

ICFA / COMCOL ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016

CALL FOR PAPERS

Art, collecting and the sense of place: an integral and integrated approach towards arts, other heritages and collecting

On occasion of the **24th General Conference of ICOM** its international committee on fine arts (ICFA) and collecting (COMCOL) will have a joint meeting. The theme of this meeting is related to the theme of the General Conference. Within the context of "Museums and cultural landscapes" the two committees will focus on the issue of collecting fine arts and other heritage beyond the museum walls.

ICFA is the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Fine Arts which aims to discuss problems and exchange opinions between professionals who work in museums and art galleries that collect old master and nineteenth century oil paintings and sculptures. **COMCOL** is the International Committee for Collecting of the International Council of Museums which aims to deepen discussions, and share knowledge on the practice, theory and ethics of collecting and collections development.

Museums are part of a cultural information landscape. There is an increased tendency to create networks of museums and other art and heritage initiatives; the distinction between institutional and private initiatives is blurring as well as the distinction between in situ and ex situ. These tendencies ask for an integrated and integral perspective on art, other heritage and on the concept of collecting. In the context of the general theme of 2016, ICFA and COMCOL would in particular like to explore this perspective in relation to specific dilemmas provided by the relation between works of art and their "natural habitat", such as sculptures in public spaces and paintings in historic houses.

As specific aspects of this main theme we would like to address following topics:

How to organize shared responsibility?

One of the key concepts of present day more integrated developments is the notion of shared responsibility: a shared responsibility of museum staff, a shared responsibility of organizations and interest groups in networks of heritage communities, and a shared responsibility of museums and their source communities, constituent communities, actually all communities of practice. Can (should?) museums have a responsibility in the preservation of art in public spaces? To what extend can (should?) these works of art be part of the museum collection?

How can (should?) museums organize a respectful and productive collaboration with all stakeholders involved?

The meaning of heritage in the public space, how to collect?

Art in public space, such as statues on squares and in public parks, accumulates social significance that usually is not related to its art historical significance. The same can be said about buildings and “even” trees. The objects contribute to the “sense of place”, but at the same time this “sense of place” becomes part of the identity of the object. More than an object in a museum environment, heritage in the public space is integrated in people’s daily life and often become projections of their dreams, fear, hopes and anger. This could even result into physical interferences. How can (should?) museums deal with this, and how can (should?) stakeholder communities be involved? In case of art, is it a task of fine art museums to document this, for example by collecting relevant documents? If not, whose responsibility should this be? How can (should?) the perspective of stakeholder communities be respected?

Historic houses and their fine art

Historic houses mostly have a large fine art collection, but also other, more cultural historical objects. These historic houses are always based in and in dialogue with the surrounding cultural landscape and its stakeholder community. How can (should?) the relationship between the collection of a historic house and its contextual surrounding be enhanced? Can (should?) fine art museums adopt responsibility for only the fine art, or also for the other objects? Can (should?) we make a clear distinction between the art historical, cultural historical and the socio-historical, contextual value of fine art in historic houses? Can the historic house itself with all its objects in it be perceived as one collection, or maybe even as an archive? Can (should?) part of the collection in historic houses be replaced in situ, by copies or works of “lesser” artistic and cultural historical value, in order to enhance the ex situ collection (profile) of a fine art museum?

The memory of (fine arts) museums in their cities

Museums represent a “sense of place” themselves. The institutions with their collections and their buildings are markers in the identity of the place (square, neighbourhood, city), usually embodying the history of the place. As such the place gives identity to the museum institution. But who are the people involved? Is it possible to identify stakeholder communities and what role do they play in shaping this memory?

For the topics as outlined above we invite papers that explore the issues from the perspective of theory, practice and/or ethics. Presentations are limited to 20 minutes. We are particularly keen to encourage submissions that cut across and between disciplinary vocabularies to provide new synergies, domains and inter-disciplinary possibilities. We warmly welcome proposals which go beyond traditional paper presentations and encompass also panels and workshops.

It should be noted that although the main institutional focus will be on fine art museums, the experiences of other heritage institutions will also be regarded. Similarly we are interested in the whole scope of collecting and documentation (tangible - intangible, movable - immovable).

Submitting abstracts

Submissions (between 250 and 300 words) should be sent to leontine@menschmuseology.com and giuliana.ericani@gmail.com by **January 20 th, 2016**. Approval of proposals will be announced by 26 January, **2016**.

The ICOM members whose papers will be accepted will be invited to the Conference and the early bird registration fees will be payed

The following information should be included with the abstract:

- Title of submitted proposal. Please indicate if it is a paper, workshop or panel contribution.
- Name(s) of Author(s)
- Affiliation(s), e-mail address(es) & full address(es)
- Abstract in English (between 250 and 300 words)
- Technical requirements for the presentations.
- Formal acceptance to join the entire Conference