**The Whole Earth Museum** – The Infinite Finite Catalog

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Knowledge and Culture are the engines of civilizations. Each generation is entitled to define is own way of translating them in collections of transferable messages. Prehistoric paintings, Baroque statues and Polaroid are different kind of legacies, giving more or less consciously their contribution as pieces of a collective memory.

Museums are nowadays tools to outsource our knowledge, and as such they are subjectively designed, purposefully including and excluding items and information. There were times where the destruction of knowledge was the core of the preservation strategy, providing the ideological support to political regimes.

But from time to time attempts to collect the whole knowledge in the most complete and objective possible way arose.

Those Encyclopaedic attempts continue in a cyclic manner even nowadays:

“When I was young, there was an amazing publication called The Whole Earth Catalog, which was one of the Bibles of my generation. It was created by a fellow named Stewart Brand not far from here in Menlo Park, and he brought it to life with his poetic touch. This was in the late 1960’s, before personal computers and desktop publishing, so it was all made with typewriters, scissors, and polaroid cameras. It was sort of like Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along: it was idealistic, and overflowing with neat tools and great notions.”

Steve Jobs (2005) Stanford University.

The Whole Earth Catalog was published for few years, but its impact on the Sixties counterculture and nascent global community was deep and provocative, fuelled by the ideal of generating a comprehensive worldview.

The proposal for The Whole Earth Museum moves in the same direction and brings this one generation-old publication to face with current and future issues of preservation. It deals with an encyclopaedic attempt, in continuity with a long tradition. But it expands the concept of preservation to species and places themselves: reality is now exhibited, instead of its representation. This totalizing worldview redefines our planet as a finite system, where the ordinary becomes extraordinarily valuable.

Placing objects inside neutral glass boxes and having all them in visual connection, enriches the value of every single object. If environments such as natural landscapes, urban peripheries and human artefacts are taken as exhibition objects under the same collection of showcases, the representation of the human History will not be again partial and specific. As cultural DNA, made of glass cases and filled with information and experiences, The Whole Earth Museum is a selection resulting in a comprehensive worldview, filtered only by our willingness to visit and discover.

The goal of freezing environments and situations will never be achieved, since evolution is on our way and time will constantly push the boundaries. The museum shall expand and include new server farms, real estate speculations in Dubai and the indigenous population newly discovered in Amazonia.

This Encyclopaedic Museum is an ambition rather than reality. Its very nature is to follow an evolution where humans are at the same time visitors-curators, and for a limited period of time, live exposition pieces.