Letter to the Editor 16 February, 2022
Museum and Society

Dear Jen,

I would like to thank you once again for your kind patience and apologise for the length of the revision process.

I am extremely grateful for the time that you and the reviewers devoted to the original manuscript and for all the suggestions and comments that I received. These comments mostly focused on the analysis section, which was deemed overly descriptive, and the suggestion was to relate it more strongly to the methodology. Another major suggestion was to add a short literature review and a discussion of the critical evaluation of the pavilion. I think these were much valid and useful points, which I tried my best to implement. As a result, I believe the revised manuscript is more readable and its main arguments sharper. Specifically, I did the following main changes:

1. The analytical section of the paper is now less descriptive and integrates the methodology more effectively. I deleted the original section called *General description of the pavilion* and incorporated its concise version into the section *Ideational metafunction.* The analysis in the sections *Ideational metafunction, Values and figurative language, Textual metafunction,* and *Discussion* was reworked to bring out the theme of *connections*, which I argue is fundamental to the understanding the main narrative of the exhibition, since connections (historical, cultural, geographical, and human) are the key instrument through which *diversity* (on many levels) could be bound into *unity*.
2. The *Discussion* section now includes comments on the difference between the reception of the pavilion by international art critics (based on their reviews) and my analysis of the meaning of the pavilion. The fact that the critics missed some of the meanings communicated by the exhibition highlights the usefulness of applying the kind of analysis I am suggesting for a more comprehensive understanding of meaning-making in exhibitions.
3. A short literature review of studies on national pavilions at the Venice Biennale was added, discussing the relationship between the festival and the issues of soft power and national imagery.
4. The long descriptive section on the history of Iraq which was formerly in the beginning of the paper was cut and its much concise version is integrated within the discussion to make a case for the importance of historical contextual knowledge in the analysis of the exhibition.

I hope you find these revisions satisfactory improvement on the original manuscript.

Best wishes,

Anastasia