

**THE BRAND QUEST FOR HERITAGE: HERITAGE-MAKING AND SOCIAL
OBLIGATION IN BRAND MUSEUMS**

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the key role of heritage in the experience that brand museums offer to visitors to foster brand loyalty. Heritage-making situates a given brand within a specific historical continuum, connecting visitors to both time and place. To address the question of how brand museums engage in heritage-making, we conducted ethnographic case studies at two brand museums, the Fallot Mustard Mill and The Laughing Cow House. Through direct observation and extensive interviews with 72 visitors, this study shows that a heritage experience is based on scientific, authentic, aesthetic, and mythic values. The findings also suggest that heritage-making in brand museums can strengthen consumers' relationship with the brand through affective proximity and social obligation.

KEYWORDS: Brand museums; Heritage-making; Brand; Social obligation; Heritage experience

INTRODUCTION

Retail environments' experiential approach, long presented as avoiding or at the very least ameliorating the predictability of commerce (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello 2009), has in recent years been heavily overused, leading brands to seek new sources of differentiation (Levy et al. 2005). To refresh and extend their positioning, today's adaptive brand retail environments offer spectacular entertainment experiences amplified by techniques borrowed from museums and the art world.

In this context, brand museums seem to encapsulate the evolution of retailing towards multi-sensory experiences that involve consumers in brand-related entertainment and consumption processes. Like themed flagship stores, a brand museum is overtly commercial, with a gift store, advertising, brand-oriented cultural artifacts, and entertainment through multi-sensory interactive displays (Kozinets et al. 2002). But unlike traditional retail spaces, brand museums feature an education-based mission. They combine, like regular museums, the desire to belong to a like-minded community with the importance of education and aesthetics. They also differ from themed flagship stores, in that the brand museum communicates local and international history through its related cultural artifacts, situating its product offerings within a wider cultural context (Hollenbeck, Peters and Zinkhan 2008).

Brand museums are thus complex places that combine entertainment, aesthetic and heritage dimensions. However, while the literature has studied the spectacular (e.g. Hollenbeck, Peters and Zinkhan 2008) and aesthetic experience (e.g. Joy et al. 2014) offered by brand museums, the heritage experience remains largely underexplored. Yet, by highlighting its heritage within a museum, the brand proposes a very specific experience that deserves attention because it is based on memory and communal identity by transmitting the resulting collective

memories (Goulding 2000;Lowenthal 1998), thus allowing to create a deeper relationship with consumers.In consequence, the objectives of this article are (1) to define the heritage experience established in brand museums – what we call brand heritage-making – and (2) to examine the effects of brand heritage-making on the consumer-brand relationship.

In this paper, we suggest that brand museums are involved in heritage-making through demonstrations of history, knowledge creation, display, and authenticity. Through such pleasurable experiences, visitors develop an affective proximity and experience social obligation toward a specific brand through generalized reciprocity (Darr and Pinch 2013), as brand equity is enhanced through brand remembrance and purchases.To investigate our thesis, we examine the heritage aspects of brandscapes in two French brand museums, and develop a heritage-making framework, based on values associated with the heritage experience and how consumers perceive the resulting setting. We suggest that these brand museums should not be viewed as “fixed cartographically coordinated spaces”(Coleman and Crang 2002: 11) through which visitors simply pass. Instead, such museums should be seen as “places in play”(Sheller and Urry 2004; 6), as brand managers, curators, guides and the visitors themselves continuously create heritage.

A review of the literature, our methodology and findings, and discussion follow. We conclude with a discussion of heritage-making developed in retail environments and the managerial implications for brand managers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand museums in the literature: from a spectacular to a heritage experience

Flagship brand stores, premium brand stores, and brand museums are all dedicated to celebrating the brand through rich emotional and mesmerizing experiences (Dolbec and Chebat 2013; Ger and Belk 1996; Kozinets et al. 2002; Hollenbeck, Peters, and Zinkhan 2008). Regardless of their differing characteristics (Kozinets et al. 2002), these environments share the common objective of creating a ludic-oriented experience by blending dazzlingly elaborate staging with multisensory cues (Borghini et al. 2009).

Hollenbeck, Peters and Zinkhan (2008) make a fundamental case for viewing brand museums as a retailing tool that can shift the brand to iconic status. By using historical linkages and museum-like qualities combined with a mission to educate, the brand museum becomes a retailing environment that provides the consumer with a meaningful appreciation of the brand. Brand meaning, particularly in brand museums, is derived from the following seven sources (Hollenbeck, Peters and Zinkhan 2008). “Humanization” infuses the brand with character and life, enabling a sense of connection that encourages deeper consumer loyalty. “Socialization” is the process by which the museum crafts a communal experience through story telling that draws visitors together. “Localization” of the brand highlights the brand’s geographical origins, while “globalization” illustrates the brand’s achievements and innovations in a worldwide context. The brand museum “theatricizes” the brand by staging a retail spectacle through interactive and participatory experiences, and by showcasing historical brand artifacts. “Contextualization” sites a brand within a specific historic, cultural, and social context, which highlights visitors’ associations with the brand, and allows them to access their own emotions surrounding the brand. Lastly, “characterization” of the brand happens in the museum through connections with historical figures, celebrities, and brand ambassadors, and encourages consumers to form deeper brand meanings. Through these different sources of brand meanings, Hollenbeck, Peters and

Zinkhan (2008) study brand museums only from a retail spectacles point of view insofar as they consider them like flagship stores.

More recently, the literature has studied the aesthetic experience provided by brand museums, thus blurring the boundaries between retail spaces and museums. In their 2014 study of Louis Vuitton flagship stores in Hong Kong, Joy et al. examine how the brand incorporates art within its identity. Museological techniques, such as those on display in brand museums, can educate the public and provide a history of a given brand; luxury retail spaces such as Louis Vuitton stores in essence become art institutions themselves, inviting consumers into a fantasy world made visible, with gravitas conferred by art. Dion and Arnoud (2011), Joy et al. (2014), and Dion and Borraz (2015) emphasize the interactivity between culture and retailing (Rodner and Preece 2015), showing that luxury brandscapes create and disseminate aesthetic experience. In creating a museum-like retail experience, luxury brands employ salespersons whose roles overlap with those of guides and potentially curators or docents. This strategy transforms the lived consumer experience into an aesthetic experience based on features, such as the perception of products as art objects (Joy et al. 2014), which reinforce the brand aura, given the non-reproducible nature of art pieces; and modifies consumer behavior in the store to include those more typically displayed in an exhibition context.

While the literature offers analogies with the museum world, heritage characteristics appear only in the background of the aesthetic ideal associated with a brand, its products, and commercial places (Dion and Borraz 2015). When brands offer an experience based on technologies and devices inspired from the museum world (Hakala, Lätti, and Sandberg 2011), they do not reduce the cultural orientation of such settings to an aesthetic ideal. They actually try to redefine their brand as a heritage artifact and thus propose through it a heritage experience.

Heritage-making and social obligation in brand museums

In this article, we argue that, by developing a brand museum, a company seeks to redefine the brand as a true heritage object. While the literature has highlighted the importance for a brand to underscore its heritage through its history, longevity, core values and symbols (Hudson and Balmer 2013; Urde, Greyser, and Balmer 2007; Rose et al. 2016; Dion and Mazzalovo 2016), the processes that lead the brand to fit into the heritage sphere remains understudied. Considering the heritage dimensions of the brand implies to understand the logic of construction that leads the brand to claim heritage values, what we call heritage-making.

Heritage refers to “the legacy of the natural and human world that society wishes to pass on to future generations” (Ashley 2005, p. 5). According to Smith (2006), heritage is an object of the public sphere that is preserved and transmitted between generations. As a patrimony constituted by the society or a social group, heritage is an extraordinary object out of market relationships (Gauchet 2005), at the heart of identity transmission and construction mechanisms (Otnes and Maclaren 2007) and that creates social bonds within a family, a group or a territory (Davallon 2006). But cultural heritage is not a mechanical and neutral transmission of information from one generation to another (Lowenthal 1998). It is important to consider it as a social construct which does not exist *a priori* (Arantes 2007). As Smith explains (2006, p. 47), “heritage had to be experienced for it to be heritage”. Because it is socially constructed between actors (Schroeder, Borgerson and Wu 2015), heritage is malleable and can be manipulated (Chronis, Arnould and Hampton 2012). Hall and McArthur (1998) thus suggest that the relationship between heritage and visitors is a symbiotic one. Visitors need the heritage manager to provide an emotional (Calver and Page 2013), authentic (Goulding 2000) and identity

(Goulding and Domic 2009) experience. But the heritage manager needs visitors to recognize, accept and help justify the way heritage is presented. The transformation of an object into a symbolic double through a set of collectively accepted values, thus corresponds to the heritage process (Heinich 2011), that is to say, a heritage-making approach. When conducted by a company, this process seeks to legitimize the brand as a heritage artifact, giving to it a sense of elite superiority (Ranger and Hobsbawm 1983), even if it is originally an ordinary object. In receiving recognition as part of the heritage corpus, the brand lays claim to cultural status through a temporal and geographic rooting (Lowenthal 1998), which allows the brand to present itself as a point of reference in society (Waite 2000), while the geographic anchoring enables it to represent a territory (Park 2010). Cultural heritage, like art, is produced and legitimized as a separate and autonomous sphere of knowledge, value, and circulation, standing in opposition to the market, exchange value, and commodity circulation (Bourdieu 1984).

By creating a brand museum, companies thus bring the brand out of a purely commercial sphere to redefine the relationship with the consumer (Weinberger and Wallendorf 2012). This would be a way to give more than what the consumer is accustomed to receive in a conventional commercial relationship in order to create a sense of reciprocity (Darr 2003). Since the brand museum aims to share the heritage of the brand – which is by definition something that one should protect and transmit (Smith 2006) – it performs a form of giving which in turn creates social obligations, i.e. a feeling of being obliged to carry out a social action because of an established connection with a brand (Darr and Pinch 2013). In brand museums, customers are expected to behave in an appropriate manner, distinct from a typical and pedestrian retail environment. The architecture and scenography, as well as the objects within the space, provide the parameters within which obligations are built (Darr and Pinch 2013). Through the staging of

its heritage, the brand makes its history, know-how and symbols accessible to consumers in a transmission logic whose message would be “this is *your* heritage”. When experiencing the heritage of the brand during their visit to the museum, visitors are thus confronted with the social functions of heritage; a level of obligation is then created in the visitor (Darr and Pinch 2013; Darr 2003). Because of the engaging social context created within the museum (Clark and Pinch 1988), consumers are led to appreciate the brand and its heritage, to cherish it and to share it in turn with their friends and family.

While Hollenbeck, Peters and Zinkhan (2008) provide a rich understanding of the role of brand museums in enriching connections between consumers and brands, they do not focus on heritage building, which we argue is intrinsic to creating and deepening brand connections. The literature overall has largely not addressed the intersection between heritage and consumption (Otnes and Maclaren 2007), even in heritage contexts (O'Guinn and Belk 1989; Belk and Costa 1998). We expand this literature by identifying the specific elements that create a heritage experience, and by shedding light on the resulting heightened relationship between visitors and a brand.

METHODOLOGY

To understand the heritage-building process of the brand in retail environments, we employed two extended case studies; such research is particularly appropriate when the goal is obtaining an in-depth understanding of a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Burawoy 1998; Yin 2013). Data were collected in two French brand museums: the Fallot Mustard Mill and The Laughing Cow House (See Appendix A). The food industry as a whole has significant enthusiasm for brand museums, given the strong relationships among food

products, heritage, and cultural identity (Tellström, Gustafsson and Mossberg 2006). We selected our two brands specifically because of their differences; Fallot is a niche product marketed to connoisseurs, while The Laughing Cow is an industrial cheese product with a global presence. By exploring the heritage-making of their respective brand museums, we were able to develop a comparative analysis to validate our findings, while accounting for the contextual effect of our case studies.

Our data are triangulated using multiple methods and data sources, which strengthen the validity of our findings. We collected data using four complementary qualitative data collection methods. First, we studied commercial and communication data produced by the companies (pamphlets, museum maps, websites, press releases, and the like), to assess how their brand experiences were promoted and staged. We then conducted interviews with the two museums' respective managers, focusing on the museums' origins, and their implementation and positioning. The interviews lasted approximately forty-five minutes and were recorded and transcribed.

Second, in line with research studying consumer behavior in retail environments (Borghini et al. 2009; Hollenbeck, Peters and Zinkhan 2008; Joy et al. 2014; Kozinets et al. 2002; 2004; Sherry 1998), we employed traditional ethnographic techniques to prioritize facts and actions in real situations (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). We conducted thirteen extended observational sessions (over a half day, either individually or as a group) in the two museums during a two-year period. During observations, we adopted a participant perspective and took notes and photographs, using the resulting data to triangulate our findings.

Third, we collected consumer narratives immediately after visits to gain immersive interpretations, in combination with field logs and guided introspection, following Wallendorf

and Brucks (1993) and Sunderland and Denny (2007). We recruited participants directly at the site at the beginning of a visit: we gave each participant a notebook and pen to take notes during the visit about their thoughts, feelings, and moments of surprise and enjoyment. Visitors were also asked to take photographs for their use in recalling their experiences. After the visit, we provided participants with a quiet area and writing desk. Briefly, the informants were asked to complete their narratives about their visit in the brand museum using their notes and photographs. But, they were not given instructions about what to focus on. This kind of writing introspection has become easier to achieve due to the prevalence of reflexivity today and given people's growing habit of talking about themselves (Olsen, 2012; Patterson, 2012). This ethnographic technique gave the opportunity to the visitors to live their experience as freely as possible and allowed us to capture vivid impressions of the experience. About 150 visitors were asked to participate; ultimately, we obtained forty-seven narratives (twenty-three related to The Laughing Cow House and twenty-four to the Fallot Mustard Mill): in all, we gathered one hundred and ninety-five pages of narratives, averaging just over four pages per field log. We asked first-time visitors (which represented the vast majority of our participants), without prior knowledge of the museum to work on spontaneous narratives. Having previously visited the museum could affect visitors' perceptions (for example, leading them to focus on some aspects of their experience rather than others) that could complicate identifying all the dimensions of their experiences. Table 1 lists participants' respective characteristics. We further noted the geographic origins of our participants in order to ensure their heterogeneity. Because of the strong relationship between food products and territoriality (Wilson 2006), visitor perceptions could vary greatly between consumers from the brand's place of origin and those from farther away. Of our forty-seven

participants, fewer than 25% came from the same region in which the museums were located (see Table 1).

Table 1 about here

Fourth, to gain a deeper understanding of the experience, and particularly of its impact on the participants, we conducted twenty-five in-depth interviews with both first-time and repeat visitors, focusing on the relationship they developed with the brand. Participants for these interviews were recruited directly at the end of the visit by collecting their e-mail addresses and telephone numbers in order to be able to contact them later. They were interviewed as much as two months after their visits to assess lasting perceptions. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or using Skype. They lasted from thirty to sixty minutes in length, and were recorded and transcribed. To minimize any risk of interviewer-induced bias, our research objective of brand heritage-making via brand museums was never introduced. Participants were asked to describe their experiences in the museum and the resulting impact on their relationship with the brand, and were free to guide the flow and content of the discussion. Our informants represented a balance of women and men of various ages and occupations. Table 2 summarizes the demographic information of the informants.

Table 2 about here

We analyzed collected qualitative material using comparative and hermeneutic methods (Arnould and Thompson 2005; Spiggle 1994; Thompson 1997). Using an iteration process and progressive abstraction, we analyzed data varying between individual and collective interpretation, with the aim of obtaining a shared understanding of uncovered phenomena (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). We further reformulated conclusions based on the systematic identification of those issues that did not conform to previous conclusions (Borghini et al. 2009).

Finally, the use of multiple methods, investigators, data sources, and the iteration process during the analysis allowed us to maintain an analytical distance from the field.

FINDINGS

To explain the process allowing and introducing a brand and brand objects as artifacts in the heritage corpus, our investigation reveals four values. These values drive the discrete elements that comprise a heritage experience. Our results also underscore the emergence of affective proximity with the brand and social obligations among consumers after the tour museums.

Scientific value

Each brand museum initiates a heritage process through a scientific value that serves as a source of intellectual stimulation for visitors, encouraging discoveries (Prentice, Guerin and McGugan 1998; Smith 2006; Falk et al. 2012). Visitors to the Fallot Mustard Mill and the Laughing Cow House see this scientific value by experiencing proof of these museums' respective long-established expertise, which visitors associate with the production of scientific knowledge (Kozinets 2008). As our participant Celine, who had just toured the Fallot museum, said: *I didn't think we would see the production chain during the visit...[but] we saw people working for real and we understood what they do. When we read: "Today we make mustard with basil", we really discover what they do behind the scenes and we learn something! We saw the machines, we observed their size, the work being done, the techniques and technologies used.*

Scientific value accrues through this demonstration of technical and specific expertise; additionally, visitors see firsthand that companies engage in actual, demanding production

processes, which in turn creates an aura of ‘scientificness’ in the exhibition, as perceived by Dominique, a visitor at the Laughing Cow House: *The brand museum adopts a true historical perspective; they didn’t try to hide historical conflict with ‘La VacheSérieuse’ (a local competitor). This is history from a scientific perspective... that goes beyond the desire to serve their own interests.*

The museums’ technology, manufacturing processes, and marketing materials through the eras are all on display, as noted by our participant Pauline, a visitor at the Laughing Cow House: *The showcases are organized chronologically showing us the evolution of the brand, the logos, the marketing campaigns. Everything is done to better understand the history of the brand. I have learned many things about the brand that I had no idea about before and that's the point of this visit.*

Visitors of a brand museum not only learn about a brand product line, expertise, and history: they also experience a wider perception, rooted in place, nationality, and community, of time, for which the brand is ultimately an emblem (Riegl 1982). Our participant Simon reported: *With the Laughing Cow, we have a century of history and of human behavior. When I discover the machines, the places, the old cellars, all the stuff that the brand has kept and exhibits,... visitors can see History with a capital H because it’s not anecdotal. It concerns Humanity.*

Some visitors may question the proffered information and the fragmentary aspects of exhibitions, and thus challenge a museum’s scientific value. Bruno, a visitor who collects Laughing Cow objects by the thousands and is deeply immersed in the brand and its history, stated: *In the exhibition, they show just a piece of the Laughing Cow while, for me, there is a richer and more impressive history. Just in France, there were between 4,000 and 5,000*

Laughing Cow images that were in the boxes. There were pins and key rings. There were thousands of promotional items. What the museum shows, it's really not enough to fully understand the history of the Laughing Cow.

While all visitors may not share the same keen interest in the scientific value of a heritage site (Poria, Biran and Reichel 2009), a majority of our participants did. Through demonstration logic and providing access to knowledge, brand museums satisfy a key social function of the heritage experience: the creation and transmission of savant knowledge (Calver and Page 2013), which establishes the brand itself firmly within the heritage sphere.

Authentic value

Authenticity is expressed at brand museums through artifacts with a tangible and undeniable origin (Grayson and Martinec 2004; Leigh, Peters and Shelton 2006). Objective authenticity is embodied by items weathered by time and use, and thus perceived as reference pieces, whether packaging, advertising, promotional items, or tools and machines, which are no longer seen as ordinary objects but rather as markers of history and time suited to a museum of history. Our participant Sylvette discussed the Museum Fallot exhibitions: *The museum with all the old machines in the attic, it was really good. The old and original materials, scales, sieves were quite fascinating. It's really nice to have kept all these machines and all these period items. The brand conserves, protects, and exposes its past.*

Authenticity is further supported by the reuse of historical sites of manufacture. Investing in such spaces allows the brand to present the physical traces of its production activity (Xie 2006), which make the location, objects, and the brand itself credible within biographical, cultural, and historical points of view (Benjamin 1968). Our participant Chrystel reported on the

site of the Fallot museum: *It's very interesting to see that the museum is anchored in a city (Beaune) where the brand history began and that the brand converted rooms that were dedicated to the production into a museum. There are still marks of use on the wall and the floor. I like this link between the site's history, how it "was before" and now how the brand integrates this in a very modern process. There is a staging but of something that is true and right.*

However, these authentic values are potentially undermined by simulated authenticity (Chhabra, Healy and Sills 2003). For example, some participants noticed recorded sounds of old production machines and a recreated traditional attic. The Laughing Cow House features props, such as fake cheese wheels and reproductions of old grocery stores. A participant, Anne-Lucie, said of the Laughing Cow House: *The first space, presented as the historic cellar, is very deceptive because it looks nothing like an ancient cellar. I don't like the fake wheels put on the shelves and the renovation seems to have removed all authenticity.*

Based on an objective authenticity, some visitors experience a form of existential authenticity, viewing heritage from a romantic perspective (Kim and Jamal 2007). The original artifacts engender reverie, a perceived nostalgia for an idealized bygone era, combined with the reactivation of personal memories. A participant, Inès, recalled: *In the first room of the first floor, I observed several objects on display : old advertising posters, old logos, and ancient cheese boxes... treasures dating back to the mid-twentieth century, and I really have a feeling of being transported in this post-war period. During the visit, I enjoyed imagining period scenes such as, for example, this all-metal dinette [toy] that little girls could earn through brand contests. It also reminds me of my childhood.* Inès's narrative informs us about the relationship some consumers have with objective authenticity and existential authenticity. In the context of brand museums, the value of authenticity is thus multifaceted. Based on a reproduction of the past, the perception

of objective authenticity may enable visitors to accept the veracity of an exhibition (Goulding 2000). Although some consumers question this authenticity, it nonetheless encourages brand engagement as it preserves the integrity of a brand's origins (Prentice 2001). In parallel, the identification of an existential authenticity meets the emotional aspirations of visitors, promoting a pleasant experience (Brown, Kozinets and Sherry 2003). The visit of the brand museum is thus registered in creative reconstruction and as a form of emotional heritage (Heinich 2011).

Aesthetic value

Although aesthetic value is marginal in a scholarly approach to heritage (Heinich 2011), our data underscore its role in transforming a brand into a heritage artifact. Our participants were well aware that they experienced different artification processes related to both the museum location and its exhibits.

The aesthetic experience associated with a museum location integrates the museum's architecture with the configuration of interior spaces through a meticulous scenography (e.g., spaces, lightings, colors, and materials), which creates a comprehensive experience (Goulding 2000; Joy and Sherry 2003), as our participant Alain noted: *Aesthetically, the Fallot Mustard Mill is really fine. There is a contrast between the room where there are old tools with a rustic aesthetic where we sit on old cases and the modern room where the tour guide explains the brand's tradition and when I hear about tradition, I prefer to sit on old cases. It's better than being in very modern seats. It's consistent.*

Such museumification leads the visitor to experience objects beyond their original utilitarian and technical functions, providing a new aesthetic significance (Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer 2012; Joy et al. 2014). As our participant Antoine reported: *The old machines*

in the attic are on display. So we can consider them as art objects. Before, this machine had another dimension, another utility. Of course, at the beginning, it was not a work of art. But since its historical value has increased, now it is an authentic account of the past and that it is emphasized and valued by Fallot; it changed its role and I look at it in a new light.

Aestheticization can relate to tools, machines, advertising materials, and other brand-related artifacts; it can also involve the brand product itself, as described by Maïté during her visit to the Fallot museum: *In the next room, in a dim light, I discovered a wall decorated with semi-transparent jars of mustard in a variety of colors – yellow, red, and orange. I was surprised to find such "an art work" at that point in the museum visit. But I think it's well thought out and it's beautiful... jars of mustard that ultimately represent something like a contemporary painting. And since there are some seats aligned along the wall, I could sit down and admire the scene*

This aesthetic experience led some participants, particularly those who lived locally, to highlight the role of the brand museum as a space that can provide artistic resources and promote creation. Laetitia, a participant who lives in the Jura and has visited the Laughing Cow House, commented: *Clearly, for the locals, the Laughing Cow House offers a counterpoint to contemporary art museums that do not exist in the city. The brand museum serves as a resource for locals. I consider the House as a place where contemporary art is really valued.*

Whether positive or adverse, all our participants underwent an aesthetic experience during their visits. Sensory and aesthetic pleasures are characteristic of the heritage experience. Consumers thus categorize brand museums in the field of art and, in so doing, legitimize it as a cultural institution (Joy et al., 2014).

Mythic value

Finally, the heritage process is built on the brand's ability to endorse a mythic value, which considers the brand museum from an emotional heritage perspective (Heinich 2011). This value is not necessarily based on evidence, but rather on stories or quasi-narratives (Holt 2004; McCracken 2005). The museum does not seek to describe the brand's historical reality so much as promulgate the brand's marketing narrative over time (Eliade 1954).

The museums present their respective brands within a context of timelessness by eliding chronological landmarks. A brand's mythic value deliberately loosens visitors' temporal references to present the brand as an eternal myth (Holt 2004). Bastien, a participant, accordingly described The Laughing Cow as “*a centuries-old brand, which must keep in tune with the times to exist*” when in fact the Laughing Cow trademark is less than 100 years old. For our participant Henry, this cheese brand “*is part of the French icons that are able to withstand the test of time*”. While their shared recognition of non-chronological time contradicts the concern of specific time dating, such recognition allows the brand to leave the mundane, time-bound reality of everyday life. Instead, the brand attains an immutable dimension that facilitates its entry into the heritage register; the brand can now be perceived as outside of time, and thus impervious to the deteriorations of time (Lowenthal 1998). The museums offer visitors access to the magical time of the origin of the brand; the brand's heritage is set in place with its origin story, and what follows are merely repetitions refracted through a permanent structure (Eliade 1954). Having access to these magical times increases the power of the myth and its aura (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). As a participant Lea recalled, the Fallot tour offers “*stories and legends about the mustard*”, with the museum bearing the status of “*a mysterious place where they produce a secret element*”.

Above all, brand museums communicate stories about characters, events, and achievements associated with their respective brand universes to advance an origin myth. Our participant Nathalie, who visited the Laughing Cow House, recalled that: *These stories are what I retain at the end of the visit. It was interesting to know the origin of the brand, the early history of this myth. This Cow is a character that has been with me since my childhood. The brand museum has partly unveiled the secrets of this character. During the visit, the tour guide told many stories about the Laughing Cow. I was quite surprised to learn that the name 'Laughing Cow' comes from a connection with the name "Wachkyrie"*¹. As Nathalie said, *the story is fun.*

Brand museums can thus offer a perspective that is more folkloric than scientific, presenting the brand as one element in the collective memory and identity of a particular community. Simon, a participant from the Jura, said of his visit to the Laughing Cow House: *The stories are stories I had already heard from people from the Jura when I was a little boy. So it's a part of our history. For example, the story that it was the wife of Mr. Bel who decided to put earrings [the earrings are actually wheels of Laughing Cow cheese] on the Laughing Cow. The museum gave me the opportunity to remember all of these stories.*

Through mythic value, visitors can go beyond appreciating a brand's historical reality, to embracing its role in traditional legends (Eliade 1954). Some visitors can over-interpret a brand myth, or create their own brand idealization. For example, our participant Alain was under the impression that Fallot had invented mustard, whose origin actually dates back several millennia. In the process of heritage-making, mythic value can appear ambiguous, allowing a brand to be

¹[The company founder had named the brand after seeing laughing cow images painted on wagons bringing meat to French soldiers in WWI. The cow images were labeled La Wachkyrie, a play on Walkyrie (Valkyrie), which was painted on wagons bringing rations to German soldiers. Handmaidens of Norse mythology were reborn as an amused red cow wearing earrings (<http://www.secretsofparis.com/heathers-secret-blog/la-vache-qui-rit-know-why-shes-laughing.html>)

considered a form of knowledge, since a brand myth is as an explanatory principle of the world (Stern 1995).

Identifying scientific, authentic, aesthetic, and mythic values clarifies the nature of the experience lived by visitors to brand museums. Furthermore, as can be observed in art, history, or science museums, heritage values are interdependent (Heinich 2011), combining with and reinforcing one another. While one or more of these values may be lacking in a brand story, the role of the brand museum as a place of heritage construction can nonetheless prevail; the museum can simply co-produce a “small heritage” rather than the ideal, which will aggregate all these values.

Building affective proximity to the brand and social obligation

The recognition of the brand as a part of the heritage corpus through heritage-making (and the related social functions of conservation, preservation, enjoyment, and transmission) offers visitors an affective proximity with the brand. Learning the history, origin myths, and expertise associated with the brand generates, or increases, an attachment to the brand. Thus visiting brand museums personalizes and humanizes the brand (Hollenbeck, Peters and Zinkhan 2008), as evoked by our participant Frédéric: *Now I know that Fallot is not just a manufacturer that merely produces mustard and expands into international markets. The fact that they have given me this experience, they have shown their production process, they have made a nice gift shop. It gives me a good image of a brand that doesn't seek to make volume at any price but wants to explain its history, its evolution.*

Having access to the backstage and the brand's secrets creates a positive image of the brand (Narsety and Russell 2013). Our participant Antoine said: *In the supermarket, when I see a*

product, I consider it as an industrial product which means mass production, industrial machinery. Here Fallot shows me it's not that at all. I realize that I had perceptions that did not fit with reality because of the discovery of the family, the handcrafted side and the human scale side of Fallot products. And [that] can be a reason for me to consume more of it, because I realize the values behind this production are consistent with my own values.

Because brand museums can anthropomorphize brands, which then embody relational connections (Fournier 1998), visits can generate a sense of belonging, as visitors feel part of a larger community. As our participant Celine reported after visiting the Fallot Mustard Mill: *They do everything to make you feel close to the product in the literal sense as well as the figurative. You can touch everything during the visit and the museum explains the story, the production processes. I think they have won the bet to make visitors feel at home, to belong to the Fallot family by learning how things are done.*

Our data suggest that in addition to creating an affective proximity with consumers, brand museums and the experience of brand heritage create social obligations among consumers. Based on affective proximity, visitors to brand museums respond accordingly (Darr and Pinch 2013; Darr 2003). A participant, Alain, stated: *As I am well welcomed by someone, I want to give as good as I get.* Visitors receive the heritage of the brand during the visit and want to do something in return. This feeling was shared by a number of our participants, including Nathalie about the Laughing Cow House: *The whole visit was good. All this history, this heritage that is given to us and that we have discovered. Even the shop was fine. The end of the visit with the gift shop where we can take pictures with accessories of the Laughing Cow. It was really excellent. And the tasting of the products also. We have really enjoyed all that, all these gestures towards us.*

Visitors experience transmission of the brand's heritage as a selfless action, with the brand's primary goal to inform and share rather than sell products, which generates a reciprocal return (Sherry 1983). Consumers feel indebted to the brand, as described by Antoine: *I really felt that I learned a lot of things during the visit. To see the location, see the people working on the production line, has really confirmed what I thought of the brand. I like to know what I buy and before buying, I look for information about brands, firm practices and products. And like me, people want to know more and more. So, I find it great that Fallot is transparent like this. It's like the brand makes a gesture towards me and in return, by buying, I also make a gesture towards the brand.*

The interpretation of our data suggests a first form of social obligation with the purchase of brand products. The purchases may happen just after the tour museum in the gift shop but also, in the long term, through repeated purchases of brand products, as indicated by Nathalie: *In the end, I was very touched by the visit. All that work done by the Laughing Cow... This work that I can see during my visit. And now, when I'm going to buy products, I will say to myself: it's great because it's something I've visited. I'm even a little bit proud maybe. I was consuming the products and now after the visit, I will consume even more.* Through her repeated purchases, she supports the brand in a form of reciprocity and commitment (Siu et al. 2013). Many of our participants expressed their support for a brand through repeated purchase acts, driven by their memories of the brand's museum tour.

Visitors value a brand's willingness to be transparent, which in turn generates confidence in the brand (Rose et al. 2016). Our participant Clémence said after visiting the Fallot Mustard Mill: *There really is a concern for transparency. The brand shows visitors how the product is manufactured. So, the company shows that it's not producing an industrial product with unknown*

ingredients. I know that the product is made in Burgundy. So, now I will buy Fallot. Now I trust the brand, although I am aware that they have not told us everything. But now if I have the choice, I'll buy Fallot because they explained how the mustard is made. And behind that name there is a real tradition. I trust them because they have been honest with me. I do not want to be lied to about the quality of the product, especially now. So, now, I know that these are good products and that they will not disappoint me.

If visitors feel indebted to the brand and view it as a heritage tradition, and in consequence support it, that commitment may well extend to their familial and social circle, thus highlighting that transmission processes are at work. As a result, recommendation appears as a second form of social obligation (Darr and Pinch 2013). As our participant Chrystel said after visiting the Fallot Mustard Mill: *The museum is one way to reveal the tradition of Burgundy. This is a good example of people who have not "sold their souls to the devil". They succeed in changing their practices and products - because consumers' tastes have changed – and at the same time they succeed in sustaining the tradition. Setting up a museum in the historical manufacturing site is also respectful of this tradition. There is a product that has always been there, that is done in a modern way today but at the same time they have not forgotten how it was before. And I find it is appropriate to share this. So I tell it to my friends and family. I tell them: accept the sharing the brand wants us to...*

In brand museums, this active interpersonal communication is rooted in the concept of heritage. Indeed, heritage is an object of the public sphere that is preserved and transmitted between generations (Smith 2006), with many of our participants eager to do so. As our participant Laurène stated: *Now I know the difference between Amora, Maille² and a brand like Fallot. To be honest, I will buy only the Fallot brand. Now, I recommend it to everyone, I*

²Amora and Maille are two competing brands of mustard

brought flyers for my parents, for their friends, for my friends. And I tell them that if they want good mustard, they have to order this one. When I came back home and I brought the pots of mustard, I told myself that it was a real shame to live so far away. My father has devoured everything that I brought! I organized tastings like those held during the tour. And I explained that the visit is something that would interest my father, because he's someone just like me. I told them the tour was really cool. I sell their stuff like a real spokesman of the brand!

Our participant Clémence reported that she has converted her family to the Fallot Mustard products after visiting the brand museum: *And, now, to my family, I tell them "You'd better buy this mustard because I know it and you can trust me." I brought mustard to my parents and now they ask me to bring it back all the time. They do not buy mustard in supermarkets anymore. I told them we really know how it is made and they trust me. They have tasted the mustard, they find it so great. So, it makes them want to buy it again. I have actually converted them to the brand! Yet I have not told everything about the visit, but I told them that it was really made in Burgundy. It is an authentic product, with no strange ingredients and my parents now trust the brand.*

Social obligations for some consumers exceed purchasing and recommending brand products. Some of our participants elected to volunteer for a brand. Our participant Laetitia revealed: *The reality of all this work that the Laughing Cow House has done in the heart of the Jura has really changed my relationship with the brand. At the beginning I associated the museum with a showcase that allows the brand to be well established, baiting the consumers and encouraging them to spend more money but then I realized the brand actually wanted to deploy its know-how, to serve the local population who live around the House. And finally, I no longer associate the museum with a commercial universe. And so I've decided to become involved in the*

non-professional working group that is discussing different architectural projects related to the reorganization of the House. I'm a voluntary worker. I feel really concerned with the project, the future tour in the museum, the future scenography of the Laughing Cow House. And I do it with a lot of pleasure. With Laetitia's comments, we see that she no longer sees the museum as a brand showcase, but rather as a place outside the commercial world, one integral to the local community.

Laetitia chose to give back to the brand, both through purchases and actions, in essence serving as a liaison between the brand and the general public. Such dedication is the ultimate expression of any brand museum's goal.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical contributions

Our research on heritage-making in brand museums enriches current marketing literature by investigating the heritage experience within retail environments dedicated to brands and its benefits in terms of relationships. We show that the heritage-making in brand museums is based on four values: scientific, mythic, authentic, and aesthetic. When confronting with brand heritage, consumers experience social obligation, ensuring that the brand remains in consumers' minds, a memory that might well trigger gift shop purchases, and potentially fuel additional future purchases. Brand museums take on an aura associated with their particular brand. Figure 1 encapsulates the entire framework.

Figure 1 about here

As a consequence, this research offers two main theoretical contributions. First, we investigate brand heritage-making. Brands view their museums' *raison d'être* as providing

memorable experiences, gifting visitors with information, artifacts, visual and auditory presentations, and opportunities for personal interaction with the brand. At the brand museums we examined, visitors are treated to informative stories about the history and authenticity of the brand, with artifacts on display that bring the brand's heritage into sharp focus. Both museums in our study emphasize the association of their products' traditional manufacturing and sales processes with authenticity and locality (Xie 2006). Such values not only facilitate social connections and social networks, they also encourage social cohesion and communal identity (Mason 2006).

The heritage component of brands is evident in the values that consumers experience in the museums' environments. The scientific value allows the brand museum to clearly legitimize its membership within the heritage register by providing a scientific and historical context. As it would be for any museum, this register helps the brand museum be perceived as a place of knowledge transmission and offers visitors an intellectually exciting experience (Falk et al. 2012; Rodner and Preece 2015). As places sited in their respective places of origin, engaging in preservation, and displaying non-denatured objects, brand museums display a value of authenticity, thus maintaining the integrity of their relationship with the origin of things (Eliade 1954; Prentice 2001). However, our results show that the experience of authenticity may be altered by the use of techniques that create a simulated authenticity. The aesthetic value extends the brand meaning from its utilitarian function to the artistic field and creates a sensory experience for consumers (Joy et al. 2014). For some visitors, a brand's mythical value helped reaffirm their own understandings of their identities as evinced by the products they purchase. Through the sharing of symbols and stories, mythic value affirms the brand's culturally iconic status and legitimizes its presentation as a heritage artifact (Chronis 2005). Our findings show

that the use of fictional references, such as legends and anecdotes, emphasizes a brand's sacred nature. This value also meets visitors' emotional aspirations by offering them a potentially nostalgic experience (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry 2003). Moreover, by appealing to visitors' self-identification as highly educated consumers, an artisanal brand can instill a sense of self-reinforcing communal unity—a connoisseur among others of similar discernment.

Through the identification of brand heritage-making, our research thus broadens perspectives on the cultural and artistic orientation of retail environments. The hybridization of the market logic of retail environments with the world of art has been identified by several recent studies in the context of luxury brands (Dion and Arnould 2011; Joy et al. 2014; Dion and Borraz 2015). Using techniques from art galleries as well as museums, brands propose an experience centered on aesthetic pleasure, driven by the perception of products as works of art. The heritage building, however, is not limited to the creation of beauty, and therefore can be used *de facto* by many brands, including those not perceived as luxury brands. The brand heritage-making is based on both aesthetics and the creation of a world of intellectual stimulation, an authentic and timeless universe mobilizing fictional references. In brand museums, a wider spectrum of values associated with the cultural world is used. Consumers' relationships with objects are not only aesthetic, but also cognitive (learning and transmission), temporal (nostalgia and intergenerational transmission), spatial (representation of a territory), spiritual (not just in terms of religion but also through the experiences of wonder and awe generated by visiting heritage places), and social (memory and collective identity). These multiple sources of value allow brands to assume the role of a cultural agent. While luxury brands can capitalize on their aesthetic values – an option unavailable to most brands – the use of multiple values associated with heritage-making enables all brands to provide acultural orientation.

Second, we show that in brand museum tours, the social obligation which it creates is implicit. For a small fee, visitors gain entry into privileged places, where they experience information, visual stimulation, historical provenance, artifacts of various kinds, interactive encounters, and free tastes of a brand's product line. While there is no obligation to buy, the gift shop is always the last stop on the tour. While the activities in which visitors engage during brand museum tours are essentially involuntary, visitors' reciprocal responses are entirely voluntary, a response to tour activities that have generated genuine interest and trust in the brand. The possibilities of interacting at various levels with the brand and the heritage mechanisms, namely transmission and representation, create social obligations which in turn become an ingredient of the long term economic performance through a deeper relationship between the brand and the consumer (Fournier, 1998).

Our study thus considers brand museums as not only spectacular commercial environments, but also as places that distort the market and the commercial function of the brand. According to Hollenbeck, Peters, and Zinkhan (2008), the experience lived in brand museums is intended to strengthen the relationship between consumers and the brand, since brand museums are conceptualized as the most intense form of retail spectacles. In their analysis, the relationship between the consumer and the brand is intrinsically commercial, even if the experiential nature of brand museums enriches the single utilitarian function of retail environments (Kozinets et al. 2002). In contrast, our results consider brand museums as places where the commercial logic of the brand is no longer the primary focus but does result in brand loyalty and increased sales.

Recognizing the brand's status as a heritage object simultaneously recognizes it as an extraordinary object outside of the commercial world because heritage belongs to the public

sphere (Gauchet 2005; Smith, 2006). Brand museums are an integral part of our social capital. While Borghini et al. (2009) highlight a commercial retail ideology based on material features and exclusively produced by the brand, our study of heritage-making in brand museums examines how they create a selfless relationship: the brand and its story are transmitted without requiring anything in return, at least in the short term (Sherry 1983).

The brand museum is thus at the heart of a moral economy logic rather than a market economy logic (Weinberger and Wallendorf 2012), centered on the relationship between the brand and consumers. In contrast to previous research that considers the brand at the heart of retail environments (Sherry 1998; Kozinets et al 2002; Kozinets and Handelman 2004), our research suggests considering brand museums as spaces that materialize broader social relationships. Because such museums focus on a heritage dimension, they resonate with traditional heritage functions: the transmission of memory between generations, and the representation of territories that are universal, that is to say the creation of collective identity markers used as resources by individuals (Holt 2004).

Managerial implications for brand managers

Brand museums present the innovations underlying their history, and serve to cement relationships with the brand among generations of family visitors by linking the brand to technological and historical achievements. They display historical artifacts that make visible a brand's venerable history and its relevance to modernity. Such heritage-making experiences have the potential to impact social cohesion by helping to reaffirm a group's identity and gain pride and confidence in their history and achievements, regardless of whether the past is true (Stanley 2006), as evidenced by invented brand characters. Brand characterization associates the brand

with personalities such as historical figures, celebrities, company founders and employees, and created icons. Heritage brands reproduce stories, whether real or invented, through images and advertising to create emotional meaning for consumers.

Beyond the importance of heritage-making for brands, we also offer specific recommendations for brand museums. The number of brand museums is constantly growing; in 2016, both an IKEA museum in Sweden and a Nestlé museum in Switzerland have opened their doors. While maintenance costs can be sufficiently high that several brand museums have closed in recent years, such as France's *Musée De La MoutardeAmora* and England's Jaguar Heritage Museum in England, Italy's *Museo Storico Alfa Romeo* (Alfa Romeo Historical Museum), which closed in 2011, reopened in 2015, with a new name referencing the heritage's ability to transcend time: the *Museo Alfa Romeo - La macchina del tempo*, which translates to the Alfa Romeo Museum - The time machine. Our study underlines the essentiality of invoking heritage, identifying the values and mechanisms at work in brand museums, and suggests practical tools for developing heritage-making. To be legitimate as cultural institutions, flagship stores must be intentionally designed for this purpose; otherwise they will remain a place of market mediation. Architecture, ambience, and design, along with discourse, displays, and activities, must all convey heritage values.

Brands can also rely on brand museums to legitimize the brands' roles of mediation and/or representation, which are often incorporated in their communication strategies. The TAG Heuer Museum celebrates its commitment to preserving its unique cultural heritage. The Patek Philippe Museum in Switzerland also chronicles its heritage; the museum showcases timepieces from as early as the 16th century, and traces the company's own history since its founding in 1839 (<http://www.patekmuseum.com>). The company's publicity notes that the brand “works at

preserving and revitalizing a unique heritage [...] thus perpetuating day after day the beauty of ancestral gestures.”

Our study is also relevant to managers of retail environments that integrate cultural features, and more specifically museum spaces within their stores, such as the Gallery des Galleries within the Galeries Lafayette Haussmann in France, Uniqlo’s flagship store on 5th Avenue in New York, in which an area is devoted to exhibitions, and Mariner's flagship store in Spain, which incorporates the Mariner Museum (“Supreme Luxury Experience Since 1893”) (<http://www.mariner.es/en/museo-mariner.php>). Our research can provide a useful framework for brands willing to develop exhibitions around their brand. As our study highlights, economic activities are embedded in social contexts, and social obligation is accumulated through consumer participation in such places.

Finally, our research raises questions about the positioning of brand museums. While Hollenbeck, Peters, and Zinkhan (2008) relate brand museums to commercial environments, this study locates them within the museum world as well. These hybrid settings undoubtedly blur the competitive frontiers, making it difficult to determine *a priori* the competitive world in which they are connected. However, without such hybrid positioning, consumers will be restricted to traditional differentiations among consumption areas: for example, a museum, a retail store, and an art gallery, each in its own place. Conventional logic dictates that they are in one space, and one only.

CONCLUSION

We argue that brand museums are centers that focus on building consumer social obligation through heritage-making. Through interactions between brand museum

managers/curators and visitors, we reveal how, through different values, visitors begin to identify with the brand. Brand representatives and visitors share an understanding of the use of the material object in a particular setting, and how it figures in exchange contexts. No immediate economic transaction is expected when visitors tour brand museums, but social obligations are created through the expression of heritage, i.e. an expression of moral values of transmission and protection. We extend Hollenbeck et al.'s argument that brand museums intensify brand experience and elaborate on brand meaning for visitors, concluding that the drivers of such processes are values that are packaged in the brand museum and perceived by the consumer as embodied in the brandscape. By interacting with the values deployed by brand museums, and by endorsing them, visitors reinforce their own identities. We concur with Akaka, Schau, and Vargo (2013) that understanding the influence of cultural context on valueco-creation is essential in understanding how to increase the value of a particular offering – the norms, practices, meaning, and resources available in markets. As Penaloza and Mish (2011) suggest, we need to understand markets as cultures. As a repository of heritage artifacts, a brand museum becomes a resource whose various stakeholders must protect and preserve the brand, because the museum represents a source of memory and meaning to be passed down from generation to generation.

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Appendix A. Presentation of the two brand museums

Presentation of the Fallot Mustard Mill: Fallot is a family business created in 1840 in Beaune (Burgundy, France)

that, true to its heritage, continues to pulverize mustard seeds at the grindstone. Such respect for tradition allows Fallot to benefit from a high-end market positioning. In 2003, Fallot opened a brand museum and developed a “discovery path [...] using [the] most modern museum techniques” in which visitors can “discover the history of the Burgundy mustard like [they have] never seen it before” (<http://www.fallot.com/en/la-moutarderie-fallot/>).

This museum offers a tasting area and two different tours (<http://www.fallot.com/en/>):

- “Decouvertes” tour: *“The Discovery tour is a fun interactive circuit in a timeless setting which will titillate your sense of smell like no other. It takes visitors on a journey through the ages, teaching them about the techniques and traditions associated with mustard and its history”*
- “Sensational Experience” tour: *“While La MoutarderieFallot has been able to preserve its traditional and ancestral manufacturing methods [...], it is with pride that we now invite you to come and discover new experiences and sensations at a venue which truly befits the 21st century.”*

Presentation of The Laughing Cow House: The Laughing Cow is a brand born in 1921, owned by the Bel Group (founded in 1865), which specializes in various cheeses. The brand was created in the French region of Jura and benefits from an international reputation, with products available in 120 countries, due to its industrial development and global marketing strategy. In 2009, the group opened its brand museum in Lons-le-Saunier (Franche-Comte, France), a 27,000 square foot museum dedicated specifically to The Laughing Cow brand, in which visitors can discover “collectibles, images, documentation [...] which constitutes the heritage of the brand, its evolution, and its multiple representations,” as noted in publicity materials. The museum’s website (<http://www.groupe-bel.com/fr/marques/la-maison-de-la-vache-qui-rit>) states, “More than just a company museum, the [Bel] Group [the parent company] has sought to remake the site in The Laughing Cow®’s image, where visitors rediscover the values of conviviality, humor and innovation that characterize the brand and the numerous advertising campaigns that have contributed to its popularity.” The museum offers a garden for children with games related to cheese, an educational room, a cafeteria, and a shop. Manager Philippe said that the museum was conceived as a place of “living and amazement... [to create] “a very emotional relationship between the brand and its visitors.”

**Figure 1. Brand museums as heritage-making spaces for strengthening the relationship
with the brand**

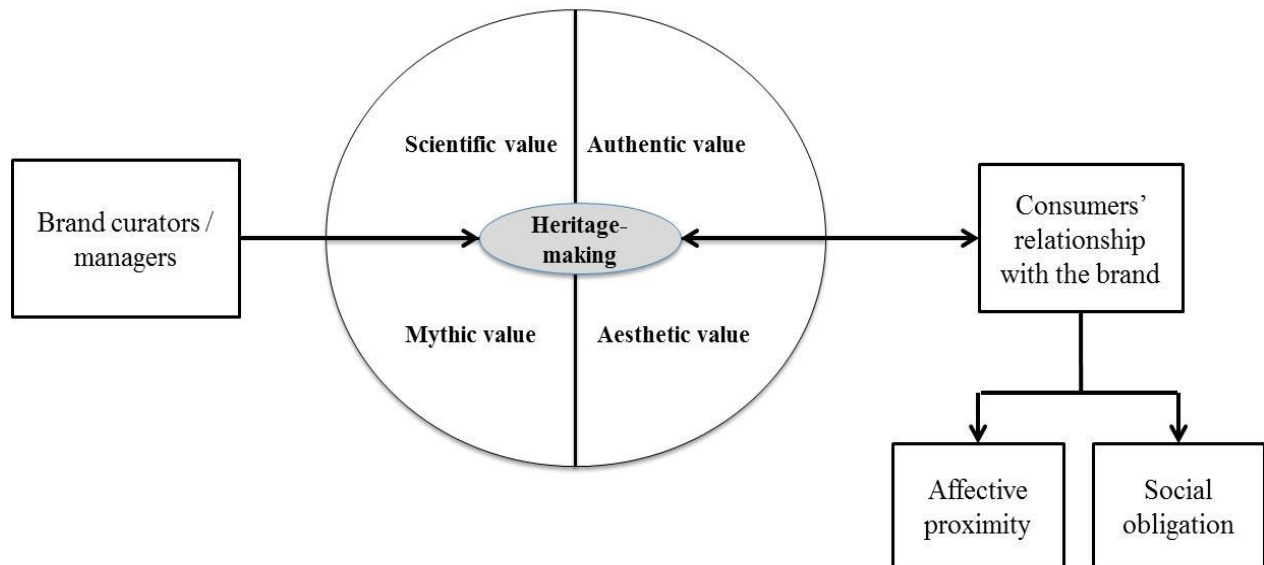


Table 1. Participant demographics of the introspection phase

	Participant (gender)	Museum visited	Occupation	Geographical roots with the brand museum	Introspection (number of pages)
1	Morgane (F)	LaughingCow	Project manager	No	7
2	Caroline (F)	LaughingCow	Socio-cultural organizer	No	3
3	Chloé (F)	LaughingCow	Communication assistant	No	6
4	Aurélie (F)	LaughingCow	Project manager	No	4
5	Suzanne (F)	LaughingCow	Sales consultant	No	11
6	Marta (F)	LaughingCow	Reception officer	No	6
7	Magalie (F)	LaughingCow	Engineer	No	4
8	Fanette (F)	LaughingCow	Development officer	No	6
9	Elise (F)	LaughingCow	Sales assistant	Yes	4
10	Sophie (F)	LaughingCow	Graduate student	No	4
11	Inès (F)	LaughingCow	Research manager	No	8
12	Noémie (F)	LaughingCow	Customer service advisor	No	5
13	Anne-Lucie (F)	LaughingCow	Communication assistant	No	6
14	Florine (F)	LaughingCow	Assistant project manager	No	11
15	Mathilde (F)	LaughingCow	Graduate student	No	6
16	Laura (F)	LaughingCow	Librarian	No	5
17	Julie (F)	LaughingCow	Real estate agent	No	3
18	Maud (F)	LaughingCow	Event manager	No	5
19	Pauline (F)	LaughingCow	Marketing assistant	No	4
20	Aurore (F)	LaughingCow	Shop manager	No	2
21	Marine (F)	LaughingCow	Quality manager	No	4
22	Pascal (M)	LaughingCow	School monitor	No	4
23	Henry (M)	LaughingCow	Communication director	No	4
24	Alexandre (M)	Fallot Mustard	Sales manager	Yes	1
25	Laure (F)	Fallot Mustard	Advertising manager	No	3
26	Charlotte (F)	Fallot Mustard	Development officer	Yes	3
27	Aline (F)	Fallot Mustard	Teacher	No	3
28	Amélie (F)	Fallot Mustard	HR manager	Yes	2
29	Annie (F)	Fallot Mustard	Accountant	Yes	3
30	Bastien (M)	Fallot Mustard	Teacher	No	4
31	Léa (F)	Fallot Mustard	Receptionist	No	4
32	Maïté (F)	Fallot Mustard	Project manager	No	2
33	Alix (F)	Fallot Mustard	Development officer	Yes	3
34	Isabelle (F)	Fallot Mustard	Press officer	Yes	7
35	Daniel (M)	Fallot Mustard	Teacher	Yes	5
36	Marion (F)	Fallot Mustard	Receptionist	Yes	2
37	Louise (F)	Fallot Mustard	Management accountant	No	4
38	Cynthia (F)	Fallot Mustard	Secretary	No	2
39	Héloïse (F)	Fallot Mustard	Travel assistant	Yes	2
40	Clément (M)	Fallot Mustard	Unemployed	No	3
41	Eric (M)	Fallot Mustard	Teacher	No	3
42	Cécile (F)	Fallot Mustard	Educator	No	5
43	Yann (M)	Fallot Mustard	Heritage officer	No	3

44	Martin (M)	Fallot Mustard	Communication assistant	No	2
45	Fanny (F)	Fallot Mustard	Secretary	Yes	3
46	Geoffrey (M)	Fallot Mustard	Sales manager	No	1
47	Julien (M)	Fallot Mustard	Communication director	No	3

Table 2. Participant demographics of the in-depth interviews phase

	Participant (gender)	Museum visited	Occupation	Geographical roots with the brand museum	Age	Context of the visit	Interviews duration (min)
1	Antoine (M)	Fallot Mustard	Student	No	22	Withfriends	35
2	Jean-Pierre (M)	Fallot Mustard	Territorial engineer	Yes	63	Alone	27
3	Céline (F)	Fallot Mustard	Student	No	23	Withfriends	32
4	Clémence (F)	Fallot Mustard	Student	No	22	Withfriends	46
5	Sylvette (F)	Fallot Mustard	Secretary	Yes	61	Withfamily	28
6	Frédéric (M)	Fallot Mustard	Researcher	No	33	Withfamily	44
7	Laurène (F)	Fallot Mustard	Student	No	22	Withfriends	51
8	Marvyn (M)	Fallot Mustard	Sales manager	Yes	27	Alone	26
9	Michèle(F)	Fallot Mustard	Teacher	No	49	Withfamily	35
10	Mickaël (M)	Fallot Mustard	Commercial employee	No	30	Withfamily	40
11	Chrystel (F)	Fallot Mustard	Communication manager	Yes	46	Alone	36
12	Vivianne (F)	Fallot Mustard	Estate agent	Yes	49	Alone	35
13	Stéphane (M)	Fallot Mustard	Human ressources director	No	51	Withfamily	29
14	Alain (M)	Fallot Mustard	Craftsmancarpenter	No	42	Withfamily	40
15	Fanny (F)	LaughingCow	Student	No	21	Withfriends	50
16	Gabrielle (F)	LaughingCow	Student	No	22	Withfriends	44
17	Mylène (F)	LaughingCow	Student	No	21	Withfriends	45
18	Alexandra (F)	LaughingCow	Housewife	No	39	Withfamily	40
19	Bruno (M)	LaughingCow	Commersialemployee	No	52	Alone	46
20	Dominique (M)	LaughingCow	Retiredperson	No	55	Withfriends	43
21	Léa (F)	LaughingCow	Tour guide	No	25	Withfriends	52
22	Marie(F)	LaughingCow	Student	No	22	Withfriends	42
23	Laetitia (F)	LaughingCow	Teacher	Yes	42	WithFamily	40
24	Nathalie (F)	LaughingCow	Housewife	No	39	WithFamily	45
25	Simon (M)	LaughingCow	Teacher	Yes	58	Withfriends	50