

EXHIBITIONS WITHOUT BORDERS

**The Role of Cultural Diplomacy, Media & Technology, and Audience Engagement
In Creating More Powerful, Diverse and Inclusive Exhibitions**

**Oct 16 – 22, 2017
Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico
San Juan – Puerto Rico**

GENERAL SCHEDULE

- Pre - Conference Workshop Monday, Oct 16
- Conference Sessions Tuesday, Oct 17 to Thursday, Oct 19
- Post - Conference Trip to Cuba¹ Friday, Oct 20 to Sunday, Oct 22

INTRODUCTION

The 2017 ICEE Conference will be held Oct 16 – 22, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, hosted by the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico (MAPR). The event includes a pre-conference workshop, keynote presentations, sessions, panels, discussions, the ever-popular Marketplace of exhibitions, behind the scenes tours of Puerto Rican museums and cultural heritage sites, as well as special networking opportunities. The ICEE and the MAPR are working on a 3 days post-conference trip to Cuba to offer conference attendees the possibility of visiting museums, collections, and the cultural landscape of this Caribbean Island. The Post-conference trip will be confirmed in Jan, 2017.

The conference aims to encourage discussion, innovative thinking, and new models of collaboration in order to broaden the scope of international exhibition exchange, making it accessible to museums of all sizes and disciplines around the world.

¹ To be confirmed in Jan 2017.

2017 ICEE Conference

CONFERENCE THEME

Through the conference, ***Exhibitions Without Borders***, we will invite conference participants to think about their work in exhibitions through the eyes of diversity and inclusion, exploring the ways museums can leverage cultural diplomacy, media & technology, and new trends in audience engagement to create more powerful, diverse and inclusive exhibitions. The conference theme will allow museum and exhibition exchange professionals to explore new ideas around the intersection of Cultural Diplomacy, Media & Technology, and Audience Engagement as sub-themes.

SUB-THEME 1: CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Description:

The U.S. Department of State defines cultural diplomacy as, “the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding.” Based on this definition, cultural diplomacy focuses on the promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage of one country with another nation as a way to foster mutual understanding and cultural exchange. Today, museums around the world are active participants in international relations and cultural diplomacy trying to build bridges across cultures and nations. Cultural diplomacy allows museums to create dialogues between nations through exhibitions, educational activities, learning programs, and other initiatives.

Developing, producing, and circulating international traveling exhibitions requires a deep understanding of international relations and diplomacy. As a result, museums are required to become more globally connected and involved in politics and international relations than ever before.

Research Questions:

1. To what extent do museums facilitate diplomatic dialogue with foreign nations? Can traveling exhibitions and museums play a significant role in fostering tolerance, promoting mutual understanding and dialogue between nations in conflict?
2. Major art museums promote cultural diplomacy through exhibitions, educational and learning experiences. How can museums of all sizes and disciplines act as neutral spaces for mediation between communities and nations in conflict?
3. Is cultural diplomacy a *soft power*? How can small and medium-sized museums get involved in cultural diplomacy as a way to develop more inclusive and diverse exhibitions?

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SUB-THEME 2: MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY

Description:

Today, museums and cultural institutions are looking into new developments in media & technology as a way to provide global access to their collections and exhibitions. From online galleries and virtual tours to mobile technology and smartphone apps, museums and exhibition producers are making exhibition content (texts, images, audios, videos) available to new and diverse audiences. At the same time, the interdisciplinary dialogue between art, science and technology creates multiple opportunities for museums to enhance visitor's experiences through innovative and creative ways, resulting in more powerful and effective exhibitions.

Research Questions:

1. What are the best media and technology practices in the exhibition field as tools to reach global audiences and enhance visitor's experiences inside the museum?
2. Technology is found more and more inside and outside exhibition spaces as an effective way to provide easy access to exhibition content. From beacons, digital/ interactive labels, and enhanced touch screen devices to augmented and virtual reality, museums are also trying to engage younger visitors and millennials. Are media and technology an efficient and inclusive way to reach different audiences?
3. Financial limitations affect museums all over the world. How can museums with limited resources take full advantage of new development in media and technology to strengthen their audience engagement efforts?
4. Online visits and digital experiences cannot replace nor substitute the physical experience and interaction between visitors and the exhibition. However, technology provides global access to collections and exhibitions to audiences around the world, including those who are not able to visit the museums due to distance, specific limitations, or disabilities. How can media and technology support diversity and inclusion goals in exhibition making?

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SUB-THEME 3: AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Description:

More and more, museums of all sizes are re-orienting their organizational structures, processes, services and products to reflect an increasing awareness for the needs and experiences of their audiences. This audience-centered approach has created opportunities for museums to reach out to new audiences and to engage more deeply with their current stakeholders. As the core product of museums, exhibitions are at the very heart of this shift. Principles of collaboration, consultation and audience participation have become woven into the exhibition development process, with the goal of creating powerful, inclusive exhibitions that provide more meaningful experiences for museum visitors.

Research Questions:

1. Engagement is facilitated in an exhibition when institutions seek to understand and build relationships with their diverse audiences. How has this changed the way institutions conceive of and develop exhibitions?
2. In the context of travelling exhibitions, where audiences are constantly changing, can meaningful audience engagement in an exhibition truly be achieved?
3. Museums and cultural institutions often engage with their communities and diverse audiences through public programming, events, and educational initiatives that provide opportunities for dialogue and deeper participation. Can true engagement be woven into the exhibition medium? How can museums blend their offerings to create more inclusive, inspiring and exciting experiences for their visitors?