

SWEDEN

Celebrating failure

AN AGGREGATION BY ISABELLE RODRIGUEZ

One could first believe it is some sort of a prank, but it is not the case and the project is more serious than it seems. The Museum of Failure opened in June 2017 in Sweden, in Helsingborg, in the dynamic region of Sund. It is so successful that a second site opened in Los Angeles to present objects from this unusual collection. First housed in the walls of the very serious Museum of Art and Design, the collection now has a dedicated space in the gigantic complex Hollywood and Highland Center. In the country of success stories, the American Museum of Failure attracted thousands of visitors, just like the traveling exhibition around the world.

The objects exhibited, most of which were initially intended for mass consumption and that we have all been able to see in the supermarkets aisles, share the fact that they were all major commercial failures, really fiascos for the companies. From the electrical anti-wrinkle mask to the dolls dressed in rags, and all sorts of not appetizing food products or the BIC pen for women, we will sometimes be relieved that the products did not find their public.

Among the brands presented, we find the giants of international markets: Google, Colgate, Coca-Cola. Does it mean that we can sometimes be a leader in our field and yet sometimes be completely mistaken? «Of course», answers the founder and director of the Museum of Failure, Samuel West, PhD in Organization Psychology and a specialist in business innovation. He alleges that our relationship with failure, in a company obsessed with success, is counter productive, and that it is maybe thanks to a separate company culture that does not sanction the misses, that Sweden is still at the top of international rankings on innovation.

This said, one should also see in this Show of the Discarded, the cynicism of big companies that here used the notion of failure like a source of appreciation intended to prove by self-depreciation the human characteristic of their researches: without the forgotten Apple Newton in 93, no iPhones and no iPads! We are not fooled by this inverted ideology of doubt...