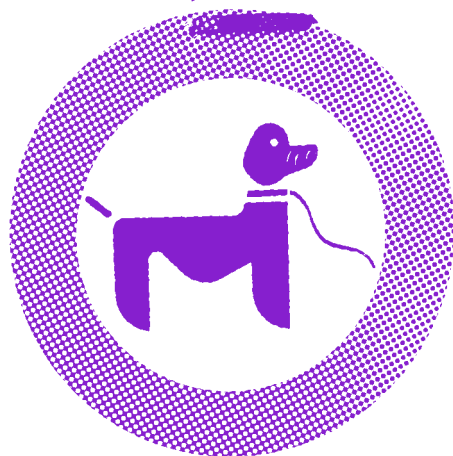


Exhibit permanently unavailable. Sorry for the inconvenience caused.



p l e a s e
do not touch



**IO NON
POSSO
ENTRARE**

Driving in the region of ██████████ in my rental hybrid convertible Mustang—of course red—I am surprised that for the first time zig-zagging across this once great people's republic—famed for its road trips, both lived and watched in movies—boredom sneakily invade my every cells. I should have perhaps given in to the young rental staff at the airport, eager to push their two newest products: a Tesla car customised as the flying DeLorean from *Back to the Future II* (Robert Zemeckis, 1989) and a much cheaper Toyota van painted as the Mystery Machine from *Scooby-Doo, Where Are You!* (Joe Ruby and Ken Spears, 1970) As I jokingly complained how, as a Western European, I felt the pop culture referenced here were too American, they beamed and showed me on screen the convertible Chitty Chitty Bang Bang car (*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, Ken Hughes and Roald Dahl, 1968); how about the winged Fantômas Citroen DS (*Fantômas*, André Hunebelle, 1964) which, they warned, would necessitate the whisker-awareness of cats for its width—there are wings on both sides—inconveniently occupied half lanes on either side of the stylish vehicle. As a bonus, they continued, a Fantômas mask was available free of charge. Unfortunately, I had not seen the respectively British and French movie and therefore declined all four (p)options for the classic red Mustang. In my jetlagged fog I could see their disappointment at my middle of the road compromise which they commented on in chinese, unaware I could understand them.



I am now bored senseless and this paradoxically astounds me. Am I not curious and open-minded enough to excavate excitement in the tiniest of dust-sized observations? Once more I overestimated my capacities and witness my heart sink. The cinematic light fails to ignite my imagination glands, wonderment factory, pleasure workers and I internally hear the sigh of abandon, a flatline. As flat as the landscape except for the mountain on the right which I swear has been there three hours despite my driving way over the speed limit.

Apart from the road, especially since all electrical and fibre cables have been buried, there are no signs of humans meddling with mother nature, just the spectacular flora, the rock formations that force respect and induce mild depression at how futile one is. You can laugh at cicadas for living a short life but the canyons here scream: "be humble". I have not encountered another car or seen any petrol/electric stations for enough time I should start to worry. Tundra Tundra and Tundra plus the inexplicably present mountain. No buildings or humans on the horizon to give any sense of scale. So much for people alarmed by anthropocentric behaviour. Let them come here to

ascertain nature doesn't just comply to humans and their needs. In the vastness of both the surrounding space and the limitless frightening scope of the mind, a nagging question forms: what am I doing here and within the realm of a humbling meditative state: is it worth it?

Aubrey S.,—chief editor (she will claim otherwise) of this series of publication,—has asked me to enquire about what she defined vaguely as *modes of communication* as modes of action. From my understanding, occurrences of people creating Temporary Specks of Autonomous Zones within our surrounding organisational systems (cultural, political, family etc.). A few weeks later, here I am, driving at 140km/h in the desert of my mind to meet and interview Ingalil Victoria and Prune Alferd, the co-founders of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Victoria and Alferd Museum (the auto spelling didn't quite allow me to type what the A.I. condescendingly believed — knew?—was a mistake).

A couple of years ago, I came across an exhibition leaflet which I initially thought was produced by the prestigious V&A in London presenting the key to a church altar and its numerous sculpted characters. On closer inspection, the names were not of saints but of the characters from David Simon's TV series *The Wire*. I was intrigued but not enough to keep the printed matter. As weeks passed, the leaflet came back nagging me, tapping on my shoulders, wink wink nudge nudge, did you forget something etc. I needed to know. My internet excavations failed to gather further information. I contacted the Victoria & Albert Museum in London where no curators who agreed to answer my emails were able to help me until someone in the communication department forwarded my message to an intern. I was told by David P., interning at the V&A, that I had misread the leaflet and the Museum having produced it was not the V&A but some "Victoria & Alferd Museum". He couldn't tell me much more, which I wasn't quite sure meant he didn't know or he didn't want to tell me. This deadend had a small door but it was locked.

I had almost forgotten all about it when cycling past a house in London I caught sight of a plaque for this very Museum! Being awfully late for an appointment I stored the information for future investigations. The week after, I retraced my steps but I couldn't find the plaque despite being very familiar with this neighbourhood. To be accurate I did find the house but the plaque had gone missing. There were four plugged holes in the wall, confirming the possibility something had been there and removed. I rang the bell but nobody came to the door. The windows



were curtained, a spiderweb reached across the lock. Opposite, a café with a terrace and a few chairs offered an observation point and I ordered a coffee to wait for the owner or tenant of the museum. After a couple of hours a skinny old man with a Lidl plastic bag approached me and said: “This black house started a trend around here and many buildings are now black too. It is a *tragedy*. The world is in the darkness and we should fight it.” I looked around and behind me as I wasn’t quite sure he was addressing me. As the sole customer, I politely asked: “Do you know anything about this Museum?”. “It’s gone”. he answered and walked off.

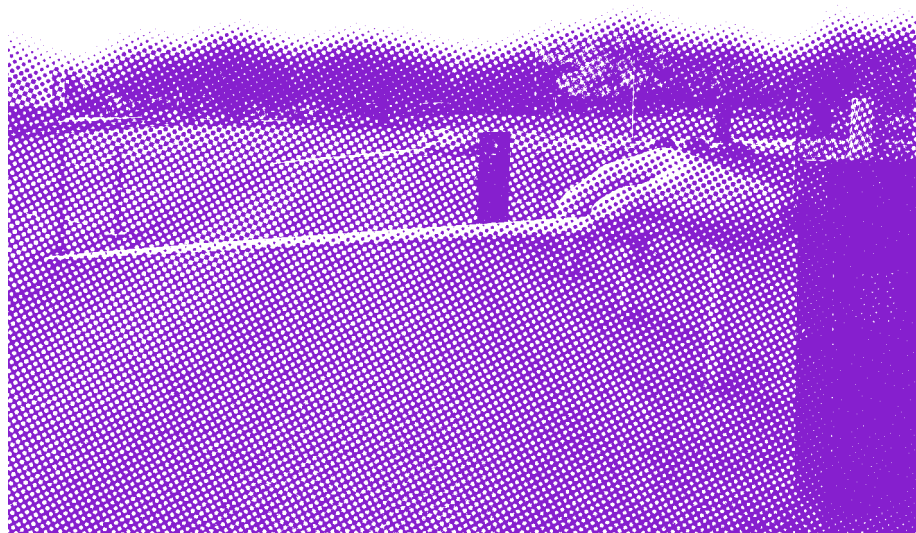
The café was now serving some expensive red wine accompanied by cured meat and pickled cabbage. I dropped my glass of wine when the old man reappeared as if by magic, suddenly touched my shoulder and, after an intense silent minute said: “If you keep it secret, I’ll tell you how to get in”.

An ellipsis later I am driving my mustang in a deserted area, following instructions that a stranger carrying a plastic bag gave me in London, more than 1000km from here. The heat creates a blur on the horizon and exhaustion brings nausea. Am I tired? Am I only half conscious driving an automatic car on cruise mode? I cannot quite recall the last two hours but I just hope it is because of the repetition or lack of events rather than having slept while driving. The itch in my right eye signals a new form, which I first discard as a hallucination. The shape however grows and so does my hope to finally visit the museum. It takes another 45 minutes to distinguish the building’s shape but nothing around it indicates its size. However I recognise the architecture as a copy of the Vasa Museum in Stockholm, a hilarious celebration of vanity. The Vasa was a boat so excessive in its size, ambition, decoration that it sank almost immediately after its pompous launch in 1628, having sailed less than 2km. It was however pulled out of the water in the middle of the XXth Century, restaured and enclosed in a Museum which vaguely espoused its overall forms, the masts visible from afar. The architectural capsule would in turn become an artefact of the times we enjoyed perusing old objects of many sizes from the past and various geographical locations, heterotopias within which patina will join the display into becoming



museum “stuff” too. I recall a greek friend being more fascinated by the temporary tent structure that protected a greek temple than the temple itself. In time, she had enthusiastically said, humans will shrink the time difference between the two structures.

Despite having visited the Vasa Museum fairly recently, to see it within a desert is striking, until the shock of incomprehension as to its size, a behemoth perhaps five or six times taller than the original. In this landscape, it is difficult to gauge its bulk. Replicas of the Eiffel tower, either in Las Vegas or in Tianducheng, came to mind, overall looking close enough to the original but clearly something else. Those were smaller than the originals, possibly for cost reasons but the Vasa I was staring at was way bigger, suggesting that if there was a boat inside, as the masts suggested, it would be of gigantic proportions and grotesque. The road slowly turned, its design purposefully turning around the building in a spiral instead of a straight and shorter route.



Finally, the entrance to the parking lot appeared. I pulled a ticket from the machine and sesame opened to the sound of an opera in Estonian.

The parking area is huge, my mustang is the only vehicle apart from a silver Toyota Prius. Do they really have this many visitors or is this the result of an over enthusiastic board meeting? Besides, the tarmac seems to have been laid perfectly on whatever the surface was, creating a dazzling effect of white and yellow lines which, seen from an airplane must be straight but from where I drive induces a mild nausea and very little stability for the car. French architects (R&Sie(n) did something of this effect in Japan or at least visually similar. Some cars there were parked on three wheels. On the back of the ticket I got at the entrance, I am informed that the parking's inner zone is the size of the asteroid that killed the dinosaurs and the outer zone the size of a meteorite that would wipe the surface of the earth of all living creatures predicted to hit us within 150 years, although the probabilities are 20%. According to what sources it doesn't say.

The heat blasts through me. My back immediately covered in sweat, my lungs filled with nearly 100% humid air. How can this be so far from any ocean, arid and be so moist? The air conditioning fooled me for a while. I stand in front of the tiny door of the ginormous black building and hope they have artificial air in there although the thought of the bill to create human conditions for such a volume is certainly criminal. I smile at the tiny A4-sized plaque: "Victoria and Alferd Museum, open daily" and open the door.

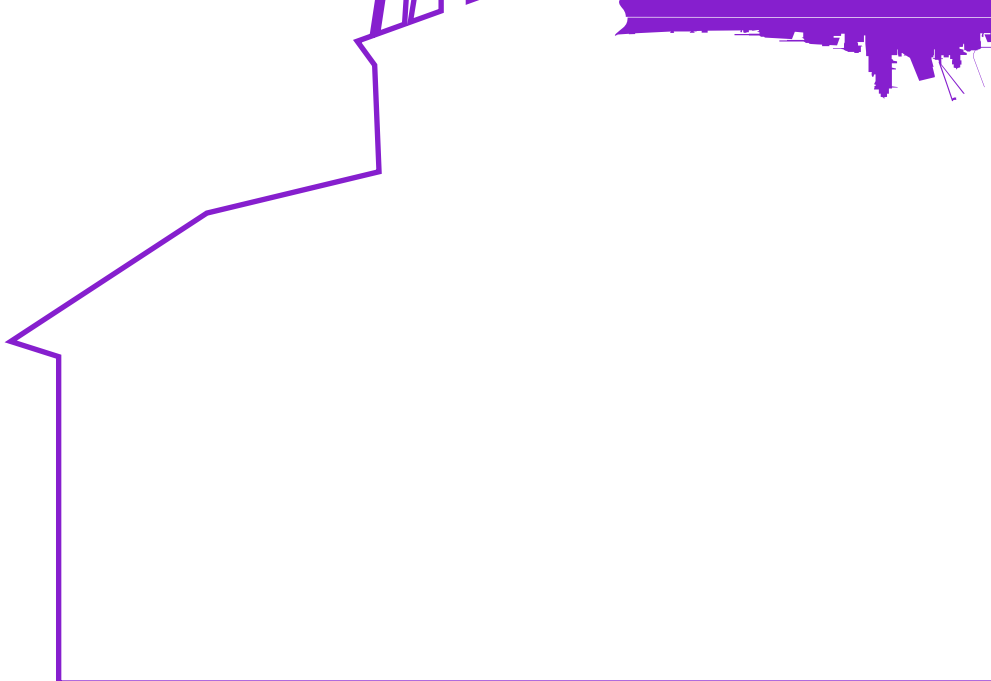
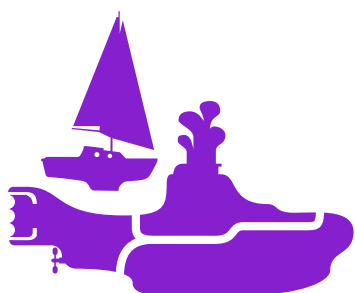


VICTORIA & SALISBURY MUSEUM

VICTORIA &

Leaflet

33



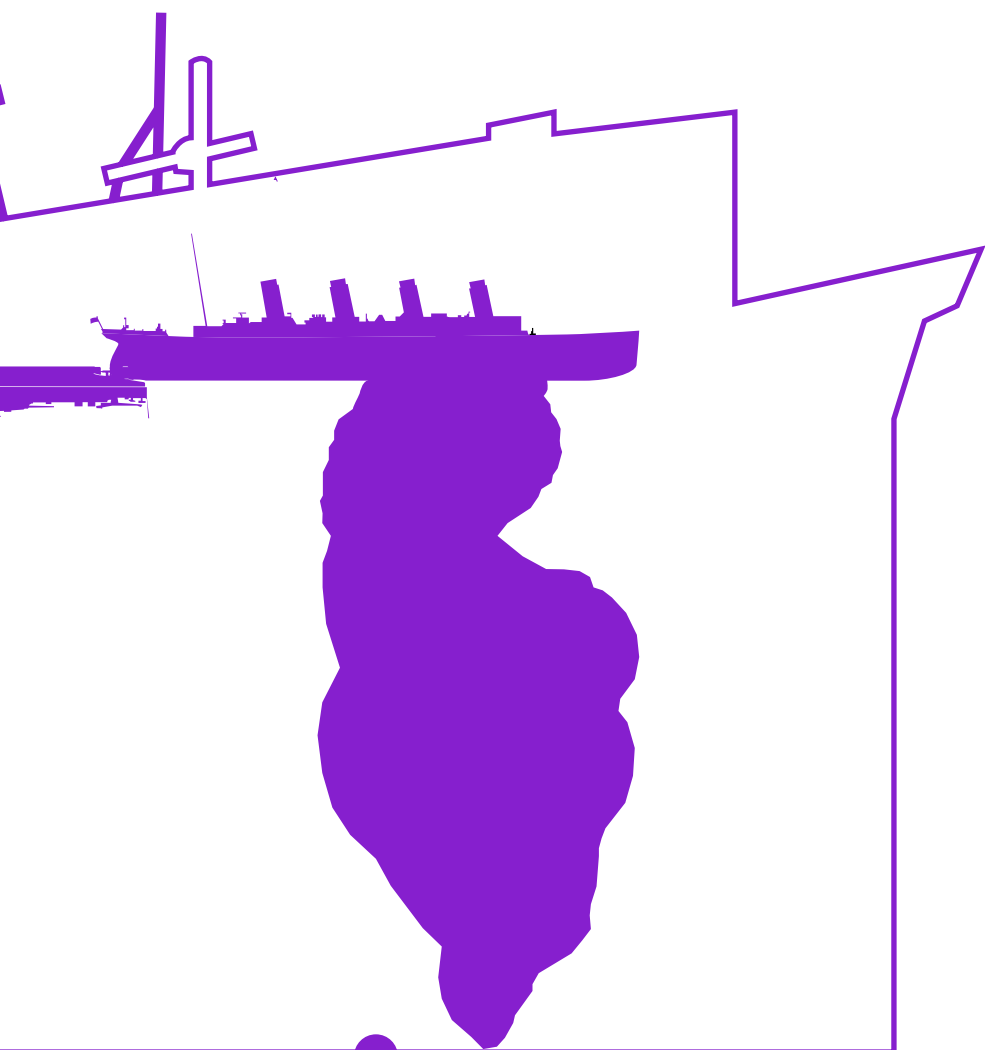
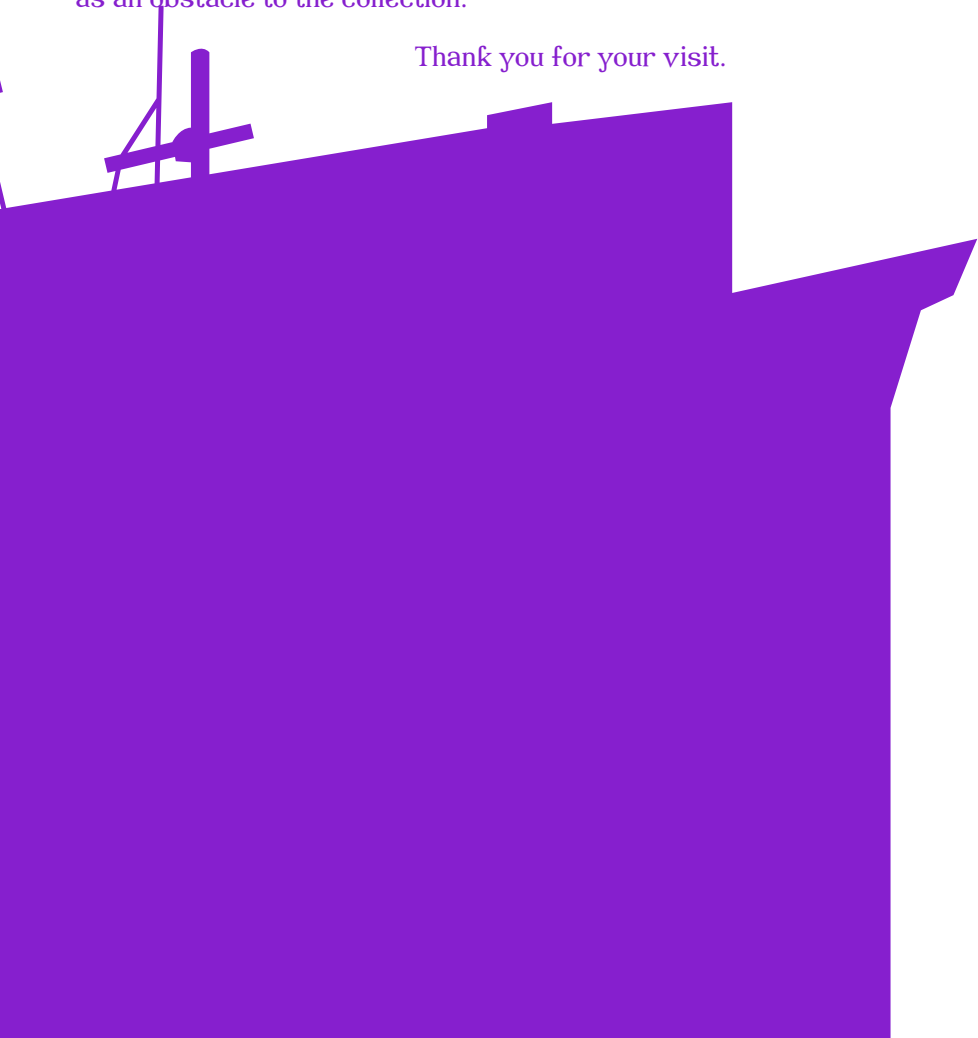
Dear visitor,

We are proud to present the new acquisitions to our collection. The Victoria and Alferd museum is a not-for-profit institution founded by Prune Victoria and Ingali Alferd. The collection is based on personal curiosity,

an interest for mistakes and tautological anomalies.

The Victoria ^{and} Alferd Museum does not own any of the items but wish to share the availability of the associated stories. We do not see time, space, ownership or fiction as an obstacle to the collection.

Thank you for your visit.



you are here

Now I am aware of how superficial this may sound but it is freezing in here. Never content, never happy, always the weather too hot or too cold etc.

It is actually freezing temperature. My breath forms a fog that I could swear crystallises and falls as snow on the mirrored floor.

A woman appears from my right and offers a fur coat. "Mammoth fur", she says before I can think PETA. I put it on as I shrink everywhere including my brain.

"Why is it so cold in here?" I ask. She points towards the centre of the warehouse museum and I see an iceberg. Not just the so-called 10% at the top but the whole of it, suspended or rather its top and bottom tips touching the floor and ceiling of this building. Before the wonder, I am guilty as charge the first thoughts are logistics and cost, second are how the iceberg was made. The astronomical cost of keeping an iceberg in a warehouse in the desert are nearly criminal but how did it even come here? Was it born and bred in situ or was it transported from its native arctic waters? If made here, how was it shaped into a vaguely familiar form? Is there a mold somewhere hidden in the non-public area of the museum?

The woman asks for my mobile phone as well as my notebook. "We don't mind you recording, this is rather to create an optimal visit in the present". During the visit, I will reach my pockets more than a hundred times to take a picture but recalling I was only able to use my eyes and memory.

A leaflet dispenser stands alone on what seems to be an endless floor as the light design confuses the mind as to where the walls are. I pick one up. The format is of an A3 folded lengthwise, 16 pages, one colour, guess which one?

In the first sentences, I spot typos, the style is narrative, over confident, possibly too friendly and many more idiosyncracies hit my analytical reading to dissociate the voice from an institutional stand point. Don't they ever proofread?

A disclaimer is on page 5:

After a visit to a Museum in south London, I overheard two visitors talk to each other. The man was telling his partner: "Well, it's not as good as the Victoria and Alfred Museum, is it?" to which she responded: "certainly not quite, dear". I chuckled at the mistake as it seemed obvious they meant the Victoria & Albert Museum. The same night, I woke up suddenly to realise they might actually have been talking about a Museum I didn't know, named Victoria & Alfred Museum. Since then and then, I decided our institution would not proofread or correct what we only assumed were mistakes, to the wrath of some of our staff. We hope you'll forgive and quite frankly, I'm pretty sure you get the idea even peppered with typos here and there.

This was signed "The Direction".

I continued reading and stopped at the description of The Titanic. Looking up and as my eyes were getting used to darkness, a whole boat appeared, suspended on top of the iceberg. "The exhibit shows an actual size Titanic at the very moment of impact with the infamous iceberg which we took the liberty to name Kanye. Please take the lift shooting up through the glass clear behemoth to visit the transatlantic liner.

Once there, locate the restaurants serving the last meal the doomed passengers from first class ate:

Oysters, consommé Olga, cream of barley
Salmon, mousseline sauce, cucumber
Filet mignon Lili
Sauté of chicken, Lyonnaise
Vegetable marrow farçie
Lamb, mint sauce
Roast duckling, applesauce
Anchovies linguini peppered with Black Diamonds
Sirloin of beef, chateau potatoes
Green peas, creamed carrots, boiled rice,
Parmentier or boiled new potatoes
Punch romaine
Roast squab and cress
Cold asparagus vinaigrette
Paté de foie gras
Celery
Waldorf pudding
Peaches in chartreuse jelly
Chocolate vanilla eclairs
French ice cream

Our chef included one Patti Smith's favourite dish to the menu, let's see if you can spot it!

Once satiated, feel free to wander the corridors, no doors are locked and we have avoided cameras and invigilators entirely, trusting you 100%. Bed linen are fresh if you need to take a nap.

Inside the Titanic, other famed sea vehicles are exhibited such as The Beatles' Yellow Submarine which our display and mount designers have cheekily decided to paint green or Bas Jan Ader's Ocean Wave and Florence Arthaud's Charles Jourdan. Once you reach the end of the Titanic, jump aboard the upside down warship Yamato.

For those who long for captions, you'll quickly notice that apart from this very leaflet you won't hear our voices anywhere. The building is also keeping away your connections to internet. I'm afraid you're on your own — but what company that is!

Ok Sasasises* and enjoy!

* Ok Sasasises is a colloquial expression meaning the discovery of what is there despite doubts that this was meant for someone else's eyes. It encourages to stay put as a hidden door might appear and reveal another world of possibilities in the transformative path of a mistake turning into an intention. The expression is rarely used and rather obsolete, a hint at the author's age and generation.

I push the button and wait for the lift. It arrives in a flash, the doors hissing perfectly. I step in and admire the glass walls as well as the transparent ceiling and floor. Inspecting where the walls meet, I cannot see a trace of glue or any other binding material. Given the rest of the design, I imagine this could be a single piece of glass.

I reach for a single button in the shape of the Titanic.

The glass box ascends slowly and for a couple of minutes I discover the inner life of an iceberg, not the perfect bloc of frozen pure water but a whole geological ecosystem as if time had stopped.

The lift stops smoothly and just before it opens, I hear conversations in early 20th century English.

#6

Victoria and Alferd
Museum