

Mason, R., Robinson, A., & Coffield, E. (2018). *Museum and gallery studies: The basics*. Routledge.
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Over the past few years, it can be noticed that visiting museums has started to become a popular leisure trend among Thai people. This suggests that is have changed their perception of museums. At the same time, there have been numerous museum trainings, seminars and classes available to the public in Thailand. Even more surprisingly, more museum studies courses are offered by notable universities than ever before. On this point, it is important for new students of museum studies to possess a basic museum studies book as a starter that can perhaps serve as their “bible”.

If there is any one text on the fundamental of museum studies to be recommended to beginners of the field, it is “Museum and Gallery Studies the Basics”. Written collectively Rhiannon Mason, professor of heritage and cultural studies and head of the School of Arts and Cultures at Newcastle University, Alistair Robinson, the director of Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, and Emma Coffield, an early career academic fellow in the Development of Media, Culture, Heritage (MCH), at Newcastle University, this book contains six chapters. After the introduction of the book sets out the purpose of the book, how readers can get the most benefit from it, and the initial ideas about what museum and gallery studies are, the first chapter aims to provide readers with the fundamental principles of museum studies. These principles include definitions and origins of museums and galleries, new museology concepts, the development of museum and museum types, museums and cultures, and the roles of museums.

Chapter 2 focuses on collecting for museums in theory and practice. This chapter explains the ideas of ‘why collecting’ and how collecting different types of objects including intangible objects like memories and living objects works. The chapter also discusses the ethics of collecting. The topics of curation, collection care and management are also included in this chapter. Chapter 3 is about museum visitors and audiences. This chapter focuses on understanding visitors and non-visitors’ behaviours by looking at profiles, prospective motivations, visiting patterns and such. The authors also raise the issue of space and sense of belonging in this chapter, which leads to the topic of audience and community engagement with museums and how to build it.

The content in Chapter 4 is dedicated to museums as a cultural business. Topics on the financial management of museums are covered in this chapter, such as revenue sources, the implications of related policies, and marketing. Museum displays, interpretation and education are the main focus of Chapter 5, which clarifies what display is in a museum context and how to work with space to responsibly and collaboratively produce meaningful displays with ease. Furthermore, this chapter also discusses museum interpretation as an aspect of education that leads to learning and knowledge gained from museums. The last chapter, chapter 6, aims to stimulate further discussion by the further discussion by considering the future of museums and galleries. The topics raised include new perspectives on museums and their values, the power of museums, museums as social activists and globalisation.

The book “*Museum and gallery studies: The basics*” is recommended not only because it is written by a group of museum academics and experts, but also for its content, which encompasses the essential details of museum studies that the beginner should know. When beginning the study of museology, it is normal for students to want to know the history of museums and their development, and it is not unlikely that the curriculum proscribes books which take time reading. Yet, with this book, the authors have digested the heavy information on museology from theory to practice from the required academic literature, and provided it for readers as a shortcut. Meanwhile, each chapter also suggests textbooks for further reading if readers are interested in specific topics. This point, therefore, shows the benefit of reading this book at the beginning of the study.

At the same time, museum studies students at an advanced level can gain benefit from this book as well. As the book was written using friendly text, it is convenient for a quick search for summarised museology concepts. To be precise, this book can be used as a references source for straightforward checking and review. Chapter 1 of this book is the best example of this since it consists of essential principles of museum studies abovementioned in a concentrated form.

Furthermore, this book is also suitable for those who are interested in the correlation between museums and culture. The authors have strengthened the point of how much museums and galleries can create a cultural impact on society as soft power by introducing several cultural studies theories into the discussion. For example, in chapter 3, the authors note that Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital has had an influence on how people perceive museums and galleries, and discuss how museums and galleries have had an impact on education. Besides Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, the ideas of nationalism and colonialism are also mentioned and coupled with clarifying examples, they help readers gain a deeper understanding of the roles of museum.

Based on my personal experience after reading, this book it can be concluded that "*Museum and gallery studies: The basics*" is one of the great introductions to museum studies, well worth a place on the bookshelf. I believe that readers, especially museum studies students, will definitely get beneficial knowledge from it.