masterplanners, architects & exhibition designers
for museums & cultural projects worldwide

THINKING and DESIGNING
The interiors of the spaces are designed to be light and airy, featuring natural materials. Each learning space includes a long magnetic whiteboard wall with interactive projections, allowing an entire class to work on large-scale activities, such as projecting a complete animal. This feature facilitates the combination of various learning materials, like film, the internet, freehand sketches, and reference material, promoting media literacy and the seamless movement between digital platforms.

The adjacent wall, which separates the learning spaces from the corridor, is a thick wall that houses display boxes of various sizes, visible from both sides and containing museum collections. Additionally, there are lockers and storage cabinets for coats, bags, and equipment. In the center, there are tables and lab benches designed to allow students to experience a range of activities from a cabinet of curiosities to a mediated wall, enabling a comfortable transition between different learning environments.
The interiors

The key features of the spaces are their light and airiness, and natural materials. In each learning space we have made a whole long wall into a magnetic whiteboard with interactive projections so that a entire class can work on a large-scale activity, for example an activity with a complete animal projected large. This feature can bring film, the internet, freehand sketches and all kinds of reference material together as part of their working together and also of presenting to each other. This builds on how media-literate youngsters are and how they move easily from media platform to media platform.

The other long wall, which defines the new spaces from the corridor, is a thick wall that works really hard. Within this thick wall are display boxes of assorted sizes, visible from both sides and containing the Museum’s collections, and there are also lockers and storage cabinets for coats/bags and equipment. In the middle will be tables and lab benches. The idea is that in one single learning space the students will have an experience that ranges from a cabinet of curiosities to a mediated wall and will move comfortably between them.

The Learning Centre - Lab
Thinking

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LEFT: Olympic Museum Campus, Lausanne, Switzerland
Metaphor: Thinking & Designing

At Metaphor we develop museums, historic houses, palaces, gardens, landscapes and city quarters into cultural destinations. We work all over the world and at every stage in the process. We understand that cultural destinations are complex entities and that many skills are required to make them. These skills include – the hard skills of designing and building physical spaces; the conservation and display of objects; operational thinking, business planning and wealth creation; and the soft skills of branding, interpreting and communicating objects, places and stories to many different audiences.

All this knowledge comes into play when we create cultural destinations.

We help our clients at every step of the way, from finding the Vision, to masterplanning the experience, designing the exhibits, working on the income streams, creating databases for the artefacts, communicating with the audiences and developing learning, wayfinding and signage. Many of Metaphor’s clients are major cultural institutions with international reputations. They often come to us for the challenging, initial stage of getting a project going.

Metaphor creates memorable experiences for your visitors.

LEFT: Surreal Things Exhibition, Victoria & Albert Museum, London
Rich Masterplanning

Metaphor has devised a unique approach to masterplanning. We blend an understanding of the hard issues of space planning, visitor routes, parking for cars and coaches, retail, catering, events, operations and security, with the soft issues of vision, content, audience, branding, communications and the web presence. We look at everything from the overarching Vision to the Events Programme and the map in the visitor’s hand. As the project develops, our understanding of the hard and soft issues unfolds together. This approach works at all scales, from small museums to historic landscapes and city quarters.

We call this Rich Masterplanning.
Finding the Story

We always begin by looking for the museum’s Story – in other words, what it is that the museum is telling us. The Story is always unique, specific to a place, a time and a collection, and designed to communicate with particular audiences. Once the Story is established it percolates down through the entire experience, from the ‘big moves’ right the way down to the leaflet or app in the visitors’ hands. Finding the right story can make all the difference to a cultural destination.

**ABOVE:** Storyplan of the visitor journey at the Parc Olympique

**LEFT:** Threshold into the story at the Order of St. John, London; introducing key concepts of “Faith”, “Care” and “Valour”
ABOVE: Masterplan to convert the Round Reading Room at the British Museum into a temporary exhibition space with the proposed layout for the ‘First Emperor: the Chinese Terracotta Army’ exhibition.
Getting the right balance between the Front and Back of House

We do detailed space planning to help our clients use their spaces to best advantage, both for their visitors in the ‘front of house’ and their staff in the ‘back of house’. We have built up an extensive knowledge of every aspect of museum-making – including how to make the Welcome and the visitor routes work; the needs of objects, how to get them in and out, and how to display them; security; retail and catering; the business case; the learning outcomes; and much more. We apply all this understanding when we advise clients on how to use their spaces. All Metaphor’s designers are trained as architects.

ABOVE: Diagram showing routes and journeys for people and objects through the V & A Museum’s store at Blythe House.
ABOVE: Welcome experience at Hampton Court Palace
BELOW: Photograph and model showing the proposed Welcome experience at Hampton Court Palace
Creating the Welcome

The Welcome is one of the most important parts of the Visitor Experience and sets the tone for everything that follows. When visitors arrive they have a mix of needs. They need to know why they are here and what is the Story that they are about to meet? but they also have practical needs – for tickets, a shop, somewhere to leave coats, and to get a cup of tea. Getting the balance right between these two sets of needs is crucial. We are skilled at orchestrating all the different elements that tell the story, from graphic panels, to film, maps and interactives. But we are also mindful of the physical requirements of the Welcome Space: where to put the front desk, creating spaces for school groups to gather, where to put the shop to maximise revenue, how to 'sign' the toilets, and much more.
Financial Sustainability

We work with our clients to understand their audiences, both existing and potential – who is coming and when, what they are eating, what they are buying, on what else are they spending? We look to maximise the site’s income, through admissions, special exhibitions and other programming and events throughout the year, and through retail, catering and more. We also advise our clients on fund-raising.

We have worked with our clients on a number of HLF bids, and are particularly strong in helping clients get Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) 1. We help them to find their Vision and Story, marry it with potential audiences and with the Activity Plan, take the architecture and design as far as required, and pin down the ways in which the concept can become financially sustainable.

We are familiar with all the recent developments in HLF requirements and have a strong record of success with them.

We advocate ‘capacity building’ wherever possible. The process of creating a new museum is complex and draws on many skills. It can thus become a great teaching tool. Heritage sites are also places that encourage the formation of business and can thus play their part in building employment.

*TOP LEFT:* Section drawing of new exhibition space of Winchester Cathedral

*BOTTOM:* Visualisation of proposed exhibition spaces for Winchester Cathedral. Their HLF bid was successful; they were awarded a £10.5m grant.
Maps, Guidebooks and Programming Events

The Museum’s story percolates from the top-most level down to the details, such as the Map in the visitor’s hands. From top to bottom everything should be orchestrated to tell a great story and to create a great experience. Maps are another area that we are re-thinking, by finding ways of putting more content and story into them.

*TOP LEFT: Artwork used to market Pennine Lancashire Museum*

*BOTTOM LEFT & ABOVE: The Pennine Lancashire story map tells the story of the region as a whole as well as of the individual destinations*
Here at what was once the heart of three great empires, is one of the world’s great cultural quarters, to rival the Museumsinsel in Berlin and The Smithsonian in Washington.

Start your journey here where all the treasures of the Sur-i Sultani Cultural Quarter lie before you. Every step you take will bring you face to face with great empires, extraordinary individuals and astonishing works of art and culture.

A palace which explains its ancient ceremonies, protocols and power structures as well as its bricks and mortar, and imaginatively helps you understand the people who once inhabited it, from the Sultans down to the pages, chefs and gardeners.

This museum takes us through the story of Turkish archaeology, as well as on a journey around the late Ottoman Empire in the company of Osman Hamdi Bey, the first and greatest of Turkish archaeologists. A visually spectacular, thoughtful and atmospheric experience.

This museum of decorative arts brings home the Palace’s astonishing collection of books, miniatures, carpets, tents and paintings to the Ottoman Mint, which housed some of the original workshops of the Empire. Here the artefacts are laid out to evoke the original streets of this atmospheric, miniature Ottoman ‘city’.

In the Mint we also see coins and medals displayed where such objects were once created.

A journey through the recreated gardens of the Ottoman Palace where themes of pleasure and power are woven together. See again the parkland settings of juniper trees and orchards that have been lost for hundreds of years; visit the fountains, flowers and pavilions of the Sultan’s private gardens; and see the meadows and vineyards of the Outer Gardens that sustained the Palace.
Masterplanning Cultural Quarters

We masterplanned the historic peninsula in Istanbul, including the approach to Topkapi palace, the Archaeology Museum and the church of Agia Irene. This was one of the Istanbul City of Culture projects in 2010. We also masterplanned the Spanish Colonial Fort and the historic centre of Santa Barbara in California, taking the experience out beyond the fort and into the surrounding streets.

*ABOVE:* Diagrams showing evolution of the site of Sur-I Sultani where we advised our client, Istanbul 2010, on how to create local businesses, including horticulture and guiding

*LEFT:* The matrix showing how we repositioned the stories of the destinations on the Sur-i Sultani
Creating Museums at Every Scale

We have redisplayed museums at every scale, from the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo (whose footprint is the size of 6 football pitches) through to tiny and intricately laid out museums, such as Holburne Museum of Art in Bath. We have devised museums of history, science, decorative arts and archaeology, and have displayed textiles, ceramics, manuscripts, coins, metallurgy, flat works, and much, much more. We have worked with many of the world’s leading showcase manufacturers.

Some of our museums have been located in old buildings and here our architectural backgrounds have helped us partner with conservation architects.

ABOVE: The entrance to the Grand Egyptian Museum, Cairo
LEFT: The grand stairs at the Grand Egyptian Museum - a majestic approach to the galleries
Turning Historic Houses, Palaces and Forts into Cultural Destinations

We work in historic destinations where the setting is as much a part of the story as the artefacts are. We have developed palaces, forts, houses, gardens, mills and landscapes into cultural destinations. We always begin by finding the stories. It is these that draw a visitor into the experience, as well as giving them a lens through which to see it and describe it afterwards to their friends. We then find powerful ways to tell the stories, using film, audio and art installations.

ABOVE: Film installation at Kew Palace, London
LEFT: Kew Palace, London
Temporary Exhibitions

We have created a number of internationally-renowned temporary exhibitions. These include ‘Michelangelo: Closer to the Master’ and ‘The First Emperor: China’s Terracotta Army’, both at the British Museum, and ‘Surreal Things’ at the Victoria & Albert in London, and the Guggenheim in Bilbao. All these exhibitions comfortably exceeded their anticipated visitor numbers and were enthusiastically reviewed, both in the UK and overseas.
Permanent Displays

We have delivered entire museums, including the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, the Museum of the Order of St John in Clerkenwell in London; and Holburne Museum of Art in Bath.
Designing in Landscapes

We love finding imaginative ways of putting interpretation into historic landscapes. At Hardwick Park we designed a series of furniture pieces with stories on them. This is one of many ways in which we can help visitors engage with the history of a place without using intrusive graphic panels.

ABOVE: Olympic Museum park, Lausanne, Switzerland
LEFT: Hardwick Park, County Durham, UK
Designing for Families

We designed Welcome moments for each of the seven museums in the Pennine Lancashire consortium. These Welcome moments captured the spirit of each museum as well as the brand of the Consortium as a whole. They were designed for families and children, and featured many versions of miniature worlds, in boxes and drawers, all designed to encourage play, exploration and discovery.

We also designed graphic panels in the form of comic strips, and put them at child level.
Working with Media

We have used film and projection in many of our projects, particularly when partnering with our long-term partners, the media company New Angle. In partnership with them we projected films on to the ceiling of the Guggenheim at the Surrealism show; ran film for the First Emperor around the edge of the British Museum’s Round Reading Room; and projected film on to the old walls of Kew Palace.

As part of our Olympics exhibition at the Royal Opera House we worked with Centre Screen to project a chariot race with a sound scape around a huge Greek vase. This was so successful that the Olympic Museum (also partners of ours) developed the same technique, projecting a chariot race across a table, and giving it a didactic element for schools.

ABOVE: Films projected onto the ceiling, Surreal Things at Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao
LEFT TOP: A moving chariot race animation projected on to the surface of a Greek vase Olympic Journey, Royal Opera House, London
LEFT BOTTOM: Projected film onto the old walls at Key palace, London
Coming Soon

Metaphor has been working with Salisbury Museum since 2008, first to masterplan this Museum and then to design a spectacular new gallery, devoted to the Archaeology of Wessex and including the latest archaeological findings from Stonehenge. The collection is wide-ranging, and includes rare Bronze Age pottery, Anglo Saxon jewellery, and 18th century letters and diaries. The new gallery opens at the end of May 2014.

Metaphor is also redesigning 11 new galleries at the National Museum of Scotland. These new galleries are grouped around two Victorian atria, one dedicated to science and the other to the Decorative Arts.

ABOVE: Winchester Collage Museum, Hampshire, UK
TOP LEFT: Wessex gallery at Sailsbury and South Wiltshire Museum, Wiltshire, UK
TOP BOTTOM: National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, UK
Selected projects

• The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Re-design of all the galleries
• Blythe House (V&A Stores). Masterplanning
• The British Museum. Masterplanning the Round Reading Room
• Compton Verney House, Warwick. Exhibition design
• Cyprus Archaeological Museum. Masterplanning
• The First Emperor: China’s Terracotta Army, British Museum, Major exhibition
• The Grand Egyptian Museum, Cairo. Masterplanning and Design of all galleries
• Hardwick Park. Landscape interpretation
• Holburne Museum of Art, Bath. Exhibition Design
• The Imperial War Museum, London. Masterplanning and Design
• The Imperial War Museum of the North. Masterplanning
• Kew Palace, London. Redisplay of all the spaces
• Lords Cricket Ground, London. Masterplanning
• Marks in Time: Our M&S heritage, University of Leeds, Exhibition design
• Michelangelo Drawings: Closer to the Master, British Museum, Major exhibition
• Museum of the Order of St John, London. Masterplanning and Design
• Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester. Masterplanning
• National Art Gallery, Singapore. Masterplanning
• The National Museum of Scotland. Masterplanning and redesign of 11 new galleries
• National Railway Museum, York. Masterplanning
• The Olympic Museum and Campus, Lausanne. Masterplanning and Design
• Pennine Lancashire Consortium. Design of Welcome Moments in seven destinations
• Salford Museum and Art Gallery. Masterplan and Concept Design
• Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum. Masterplan and redesign of Prehistory Gallery
• The Science Museum, London. Masterplanning
• Shakespeare’s Globe, London. Masterplanning
• Somerset House. Masterplanning
• The Suri-Sultani peninsula (including Topkapi Palace) in Istanbul. Masterplanning
• *Surreal Things*, exhibitions, Victoria & Albert Museum and Guggenheim, Bilbao
• Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Masterplanning
• Winchester Cathedral. Design and Re-display of South Triforium
• Wordworth’s cottage and village, Grassmere. Masterplanning
• Eight National Trust properties, including Fountains, Wallington and Tyntesfield House
We like to build long term relationship with our clients. The following are some of their testimonials; they testify to our creativity and professionalism.

Stephen Greenberg,
Creative Director

“I have worked with Stephen and Metaphor on a wide range of domestic and international projects in my capacity as both a Director of Locum Consulting and as Commercial & Communications Director of Shakespeare’s Globe. Stephen brings a huge amount of experience, creativity and, above all, pragmatism to all projects on which he works. In my experience of working with Stephen on master plans, feasibility studies and cultural exhibition development projects he and his team have never failed to surprise and impress in proposing and delivering highly workable solutions to often complex and sensitive development challenges.”

Mark Sullivan
Commercial Director, Globe Theatre, London
Rachel Morris
Director for Content & Learning

“I have worked with Rachel Morris on several National Trust projects, where she has helped us to reframe our whole visitor offer through strategic advice on story and visitor journey. She has a very strong track record of working with destinations and attractions worldwide, which has been invaluable: this broader perspective has helped us to ensure that our experience design reflects latest thinking and best practice internationally, rather than just within the UK. Rachel has particular strengths in developing story, mapping this onto space and integrating the whole visitor experience. Metaphor is the only company we have worked with that is able to provide us with such a strategic, story-based approach to experience design, and working with Rachel has been hugely influential in building our internal skillset in this area.”

Tony Berry
Visitor Experience Director, National Trust
Dmitri Martin  
Associate and Lead Designer

“Dmitri Martin was part of the Metaphor team that worked on the MOSI Masterplan, which was completed in Summer 2012. MOSI is a complex site -- five listed buildings covering 7.5 acres, along with a working railway line -- and Dmitri took the time necessary to understand it in its current condition and express its potential both in terms of its architecture and its story. He worked one-on-one with technical, curatorial, and administrative staff to prepare findings for presentation and discussion at the executive level. He is a very good workshop leader as well, capable of facilitating discussions on challenging topics among individuals who don’t always agree.”

Jean Franczyk  
Director, Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester
Su Koh  
Associate and Lead Designer

“Su Koh played a crucial role over a four-year period in Metaphor’s contribution to the development of our new Olympic Museum galleries and the Parc Olympique where he developed the landscape design. He curated and placed all the statues and also contributed to the lighting scheme. He also developed the Olympic Journey, our exhibition for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad held at London’s Royal Opera House Covent Garden. He visualises concepts beautifully and this has been very instrumental in our advocacy of the project with both the President and the International Olympic Committees. Su and Stephen Greenberg are a brilliant partnership as designers and planners.”

Francis Gabet  
Director, The Olympic Museum, Lausanne, Switzerland
metaphor
Lymehouse Studios
30–31 Lyme Street
London NW1 0EE
t +44 (0) 20 7485 9756
f +44 (0) 20 7485 2948
info@metaphor.eu
www.metaphor.eu