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## FROM THE EDITOR

ICME is not dead, just asleep

Dear friends,  
During the 1983 Triennial Conference of ICOM in London, about 40 ICME members met to discuss our common problems, elect a new Board and draw up plans for the 1983-1986 period.

We were again painfully aware of the handicaps which are inherent in international committees such as ours. ICME members living as far apart as the Solomon Islands, Brazil, Norway and Canada, meet once every three years, and then only for a few days.

Communication among members in between meetings is limited, even scarce attempts to organize regional ICME meetings have often failed because of financial problems. Few ICME members can afford the money for long distance travelling. The ICME meeting in London confirmed that of the ten working groups which had been established in Mexico City in 1980, five or more did not work effectively. It was decided to restrict the number of working groups to four.

It was suggested that the working groups each try to concentrate on one major event or activity in the 1983-1986 period. You will read more on these events in this Newsletter.

It was generally accepted by the ICME members present that the Newsletter is an important means of communication between the members across the globe and that it deserves an even greater attention than in the past. However, the Newsletter has its own problems. ICOM does not allocate special funds for the Newsletter. ICME's own funds fall short of the amount required to publish the Newsletter in the attractive style with which we all became familiar in the past years. It has become a practice, therefore, that the publishing is done by a museum which is prepared to spend its own money on the Newsletter. This was done by the Commonwealth Institute in London in 1980 whose deputy-director, Fred Lightfoot, became the Newsletter's editor till 1983. We are still very grateful for their wonderful assistance. During the 1983 Conference the problem was solved by ICME's new president, Dr Annette McFadyen-Clark, who promised to publish the Newsletter through her museum in Ottawa, Canada. She would also

try to publish a French edition of the Newsletter. Unfortunately, and much to everybody's regret, she has not been successful in her attempts to raise the funds required. That is the reason why no ICME Newsletter has been published since 1983.

This is ICME Newsletter no 6, less prestigious, less professional than we grew used to. But at least, there is a sign of life. In the past 18 months ICME members questioned me if ICME had expired. No, friends, ICME is not dead, it is just asleep. We are looking forward to some interesting events and to the next General Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1986.

In the meantime let us keep in touch with each other through this Newsletter, however modest. Please send your reports, your letters, your plans to be published in the next Newsletter.

Yours sincerely,  
Harrie Leyten.

In Memoriam: NICO BOGAART

In the middle of August 1984 we were shocked to hear of the sudden death of NICO BOGAART, ICME's president 1980-1983, and uptill 1983 Director of the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, Holland.

All who have known him will remember him for his vibrating energy, his enthusiasm, his joyful wit.

He leaves behind his wife Rachel and two children. We wish them strength in carrying this heavy loss

Cover:

IKENGA, personification of a man's personal achievement; cult of the 'right hand'. Ibo, Nigeria. Drawing: C. Thoman.

### ICME EXECUTIVE BOARD 1983 - 1986

During the 1983 ICOM Conference in London, ICME elected its new Executive Board for the 1983 - 1986 period. Here are their names and addresses:

Mrs Annette McFadyen Clark (Chairman)  
Ethnology Division  
National Museum of Man  
Ottawa  
Ontario KIA 0M8  
Canada

Mr Harrie M. Leyten (Secretary)  
Tropenmuseum  
Mauritskade 63  
1092 AD Amsterdam  
Holland

Mr Lawrence Foanaota  
Director  
National Museum of Solomon Islands  
P.O. Box 38  
Honiara  
Solomon Islands

Mr Kassim Ali  
Curator of Ethnology  
Muzium Negara  
Jalan Damansara  
Kuala Lumpur  
Malaysia

Dr Peter Gathercole  
Darwin College  
Cambridge CB3 9EU  
England

Dr Torben Lundbeck  
Department of Ethnography  
National Museum of Denmark  
10 Ny Vestergade  
DK-1471 Copenhagen K

Dr Sachin Roy  
ex-Director  
National Museum of Man  
E/8 DDA Flats, Nmirka  
New Delhi 110067  
India

Madame Shaje Tshiluilu  
Institut des Musées Nationaux  
B.P. 4249  
Kinshasa II  
Zaire

Mr Moses Abun  
National Museum  
P.M.B. 2127  
Icaduna  
Nigeria

Dr Tamas Hoffmann  
Neprajzi Muzeum  
Kossuth l. Ter 12  
H-1055 Budapest  
Hungary

### ICME WORKING GROUPS

The ICME members at the London Conference reduced the number of ten working groups, established at the 1980 Mexico Conference. For the period 1983 - 1986 ICME works through four groups only.

#### 1. Working group on the Return and/or Restitution of Cultural Property

Coordinator:  
Dr Herbert Ganslmayr  
Director Übersee Museum  
Bahnhofplatz 13  
D-2800 Bremen  
German Federal Republic

#### 2. Working group on Aims of Ethnographic Museums

Coordinator:  
Dr Rudi Vossen  
Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde  
Binderstrasse 14  
2000 Hamburg 13  
German Federal Republic

#### 3. Working group on Folk Arts

Coordinator:  
Annette Fromm  
Folklore Institute  
504 N. Fess  
Bloomington  
Indiana 47401  
United States of America

#### 4. Working group on Inventories

Coordinator:  
Dr Peter Gathercole  
Darwin College  
Cambridge  
England

It was decided that each of the working groups should try to concentrate on one event for the 1983 - 1986 period.

We are glad to present you some reports and recent information from three of the ICME working groups on the next pages.

#### Ad 1 Working group on Return and/or Restitution of Cultural Property:

A draft programme for an international symposium on the Trade in Primitive Art.

Ever since the 1970 UNESCO Convention a discussion has taken place about return/restitution issues, in which the museum collections featured strongly. The discussions have resulted in a number of de facto returns of cultural goods to their countries of origin. In other instances a compromise has been worked out between the parties, which have satisfied all.

In some cases countries have bluntly refused to return collections to their countries of origin.

During the past fifteen years while negotiations were being conducted about return and/or restitution of cultural heritage, the trade in primitive art has flourished as never before.

Very often the art objects came from existing collections in Europe or the United States of America. At times, they came directly or indirectly from their countries of origin.

Questions of an ethical nature arise. When is trade illicit? If there is any blame, should it be put on the traders? Or perhaps on the countries of origin? What is the position of the buyers? What is the position of public auctions? Does INTERPOL play a role here?

These and other questions deserve an answer. The problem, however, is many-faceted. It involves a number of parties, each with its own specific viewpoints. How can they be reconciled? How can they be disentangled?

We would like to invite representatives of each of the parties involved to meet together and discuss the many aspects of the international trade in Primitive Art.

Participants should come from all parties involved: countries of origin, international trade, UNESCO/ICOM, museum/private collectors, INTERPOL.

All ICME members who are interested please contact Harrie Leyten, Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam

#### Ad 2 Working group on Aims of Ethnographic Museums:

No recent information has been received from the working group on Aims of Ethnographic Museums. We do hope to have their report in the next ICME Newsletter.

#### Ad 3 Working group on Folk Art:

Annette Fromm, coordinator of this group had the privilege of doing field-work in Greece for one year. She was able to organise a week-end seminar on Folk Art. Annette has promised a full report for the next ICME Newsletter.

In the meantime ICOM Hungary is preparing a seminar on Folk Art for November 1985.

The organisers have invited ICME to participate in the seminar. We happily extend this invitation to all our members. The programme for the seminar will soon be out and we are sure to publish it in our next Newsletter. If you want more information, kindly contact the Newsletter's editor in Amsterdam or Dr Tamas Hoffmann in Budapest, who is member of the organising committee.

#### Ad 4 Working group on Inventories:

The activities undertaken by the members of this working group may not show directly in spectacular events. Yet the task they have set for themselves demands our attention. The group's coordinator, Peter Gathercole, sent a circular letter, from which I quote:

'Dear Colleagues,

I am seeking your immediate assistance, as a member of the working group on Inventories, in a project which could enhance the group's effectiveness, and bring knowledge of its existence to a wider public. I have just received from Raj Isar, of the Division of Cultural Heritage of UNESCO (Editor of Museum), a proposal that the group put together a collection of essays dealing with the methods employed in preparing and producing inventories of ethnographic collections in different countries and areas.

Taken as a group, therefore, the papers would present a survey of what has already been done so far, the

experiences gained, what and where work still needs to be done, and what are the main problems involved. The papers would deal, among other things, with locating and describing collections, and preparing and publishing the information, and would offer suggestions about the ways inventories could be made available internationally through some form of computerized system.

In his letter to me (August 6, 1984) Ray says: 'The work on inventories of dispersed heritages you are doing with the ICME working group has just the sort of methodological thrust which makes it relevant for UNESCO. We could I think contribute to improving professional practice in this field... The work would carry forward a major area of interest for UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation...'

The Committee next meets in Delphi, probably in April 1985, and the intention is that the papers would be available at that meeting (not necessarily published by then). As they would have to be translated by then, they would have to be in the hands of UNESCO by January 1985. An honorarium of c. \$ 500 per paper is offered; there are only sufficient funds to produce six papers.

The proposal has much merit, but aside from the details (e.g. about publication) that still have to be settled, there are at least two immediate problems to be resolved:

1. Are there available, within or outside the group, six authors who could put together a balanced and authoritative collection on time?
2. Would both working group and authors agree that the project be linked to the work of the Intergovernmental Committee? (Although it seemed generally agreed at our 1983 meeting that the preparation of inventories might well encourage requests for 'Return', my impression was that no-one considered this a reason for not producing them).

It would be invidious for me to decide on the merits of this proposal without consulting you, as a member of the group, though I feel that I

can also invite the co-operation of non-members who are involved in similar activities. I am therefore writing for your views about the proposal as such, and also to ask, should you be willing to take part, what form your contribution would take.

I am willing to act as co-ordinator and editor, and, if pressed, to write one of the contributions. Should there be more than five or six offers, I would have to exercise the editorial right to those which to include (or if necessary solicit other essays). If members of the group feel that it should not be identified formally with the work of the Intergovernmental Committee, then the contributors could act individually. This would not affect the integrity of the group, but might detract from benefits the group could otherwise obtain from association with the project. Please let me have your response to this proposal as soon as possible, i.e. within the next 2 or 3 weeks, to the following address:

Darwin College, Cambridge CB3 9EU, England.'

Peter Gathercole'

#### NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

1. ICOM Headquarters in Paris have started a drive for Institutional Membership.

This means that apart from the members, as we all are on personal base, also museums can be ICOM-members. Institutional Membership entitles you to:

- Three membership cards for use of staff members, granting free or reduced entry to museums;
- Membership to three international committees of your choice;
- A subscription to:
  - \* ICOM News (quarterly bulletin)
  - \* Museum (quarterly review published by UNESCO)
  - \* International Museographical Bibliography (annual bulletin published by the UNESCO-ICOM Documentation Centre)
  - \* ICOM Education (annual publication of the ICOM International Committee for Education and Cultural Action);
- A reduction in price on most of the other ICOM publications;
- An invitation to the ICOM Triennial General Conference and the possibility of participating in meetings of International Specialized Committees;
- Consultation in person or by correspondence with the UNESCO-ICOM Documentation Centre (see address below);
- Facilities for cooperation with colleagues all over the world, both through the ICOM Specialized Committees and personal contacts;
- Special package of museological publications.

Please, consider the advantages of this type of membership. For further information contact ICOM, UNESCO Building, 1, Rue Miollis, 75732 Paris - Cedex 15, France.

2. Argentina awaits us!

A hotly debated issue ever since the London conference has been the venue for the next ICOM General Conference. For the first time in history there were several candidates, and also for the first time in history there was a

candidate from the southern hemisphere: Argentina!

The ICOM Executive Council of July 1984 argued that because of the global character of ICOM, preference ought to be given to a country from South of the equator to host the next General Conference.

So Buenos Aires is preparing itself for the event which is to take place between 26th October and 4th November 1986.

The Argentina National Committee will soon publish its plans and its programmes of which the next Newsletter will keep you up to date.

3. Mr Luis Monreal, Secretary General of ICOM, has informed us that he has accepted a job at the Paul Getty Museum in the U.S.A. and he will consequently resign his post at ICOM Headquarters. We wish him good luck in his next career, but hasten to add that we'll miss him very much! Luis, thank you for all you have done in ICOM, your encouragement and your advice.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

In a year and a half from now ICME will have its next General Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Whether this conference will be successful depends for the greater part on its preparation. For a successful continuation of ICME's activities through the 1986 - 1989 period we shall need a good Executive Board, to be elected during the General Conference. I take this opportunity to appeal to all ICME members to look for suitable candidates for the next Board. We shall also need a well-defined policy and a set of programmes through which we can achieve our goals as a world wide museum's body.

The ICOM Executive Council will draft the future policy during its July meeting in Paris. May I invite you to present your proposals and suggestions to the ICME Board member in your area or directly to ICME's secretary, so that they can be incorporated in the ICME policy and ultimately in the ICOM programmes for the 1986 - 1989 term.