

in 2007 with “Dancing Lasha Tumbai”, despite criticism from some politicians at home. Ukraine’s liberal record may be improving: the most recent Kiev Pride, in June 2016, passed largely without incident after violent clashes the year before, though this did involve 5,500 police marshalling the 1,500 LGBT marchers.

Another delicate matter is Russia. When Jamal won, Moscow’s political establishment accused Eurovision of being hijacked by politics, with some Russians calling for the 2017 contest to be boycotted. Kiev is talking tough too: the Ukrainian government has said that Russian singers who champion separatism in eastern Ukraine will be denied entry. Choosing one of these artists to represent Russia would be a “provocation”, culture minister Yevhen Nyschchuk has said.

Ukraine is well aware that all of Europe will be watching. With Kiev counting down the days, organisers point to the benefits, including an influx of fans (the city expects about 20,000 to attend). But hosting one of the most popular events in Europe in 2017 could boost confidence here too. “We understand that a competition of this size is a very responsible mission,” said the city’s mayor, heavyweight world boxing champion Vitali Klitschko. “[We’re displaying] the image not just of Kiev but of our state overall.” — ABC

9 How to move a museum

The plan to transport more than seven million precious objects across a busy city exhibits one or two logistical concerns.

Museums can feel like islands of permanence in the heart of cities in flux. But these institutions need to evolve to stay relevant and sometimes this involves moving a longstanding collection into a new home.

What’s involved in uprooting and transporting a collection of thousands of artefacts across a city? The Museum of London is about to find out. Opened in 1976, the institute boasts a dizzying variety of collections, from Bronze Age weapons to digitally preserved oral histories that together provide a unique record of the social history of London.

The museum’s current site doesn’t make it easy for visitors to access these treasures. Located behind



a roundabout at the rear of the Barbican arts and residential complex, there is no street-level access; instead the main entrance is reached via a warren of walkways, lifts and escalators. The museum’s director, Sharon Ament, admits that visitors to its current site have to be “purposeful”. This less-than-advantageous location is one of the reasons that the museum is moving to Smithfield Market in Farringdon, where more foot traffic and better transport connections should yield a boost in visitor numbers.

But while the new location is just 500 metres west of the current one, moving the museum’s 7.5 million objects poses a significant challenge. As with any museum move, Ament and her team need to make special arrangements to safely transport the collections.

First there’s the heavy lifting: the masonry collection, which includes stone from medieval monasteries, will need to be carefully moved via forklift trucks. Then there’s the far lighter but more fragile items, such as an extensive garment collection that ranges from 18th-century ball gowns to 1970s punk garb. “Every item is sensitive to light and moths,” says Finbarr Whooley, the museum’s director of content. “You have to decide whether to store and move each item by rolling, folding or laying it flat in a large box. For some particularly delicate hats we have to build a special mount to maintain their structural integrity in storage and while moving.”

There is also one collection, unique to the Museum of London, that poses an extraordinary challenge not faced by other moving institutes: the remains of more than 20,000 Londoners, which comprise one of the institute’s most physically and symbolically delicate collections. “There are strict ethical guidelines governing the treatment of human remains,” says Whooley.

“The bodies are those of human beings and the osteologists respect their individuality by referring to them as “this gentlemen” and “this lady””

Those guidelines call for some complex procedures courtesy of a team of dedicated osteologists, who afford each of the departed the same level of care whether they’re Iron Age or Victorian.

“Intact bodies will never be broken up and they are stored and moved separately from the rest of the museum’s collection,” says Whooley. “The bodies are those of human beings – some of them named persons from medieval graveyards – and the osteologists respect their individuality by referring to them as ‘this gentlemen’ and ‘this lady’.”

It’s a lot of work, which explains why the process takes years to plan and execute. But protecting, storing and moving all those artefacts is worth it in order to better serve those other bodies – the ones that visit the museum – in a fresh and lively space. — HRS

IO Acoustic city-planners Listen carefully: in Bonn, soundscapes are paving the way for harmonious architectural advancement.

Though it may be best known as Beethoven’s place of birth and Germany’s sleepy postwar capital, Bonn has since taken on a new identity as a leader in its use of sound art – and it hasn’t done so quietly.

A “city sound artist” has been appointed every year since 2010, funded by Bonn’s Beethoven Foundation. Artists have included musicians, visual artists and academics, each of whom have had experience putting on large public sound installations. They have then worked with city-planners to pick out and promote the city’s most interesting noises, as well as to create new ones.

From the soft echoes of the cathedral’s cloisters to the melodic calls of traders in the open-air market – and a spot on the bank of the Rhine where the sound of the river bounces off a steel statue – Bonn’s most remarkable “listening-marks”, rather than landmarks, are now highlighted on tourist maps.

Carsten Seiffarth, the director of Bonn Hoeren, which oversees the project, says that sound art has provided a timely boost for the city’s reputation and

self-confidence. “Beethoven is still Bonn’s most important attraction but sound art is becoming more and more important to the city, especially after losing its capital status.”

Bonn is not alone. Sound is increasingly making its way onto the agendas of city-planners as they realise that the auditory experience is part of what makes a city unique. Think about the clicking of heels along Paris’s Champs-Élysées, the tapping of flamenco dancing in Seville and the wailing call to prayer of Istanbul’s Blue Mosque. These are as much a part of a city’s appeal and heritage as its parks and monuments.

Cities around the world are incorporating sound into development strategies. Dublin’s city council appointed its urban acoustic planner in 2014 to create sound installations, such as a loudspeaker in Smithfield Plaza that collates sounds from the screens of a nearby cinema into a subtle sonic melody. The Croatian coastal city of Zadar has turned sound into a thriving tourist attraction: one of its most-visited sites is a “sea organ”, which creates deep melodies that rise and fall with the waves of the Adriatic Sea. These sound initiatives are not just coming from city officials but from their inhabitants, who contribute to digital listening maps online by sharing their favourite local sounds.

Yet there is a danger that many of the more pleasing sounds will be drowned out as the decibel level in cities rises with the growth in population, cars and flights overhead. As more tall buildings are built using materials such as glass, which reflects sound, the hum of traffic can be amplified into noise pollution. By drawing our attention to the more interesting sounds of markets, rivers, bells and music, sound artists hope that planners and developers will think more carefully about what effect a new building’s material and shape will have on the surrounding soundscape. Bonn’s city sound artists are working with architecture students to get this message across to the next generation of planners.

“Sound is another part of architecture – but a neglected one,” says Seiffarth. “Every city has its own sounds, it’s just about finding it first.” — MPI



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