Contemporary Collections: Contested and Powerful

CALL FOR PAPERS

In 2018 the Federation of International Human Rights Museums (FIHRM) and the International ICOM Committee for Collecting (COMCOL) will come together for a joint conference hosted by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) and the City of Human Rights Education (TheCoHRE) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Building, conserving, stewarding, and exhibiting a collection has forever held enormous power towards the education of current and future generations. In the current climate of contested realities, where objects are questioned, the multiplicity of perspectives is extremely diverse and contradictory, where news and information is subject to personalization, and media literacy is ever more important, the role of contemporary collecting is under great scrutiny.

Equally, museum collection efforts have never held more potential to promote human rights, equality, provoke empathy, and facilitate meaningful dialogue. International Museums Day 2017 proposes that museums are considered “an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures, and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among people.” This asserted role sees museums leveraging their soft power to effect social, political, and environmental change.

How can contemporary collecting and museum collections promote human rights for all? How is difficult material collected? Under what context? How are these contemporary collections exhibited so as to encourage reflection, dialogue, and understanding?

The 2018 conference will endeavor to explore the increasingly dynamic role that museum collections can play in not only preserving the present and the past for future generations, but in leveraging their soft power to promote democracy, human rights, and effect global change.

During this year’s conference, we will consider the following themes:

- Democracy of collecting and collections
- Documenting activism
- Museums in dialogue with the social and political contemporary scene
- Material and immaterial factors
- Changing significance of heritage in changing societies
- Linking past and present in collections and collecting
- Re-interpretation of collections and the issues that come with it
Through the agenda of the conference, we will collectively contemplate:

- How museums challenge traditional thinking of collecting and collections in order to tell difficult and contested stories.
- How museums use conflicting emotions around shared heritage.
- How museums encourage dialogue with different communities using their collections.
- How collections and collecting methods actively promote Human Rights and/or address Human Rights issues.

Would you like to present at the joint 2018 conference? Please submit your session to the organizing committee using the form: [https://fihrm.ca/submit/](https://fihrm.ca/submit/)

In order to be considered for the program, all submissions must be received by 12:00am CDT May 15, 2018

**The following paper formats can be submitted:**

**Paper Presentation**
This format reflects a single subject presentation. It is typically presented by one person but can accommodate presenters (max 2) who have co-authored a paper. The entire duration of the session is devoted to the delivery of the paper’s subject. Presenters are encouraged to present the topics of their papers, yet to do so taking advantage of the format of a presentation and not read their papers to the audience. This session type is applied to in-depth exploration subjects and can range from theoretical to use cases.

**Panel**
This format reflects shorter presentations and facilitated discussion of like subjects. Panels must have a moderator and be composed of between 3 and 4 panelists. The moderator can be one of the panelists. It is expected that a panel will be composed of an overarching theme with individual cases that compliment one another and execute the theme of the panel. The moderator should ensure the panel moves along to schedule and offers opportunity for each panelist to both deliver their position and respond to one another. This session type provides a high-level exploration of subjects, typically including real examples from various institutions/organizations.

**Lightning Talk and Demo**
This is a special session that will take place at a specific session placement in the program. The Lightning Talk and Demo requires 5 presentations where each presenter has 5 minutes to deliver their concept. After the 5 speakers have delivered their talk, they will move to round tables within the session space and delegates will spend the rest of the session moving from table to table at their leisure interacting in unscripted dialogue with the table presenters. This session type provides a high level of interactivity between presenter and audience and often includes field-tested, living use cases and examples.