

ALLAN SIEGEL

Europe's Market Halls: Pictures from an Exhibition

A glimpse of an exhibition in Budapest curated by Allan Siegel.

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Introduction

The market halls of Hungary, Finland, Italy, Spain, Poland, Germany and France are remarkable structures. Many have survived two world wars and prevailing changes in the urban landscape. Their role in the life of the city, while sometimes precarious, continues to be invaluable.

Traditional market halls and contemporary versions (in Barcelona, or Budapest) are important public spaces. They represent vital places of social and economic activity. They create vibrant neighbourhood focal points and provide retail sites for small vendors and local food producers. Furthermore, the viability of the market hall as civic institution and public space tells us something about the societies we live in and the rituals that mark our daily lives.

With its diverse character, the market hall can be more than simply an up-scale alternative to the supermarket. In addition to its generic, impersonal design, the supermarket embodies a form of *consumerism* that degrades the evaluation of product quality to comparisons between the price at one location versus another, comparisons that blur or ignore less visible economic and social costs.

MARKET HALLS (info@kekbicikli.hu) opened at the Ernst Múzeum in Budapest on 30 November 2005. The exhibition was formulated as an evolving curatorial project. Consisting of video, sound and object installations, it was designed to facilitate a wider discourse about the importance of market halls as public spaces, architectural sites and places of economic activity.

The exhibition featured the work of artists, architectural historians, sociologists and architects from Hungary, Finland, Italy, Croatia, Poland and the United States. It will tour in Finland and Italy. A book of essays and photographs accompanies the exhibition and is available from the Ernst Múzeum (info@ernstmuzeum.hu) for ten euros, shipping included.



Fig.1: Wrocław Hale, Poland



Fig.2: Mercado Saragossa, Spain



Fig.3: Marché St. Quentin, Paris



Fig.4: Hakaniemi Kauppahalli, Helsinki



Fig.5: Smithfield Market Hall, London



Fig.6: Dresden Markthalle



Fig.7: Gdansk Markthalle



Fig.8: Mercado el Born, Barcelona



Fig.9: Mercado Santa Caterina, Barcelona



Fig.10: Lehel Square vásárcsarnok, Budapest



Fig.11: Központi vásárcsarnok, Budapest (Central Market Hall)



Fig.12: Marché de la Chapelle, Paris



Fig.13: Berlin Markthalle VI, detail



Fig.14: Kauppahalli Oulu, fish vendors



Fig.15: Központi vásárcsarnok, Budapest



Fig.16: Mercato San Lorenzo, Florence



Fig.17: Központi vásárcsarnok, Budapest, vendors



Fig.18: Központi vásárcsarnok, Budapest, vendors



Fig.19: Központi vásárcsarnok, Budapest, vendor