

MUSEUMS AFTER COVID

An international review of museum practice after the lockdown

PARTS 1 + 2 + 3

France / Pantin - 25 June 2020

A survey by:

 **tactilestudio**

In collaboration with:

 **MXE** Museum &
Exhibition
User Experience

Starting point

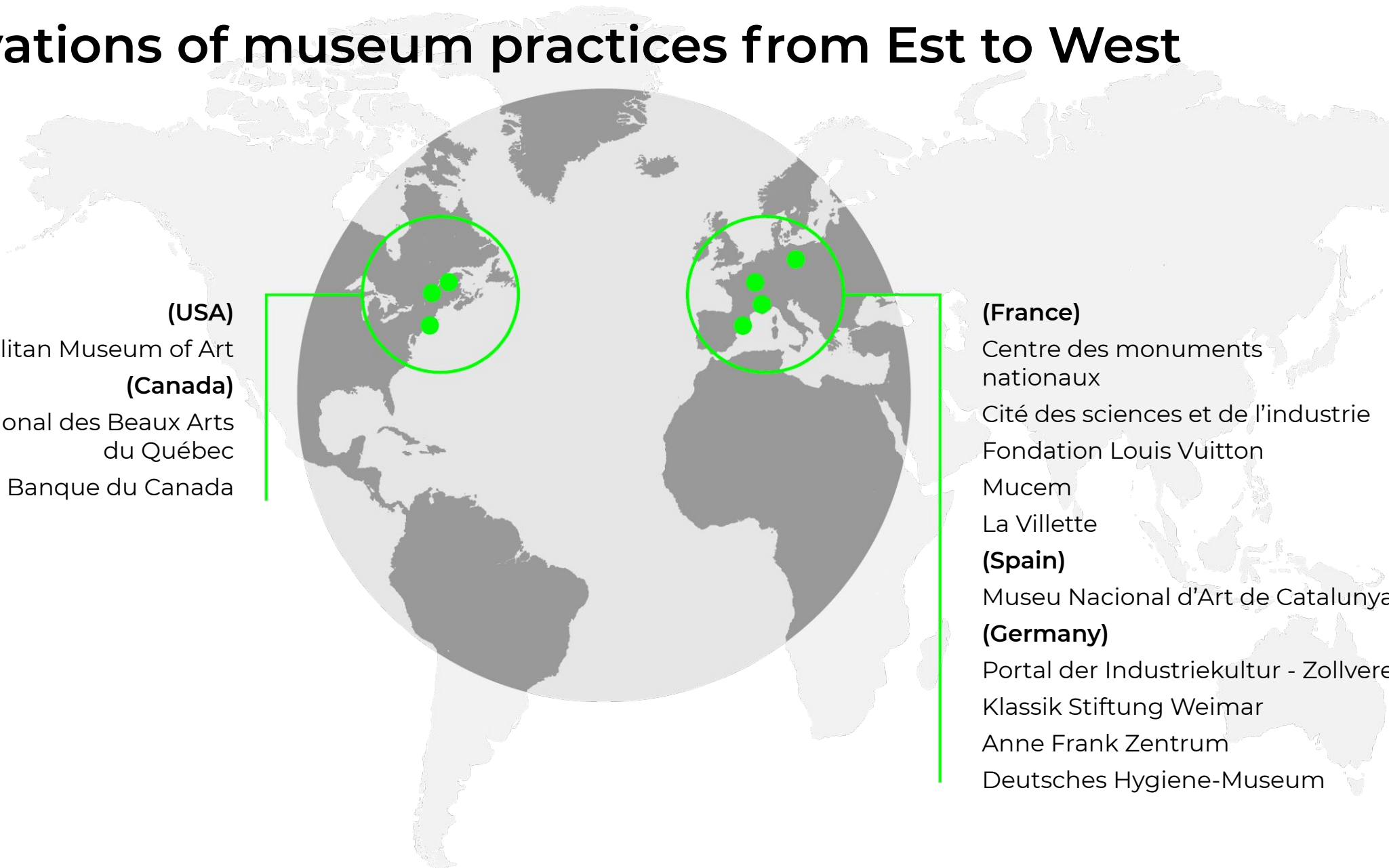
We want to stimulate exchange of practice and collective intelligence between institutions to promote a renewal of the visitor experience.

The pandemic of spring 2020 has undeniably set us on the road to new practices for visiting museums and cultural institutions.

A leader in inclusive design, Tactile Studio reaffirms its commitment to work with you for access to culture for all.

It's with great pleasure that we share with you the summary of 13 interviews carried out by our teams from 5 May to 2 June 2020. We hope that it will help to facilitate decision-making on your mediation and accessibility arrangements.

Observations of museum practices from Est to West



(USA)
Metropolitan Museum of Art

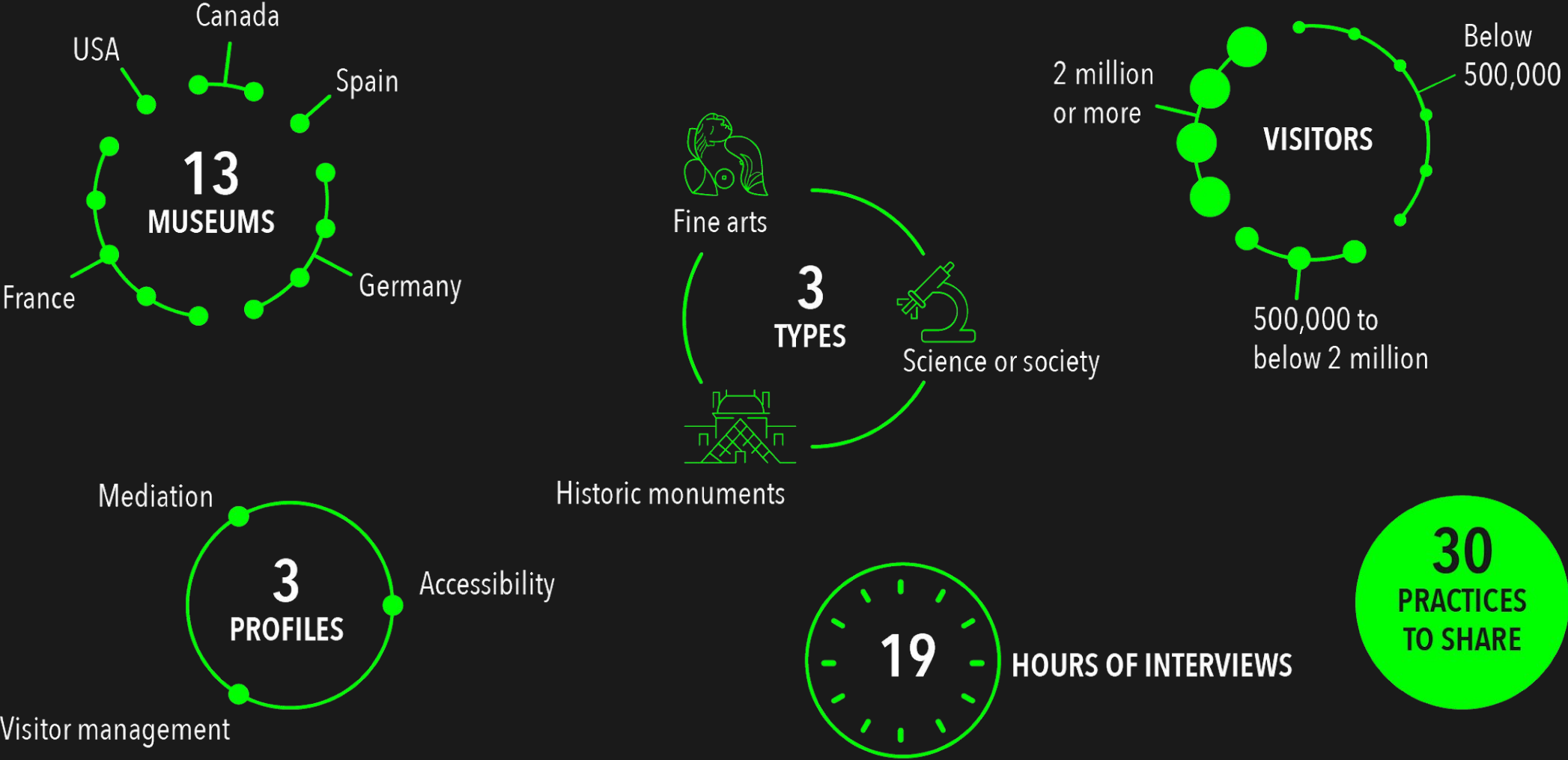
(Canada)
Musée national des Beaux Arts
du Québec
Musée de la Banque du Canada

(France)
Centre des monuments
nationaux
Cité des sciences et de l'industrie
Fondation Louis Vuitton
Mucem
La Villette

(Spain)
Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

(Germany)
Portal der Industriekultur - Zollverein
Klassik Stiftung Weimar
Anne Frank Zentrum
Deutsches Hygiene-Museum

Collection of information from 13 museums



Summary

Our report presents 30 easy-to-copy key practices and ideas classified into 4 categories:

Introduction (general findings)

01. Information and welcome

02. Protection and maintenance

03. Accessibility

04. Facilitating access

Introduction: general findings



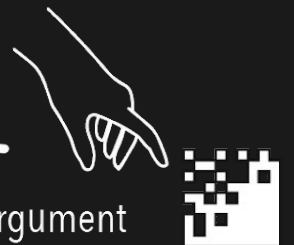
Crisis management teams, focused on hygiene and safety standards.



After the initial shock, many ideas arose on rethinking how to facilitate access.



The willingness of teams to increase cooperation, both internally and externally.



The need to make strong argument for maintaining sensory exploration.

01 Information / welcome

Practices and resources

General findings

- **Information on the welcome and hygiene facilities** available on the internet and on site, from entrance (sometimes even from the car park) to exit.
- **Reduced charges:** tickets at discounted prices and even free entry, to attract back the public.
- Timed entry tickets to **regulate flow of visitors** and to limit waiting time.

Ideas to consider

- Extension of opening hours to regulate flow of visitors, while maintaining maximum reception capacity (an initiative of the *Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya*)
- Think about the queue for entry as a time for help with the choice of exhibition and a chance to learn more about the subject (an initiative of the *Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec*)

Resources

International Council of Museums (ICOM):

recommendations on welcoming the public [link](#)

Museum professionals Covid-19 best practices:: [Facebook](#)

For American museums: American Alliance of Museums: [AAM](#)

Tactile Studio's recommendations

- Even if the date for reopening hasn't yet been fixed, reassure the public in advance by communicating widely the measures planned for that day.
- Make the most of this strategic moment to analyse the itinerary of the visit and rethink the site's signage.

Case study: Recommended protocol in Canada

Reopening in three phases, with a progressive re-introduction of all tactile elements after six weeks

Phase 1 (two weeks): opening without access to interactive elements

- Traditional visit experience: reading of labels and viewing of artefacts
- Limited guided tours. School groups cancelled. Signage adapted.
- Deep cleaning. Hand gels available.
- Staff training and FAQs.

Phase 2 (three to four weeks): re-integration of easily-cleaned touchscreens. Extension of hours.

Phase 3: tactile and interactive elements re-integrated.



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02

Protecting people /
station maintenance

Practices and resources

General findings

- **Attendance control:** restriction of open spaces or, in contrast, extension of open spaces to distribute as many visitors as possible.
- One-way access supported by ground marking and appropriate signage to **prevent visitors crossing each other.**
- **Hygiene measures:** plexiglass panel (reception, shop), cloakroom restricted to essentials, disinfectant system at entrance and strategic points (entrance to floors, tactile displays if still accessible), hand-sanitiser in exhibit rooms.
- **Instructions to visitors:**
Distance (2m USA and Canada; between 1m and 2m in Europe)
Mandatory wearing of face-mask
Occasionally single-use gloves
- **Staff training** in hygiene measures and control of visitor flow

Ideas to consider

- Since Covid-19, a weekly videoconference of an internal social and environmental responsibility group, mainly support for employees (an *initiative of the LVMH group, cited by Fondation Louis Vuitton*).
- Provision of individual styli to interact without touching screens by hand.

Resources

- ICOM: [recommendations on hygiene measures](#)
- Health and safety at work: toolkit from Government of Quebec, Canada: [trousse à outil \(gvt canadien\)](#)

Tactile Studio's recommendations

For the maintenance of stations:

1. Put on cotton gloves
2. Soak a cloth with soapy water and wipe it across the whole of the station.
3. Remove any moisture with a microfibre cloth

Case Study: Deutsches Hygiene Museum Dresden

Interactive stations that are easy to clean are accessible. Those which are not so easy to clean and disinfect remain closed for the time being.

Audio stations can be used with visitors' own headphones or with single-use headphones.

The Children's Museum "World of the Senses" remains closed for the moment.

The little extra: advice of a professor from Dresden Technical University concerning hygiene rules for hands-on and olfactory stations.

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© Deutsches Hygiene-Museum Dresden

03 Accessibility

Accessibility is the ability for people with disabilities to use your product or service. It's about making sure that everyone can interact with your product, regardless of their physical or mental abilities.

Accessibility is not just a nice-to-have; it's a legal requirement in many countries. It's also a business opportunity, as it allows you to reach a wider audience and improve your brand's reputation.

There are many ways to improve accessibility, from using clear and simple language to providing alternative formats for your content. It's important to consider accessibility from the start of your design process, rather than trying to retrofit it later.

Accessibility is a continuous process, not a one-time task. It's important to regularly test and evaluate your product to ensure it remains accessible as you make updates and improvements.

Practices and resources

General findings

- **Terms of access:**
- Access to the building and facilitated movement
- Covering or withdrawal of tactile devices (screens, stations) and audio-guides in the first phase of the reopening
- Provision of hand sanitiser as well as disposable gloves
- **Times reserved** for people with disabilities and provision with tactile equipment on occasion
- Guided tours in smaller groups or suspended completely
- Consultation with associations on conditions for the return of the public

Ideas to consider

- Imagine a personalised learning pack for guided tours (an initiative of the *Metropolitan Museum of Art*)
- Include a video in sign language on the website to draw attention to what's on offer in terms of accessibility (future initiative of the *Anne Frank Zentrum*)

Resources

- Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability (LEAD): [site](#)

Tactile Studio's recommendations

Tell everyone that a multisensory resource improves the museum experience for all visitors: "*A tactile station systematically generates conversation between visitors.*" (Source: Étude des publics au Pavillon de l'horloge du Louvre, MUXXE, November 2019)

Case study: La Villette

Opening of the Jardins Passagers to children with disabilities, adults with mental ill-health or who are autistic: one-hour slots bookable for three half-days per week.

Creation of an “artists’ plain”: exhibitions and working artists moved outdoors or into large rooms, where access is temporarily easier.

Use of space: the park is committed to facilitating movement between spaces with a circuit of garden visits, a cinematic walk, with soundbites recounting the history and development of La Villette.

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Photo credit: © Stephane Journoux

04 Facilitating access



Practices and resources

General findings

- **Use digital:** creation (or addition) of content online (funds available, virtual visits, facilitating access workshops online) to maintain contact with the public
- **Audioguides /group visits / screens and hands-on:** restricted or suspended
- **Individual facilitation offer:** an individual learning pack, delivered to home address
- **Framework of visit revised and extended:** use of the outside as a space for facilitating access and continuity of the visit from the website
- New focus: **attracting local population**, because of fewer overseas visitors

Ideas to consider

- Put in place a repeating programme to benefit the maximum number of people, even with reduced visiting hours (an initiative of the *Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec*)
- Collect objects from the public that symbolise the lockdown to them (an initiative of MUCEM: [link](#))

Tactile Studio's recommendations

- Find original ways to engage children through parents whose roles as ambassadors have grown.
- Combine digital and objects – don't forget the importance of on-the-spot experience.
- Build up a pool of digital content in advance, even with modest means.
- Interact regularly with the public through new communications channels (social media).

Case study: Klassik Stiftung Weimar

Each week we post digital offers, videos and home stories. There are also live broadcasts and other interesting information on Instagram or other social networks.

During the Easter holiday, Bauhaus representatives sent do-it-yourself kits to children in and around Weimar. Through video tutorials and digital meetings, the children can keep in touch with the Bauhaus Museum Weimar.

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Screenshots of a video tutorial on the [Youtube channel of the Bauhaus Museum](#)

Case study: Musée national des Beaux Arts du Québec

Propose outside activities, respecting physical distancing rules announced by the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (Quebec Institute of Public Health).

Host visits to the Jardin des Sculptures with families or friends living in the same household, without exceeding the three islets currently recommended.

The little extra: the idea of reserving specific timeslots (outside general public opening hours) for people who are frail.

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photo credit: © Stéphane Bourgeois

CONCLUSION

A strong belief: the museum as a place of life

Following this pandemic, it's become more obvious that museums are a place of life, necessary for the quality of social life.

Renewal of the visitor experience requires museums to take into account the following three elements.

CARE

- Take account of the concerns and customs of the contemporary public
- Give attention to all the personnel of the museum to guarantee the quality of the welcome and the visit (Covid notwithstanding)

EXTENSION

- "Visit before (and after) the visit" with content available online
- Exhibition space extended inside the museum and more outside spaces
- Exterior of the museum envisaged as an extension of the visit

PROXIMITY

- Link to be consolidated (or created) with the local public
- Increased co-operation within the museum's teams
- More regular exchange of practices between museums and within the cultural sector

Index of resources, by language

GERMAN

- Recommendations for opening
<https://www.museumbund.de/oeffnung-der-museen-handlungsempfehlungen/>,
https://www.museumbund.at/uploads/museumstag_archiv/BLP_Museum_COVID-Massnahmen_010620.pdf

ENGLISH

- Museum professionals Covid-19 best practice: Facebook
- American Alliance of Museum (AAM)
- Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability (LEAD): site
- Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO): *Survey on the impact of the COVID-19 situation on museums in Europe: Final Report*: Link
- Museums Association:
www.museumsassociation.org

FRANCAIS/ ANGLAIS

- Calendrier de réouverture des musées français : consult
- Santé et sécurité au travail : trousse à outil (gvt canadien)
- Health and safety at work: toolkit. Link
- International Council of Museums (ICOM): recommandations sur l'accueil du public

OTHER

- European map of museum reopening (source – NEMO): consult

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Next....

In a few days, we will share with you
the last part of the study:

Facilitating access

A study of:

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