

***Museum Professionals in Dialogue V :***  
***Musées Gadagne***  
***LYON, April 16, 2010***

The International Association of History Museums organised a visit and round table discussion for museum professionals at the *Musées Gadagne, History Museum & the Puppets of the World Museum* in Lyon, France, which took place on Friday April 16<sup>th</sup>.

As an introduction, a brief presentation of the history of the museum, of its evolution and of its outlook after the recent extensive refurbishment, was given by former director Simone Blazy. Having directed the museum all through the long years of administrative preparations, architectural design and restoration (+ addition of more underground spaces for exhibition, storage, and visitor circulation), and re-opening, Simone Blazy explained all the very intricate situations that had to be met, including the very important task of creating a partnership with the local population and the neighbourhood.

The thorough tour around the exhibition spaces of the museum revealed the vast richness of its collections, illustrating the history of the City of Lyon from antiquity up to today. The objects have deliberately been placed with minimal architectural design and sparse use of information technologies, as a conscious choice not to interfere with the very surprising architectural quality of the complicated sequence of rooms and with the importance of the exhibits themselves. This choice has also been beneficial in permitting the reviewing and adaptation of the exhibition to the public's needs without much change of the global outlook of the spaces, a process which is under way following the first year's experience after re-opening.

In the long decade during which the museum remained closed, it developed an important "outdoors" educational activity program, and managed to keep the public's awareness and fidelity high. Varied relationships were created with an important number of local associations sharing an interest for the development of social cohesion and historic awareness of the city. The education department has thus become key in the museum's new life, and its activities are being upkept and further developed. The major part of the afternoon was devoted to these activities, and to their efforts to re-enter the museum after being "on the streets" for so long, without losing this open and communicative relationship with the city.

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