



Gentrification, diversification & events - let's take it SLOW!

Allegra
February, 2016



Ever so often we find it indispensable to remind ourselves & everyone else that one of Allegra's guiding mottos is '[slow food for thought](#)'. Indeed, one of the very reasons for why we set up the Allegra platform was to challenge our growing obsession with 'novel' production - 'novelty' that in reality is too often little else than merely an additional 'tick' in the box of 'being enormously accomplishing'. Also known as more quantified bulk for various research excellence assessments.



However, let's not obsess over the ills of the academia (for now), but rather enjoy the positive - because there is much of that too! Concretely, we refer to the fan-bu-tastic (=fantastic meets fabulous) reservoir of posts that our archives have accumulated over the 2.5 + years. We can hardly believe it ourselves, but this archive now includes over 550 Posts by almost 250 scholars!

We realise that the archiving system of our beloved website is not necessarily its strongest suit (if you watch really carefully, you can access the Archive from the left bottom corner of the front page). We promise to work on this soon! However, until that, we'll continue to do the next best thing - or perhaps the very best thing, in fact: to share Jewels of Allie's Archives ever so often via novel thematic weeks and discussions.

By now we have a hefty reservoir of contributions on, well, most anything, and on numerous themes we have more than just one post.

This is definitely the case with the theme that caught our attention this week, namely gentrification paired up with diversity.

Spontaneously one might think that these two themes are almost mutually contradictory - one speaks of the fact that the world is continually becoming more standardised and boring, the other argues that it is becoming more complex, and consequentially maybe more exciting.

Of course - this making life (and Allegra) so exciting - both assessments are true, thus concretising what a complex and fabulous place the world is. It is precisely such nuances and contradictions that our scholarly community is uniquely situated in illustrating, and it remains our great pleasure and privilege to continue doing so via Allegra.

We set this week's theme going tomorrow with [Antu Sorainen](#)'s wonderful post 'Scenes of Gentrification', first published in May 2014. Actually, the time that has elapsed since her post has already confirmed her analysis as being accurate: the



gentrification of the Helsinki landscape has proceeded exactly as she has mapped out, quite sadly.

On Wednesday we pair her observations up with glimpses from another rapidly transforming urban area, namely San Francisco, particularly it's 'start-up hubs'. This post is written by [Amanda Reinke](#), and it was a part of our Fieldnotes series of summer 2015. The post describes poignantly the lived experience of marginalisation; of what it is like to witness a familiar urban landscape become strange and exclusionary.

On Thursday we contrast these posts by [Peggy Levitt](#)'s take on museums and the politics of display. Her post is contextualised in the observation that, objectively speaking, the world has become a more diverse place than ever in the sense that more people than ever before are moving or have moved around the globe. She suggests that we need upgraded theoretical approaches for accounting for this lived in diversity.

Importantly, even if perhaps not intentionally, Levitt's post forms an interesting contrast to the posts of Antu Sorainen and Amanda Reinke: whereas in the first two, standardisation of the world is directly linked to the growth and spread of multinational corporations, Peggy Levitt's post places a very potent non-commercial genre of public space at the heart of her analysis, namely the museum.

And this pleases us!

Although much analytical work remains to be done around the politics of display, we still believe in the potential and importance of 'the museum' as a public space of reflection and collaboration, of whimsical experiment and creative input - and thus also as a space of resistance to the 'gentrification of the mind'.

There are a growing number of exciting museum experiments around, but realistically there could be a lot more - lest the museum too become an



increasingly gentrified and standardised space characterised by brands and multinational chains.

Coincidentally, the Guggenheim is currently attempting very hard to establish its next museum in Helsinki. We hope that local resistance holds up, as we can envision a great number of more exciting local alternatives to this expansion of this global brand!

On Friday we return to what's new in the academia - concretely - as we share yet another one of our event's posts. This post will - due to no great premeditation - continue the slight Nordic emphasis of this week's debate, in that it features quite a few events located in the area. This bias may in part be due to the geographic location of certain Allegra's editors - or perhaps rather insistent celebration of the vibrant creative work that is still done in these hemispheres despite of the aggressive university funding cuts that we have seen as of late. We hope that you enjoy our selection all the same!

And of course all of this is just a tad more enjoyable with the right tunes! We wanted to set the mood for this week via a playlist that has been hidden in our files, but never shared before. Concretely this list was inspired by our [#DanceExtravaganza](#) of November 2014 - the time *before* we even had a Jukebox as we were still operating with our old platform.

We were reminded of this playlist because of the [fab fieldwork playlist that Jon Schubert](#) shared with us a few weeks back - a post that also proved a firm social media favourite. We look forward to many more playlists in the future (so do share yours with us!!)

#DanceExtravaganza

We hope that you enjoy yet another Allegra week - it is a pleasure to have you with us, as always!