

ICME Newsletter 53, June 2009

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1. WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Planning is underway for our next ICME annual conference - ICME/2009/Seoul. This year's meeting is hosted by the National Folk Museum of Korea. It will afford opportunities for us to visit with colleagues and learn of their work, hear interesting, substantial papers, and see museums. Perhaps there will be the chance to revisit sights seen during the ICOM 2004 triennial, perhaps this sojourn in Korea will open new doors to ICME members. I hope that many of you will be able to participate in the conference and the intangible heritage-filled post conference tour (see announcement and registration below). There is still time to submit a paper proposal or to simply register to attend the conference.

In the last quarter of 2008, ICOM filled the long-vacant position of Director General. Julian Anfruns was chosen for the job. He comes from a background in the French diplomatic corps and management at the Louvre (yes ask him about Tom Hanks, I did!). This combined experience strikes me as totally relevant to the tasks at hand - knowledge of French infrastructure and experience in museum administration. I had the opportunity to meet Julien last month at the annual meeting of the American Association of Museums. There is always an ICOM presence at these huge meetings. This year, Julien joined by Alessandra Cummins, ICOM's president.

The Advisory Committee of ICOM will be meeting in Paris early next month. This will be the first time the joint meeting of International Committees, National Committees and Affiliated International Organizations will meet formally with the new Director General. In the past few months, the dates of the meeting have been shifted and changed (from what was announced at the close of last year's meeting) and the agenda has been tinkered with. The Internet has been alive with conversations criticizing these changes.

Change happens. Change is difficult. Being in the position of the agent of change is precarious. In the museum profession each of these statements run all too true and might be situations in which you have been placed. ICOM has been under good leadership of interim directors for a few years, albeit interim. It is time, now, to allow the organization to return to the center and move forward with guidance from its constituents.

We need to consider what we believe is the purpose of ICOM and ICME. To me, the two most significant roles are establishing best standards and ethics for a profession to which I've devoted a long time and networking - having the opportunity to forge relationships with colleagues facing like

challenges and seeing how these challenges are solved in their museums. In that framework, let's have a clear focus of how we can best serve both organizations we have chosen to become active members of. As ICME members, remember to serve as advocates for this group of museum ethnographers. As ICOM members, let's be part of the changes that are happening in Paris.

With best wishes for an enjoyable summer (our work never stops!). I hope to see many of you in Seoul in the fall.

With warmest regards -

Annette B. Fromm,

2. CALL FOR PAPERS FOR ICME ANNUAL MEETING 2009 IN SEOUL

PLEASE NOTICE: the registration form for ICME/2009/Seoul is on the [ICME website](#)

Second - Call for Papers

ICME/2009/Seoul

Museums for Reconciliation and Peace

Roles of Ethnographic Museums in the World

Seoul, Korea

19-21 October 2009

ICME (the ICOM International Committee for Museums Ethnography) will hold its 2009 annual conference in Seoul, Korea on 19-21 October, 2009. The meeting will be hosted by The National Folk Museum of Korea (icme2009seoul.icom.museum).

ICME 2009/Seoul invites papers addressing one of two topics - Peace and Reconciliation, as addressed in ethnographic museums and The Role of Ethnographic Museums, in general. This conference invites museum ethnographers and others to address either this very focused topic or the more general topic both from the point of view of museum collecting activities and public programs including exhibitions and educational programming.

Reconciliation and peace is a topic much of concern in today's world. Inherent in intercultural understanding are such values as mutual respect, trust and shared commitment to each other and to the institutions of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies. Museums stand poised as educational facilities to serve as neutral places where issues of difference and similarities and the historical, cultural, linguistic and religious particularities of their region can be presented and discussed openly. At this conference we seek to learn how ethnographic museums in many parts of the world have tackled this significant issue.

Authors may address questions such as:

" How committed are museums to collecting cultural materials representative of all cultures in the community-at-large?

" Are the history, cultural traditions, and values of all communities presented in exhibitions in an equal manner?

" Do public programs for youth and adults strive to bring together individuals from different cultural backgrounds?

In a more general sense, papers are invited on the general topic of Roles of Ethnographic Museums in the World. The conference seeks to serve as a forum to understand the place that ethnographic museums have sought to take in their own societies whether they are representing cultures living in their communities or the cultures of overseas peoples.

The exchange of ideas on these two topics promises to be rich and interesting.

This conference is open to museum professionals and all scholars involved in the issues and topics of the annual meeting. Presentations should not exceed 15 minutes. The main language of the conference will be English. We are encouraging the use of visual images wherever possible.

Abstracts, which should not exceed 250 words, should be sent to Dr. Yang Jongsong, Senior Curator, The National Folk Museum of Korea by **1 July 2009**, at the latest. Abstracts will be submitted to our editorial committee and a decision on their suitability will be made by the end of July.

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Final details are still being confirmed. The general format of the annual meeting will consist of keynote speakers, papers, roundtables, and museum visits. Registration forms and other details are available on the [ICME](http://www.icme2009seoul.icom.museum/) and the conference websites at <http://www.icme2009seoul.icom.museum/>

Note: There is no registration fee for the ICME/2009 conference. Hotel arrangements are being made with the Somerset Palace Hotel (<http://www.somersetpalaceseoul.com>), near the National Folk Museum of Korea. Hotel fees for all invited or accepted speakers will be paid by our hosts. One half of the hotel fees will be paid other conference attendees. Post conference fees of \$100 payable upon arrival, pre-registration necessary.

ICME 2009 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

CONFERENCE

Monday, October 19 - Opening Ceremony, Keynote Speeches, Paper sessions, Welcoming Reception and Performances

Tuesday, October 20 - Conference paper sessions, Gyeongbok Palace Tour, Museum Tour and Performance, Formal Dinner

Wednesday, October 21 - Conference papers sessions, Declaration, ICME meeting, Closing Ceremony and Farewell Dinner

POST-CONFERENCE TOUR (October 22-24)

Thursday, October 22

Morning bus from Seoul, Travel east to North Kyungsang province, [Andong City](#), [Hahoe village](#)
Visit Andong Hahoe Mask Dance Drama designated as an Important Intangible [Cultural Property by Korean government](#).

Visit Korean Studies Advancement Centre (Museum of Confucian culture/ Library of wooden printing plate)

Friday, October 23

North Kyungsang province, Kyungju city/ Korean traditional village, [Kyungju Sukgulam](#) (stone Buddha grotto) and [Bulguk Buddhist Temple](#)

Saturday, October 24

[Kyungju National Museum of Korea](#), Visit traditional Winery, [The Great Tumuli/ Chum-sung-dae](#) (observatory), [Hwangyong Buddhist Temple](#), return to Seoul

The program is subject to changes.

ICME

The National Folk Museum of Korea is one of the Korea's leading institutions dedicated to the preserving the legacy of traditional Korean life, attracting more than two million visitors annually. As such we serve an educational and cultural role, providing you with opportunities to experience first-hand how Koreans lived in traditional times. The NFMK was established in 1945 and has remained dedicated to historical investigation and research as well as the collection, preservation and exhibition of artifacts related to Korean folkways. Over the years, we have presented our findings and collection in the form of theme exhibits, reports and public lectures. Today we are focusing on our visitors more than ever while adopting a more open and specialized approach to remain in step with the changing paradigm for museums in the 21st century.

3. "TROPENMUSEUM FOR A CHANGE"-website

In December the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam organised a one-day symposium to celebrate the completion of the renovation of the museum's permanent exhibitions. The symposium invited international scholars and museum professionals to discuss the role and importance of ethnographic museums in the 21st century. For those of you who were not able to attend the symposium the Tropenmuseum has made a video report from the symposium.

You will find the video report at <http://www.tropenmuseum.nl/smartsite.shtml?id=25655>

By means of pictures and sound, You are now leaving the map! Traces of German Culture in the Tri-border region between Croatia, Serbia, and Hungary ("Sie verlassen jetzt die Landkarte! Spuren deutscher Kultur im Donaudreieck") creates a contemporary panorama of the German minority in the tri-border region between Hungary, Serbia, and Croatia.

" Aspects of limitation and dissolution

" Concepts of social spaces within a region where minorities make up the majority

" Ethnic and cultural concepts beyond political boundaries, beyond the "map"

" Areas of tension between inclusion and exclusion, between acceptance and dissociation

It is no coincidence that the exhibition is called Encounters.

The exhibition consists of two parts which seem to differ in their colouring, their hanging and their artistic composition. However, the parallel worlds of historical monochrome pictures on the one hand and contemporary colour photographs on the other directly engage with one another: The zebra crossing is not the only bridge from one room to the other. The arrangements offer many common features which closely connect both rooms and accompany the visitor: the arrangement of small separate rooms that still remain accessible to the visitor, the artistic alternation between two- and three-dimensional parts of the exhibition, interconnections between the subjects of the pictures and the design elements (fences, veranda patterns, houses etc.), unexpected visual axes and vistas, unusual realities (a chair hung up, an "audio tree" etc.).

The visitor is deeply irritated in his perception by these visual stumbling blocks - purposefully and for a long time. The visitor does not only consume or receive. The unusual perspectives ask for a modified perception and at the same time a different evaluation and classification of the perceived. What seemed familiar before suddenly becomes strange and the other way round. In times when images assail us constantly, here, the perceived runs the risk of being scrutinized, of being put into question, of being reflected upon. Does the visitor who regards the pictures delude himself? Is he beguiled? What is he to make of the picture showing a little boy in a sailor suit when there is a picture next to it showing the very same boy in a typical Danube Swabian girl's dress? Even his orientation in the room is subjected to deception. Boundaries seem to dissolve.

The contemporary part of the exhibition (You are now leaving the map! Traces of German culture in the tri-border region between Croatia, Serbia, and Hungary) imposes unusual perspectives on the visitor, and yet these perspectives seem familiar at the same time: a street with median strip disappearing on the horizon. Telegraph poles along the street, cables wound around insulators, and opposite a row of houses characteristic of the area, typical colouring and fences; fences which help to maintain private spaces and individual identities; fences which still allow for chats with the neighbour, for his or her way of life, for his or her system of values. This is why the gates are open - they invite the visitor to enter the gardens and the houses. A bench characteristic of the area makes an audible contribution to the exhibition, from wooden boxes which seem unprepossessing at first sight: excerpts from talks between Joern Nuber, the current DAAD-lecturer at Osijek, and members of ethnic minorities living in the region. The most important statements can also be found in writing pinned to the fenceposts. The demarcation thereby encourages communication.

The houses are connected with each other and with the power poles on the other side of the street. This is also where the entire exhibition is situated: between the poles of dissociation and overcoming distances. The exhibition ends on a country road which apparently leads to nowhere, somewhere beyond the map; in an area beyond touristic interests; an area which cannot be booked via internet; an area in which the majority consists of minorities; an area which has always been "Europe in a nutshell".

However, the exhibition does not primarily wish to introduce the area beyond the map. Rather, it

focuses on the inhabitants of the tri-border region between Hungary, Croatia, and Serbia. It is no coincidence that their portraits line the wall on the other side of the street. The area's inhabitants have staked off their living space in a different fashion than prescribed by today's map. Now and then, the people living there offer ways of living together that are not restricted to the area. In this context, the exhibition can also be seen as a "catalyst" for contemporary processes within society, on this side and beyond the map. Since both exhibitions are shown in Serbia, Croatia and Hungary as well as elsewhere in Central and Western Europe they may have an impact on the tri-border region on the one hand; on the other, they may point out the possibilities of multiple identities to other countries. What is at stake is a living inter-regional way of life in a Europe of regions which - hopefully - will care less about politically determined boundaries in the future.

www.smb.museum/mek

The exhibition also travels to: Ulm, Budapest, Osijek, Sombor and other places.

For information, please contact: Beate Wild, b.wild@smb.spk-berlin.de





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5. Touch the World - and communicate the experience via Mobile Phones - when mobile media promote personalised learning processes at museums

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jbang@imv.au.dk, cnd@imv.au.dk, etnopb@hum.au.dk, etnothea@hum.au.dk **Learning activities are king**

Normally, the UNESCO Collections circulate between Danish schools where each class can hold them for three weeks and work with them. The children are induced not only to look at the objects and read about them but to use them hands on. The collections are used to make exhibitions, show and tell at parent arrangements or for role plays, where the children dress up, imitate, and explore different environments like "the home", "the school", "the tea bar" etc. As such these collections are ideal for what has been termed a "constructivist" approach to learning. Koper sums up the core of the constructivist approach:

For "Touch the world" the collections were mixed and used for four different workshops. One particular experiment that aimed at extending the potential of constructivist learning was the use of mobile phones in the exhibition. Mobile phones were handed out to the school children as a means for on-the-spot communication of what happened in the four different workshops. This article will discuss the pedagogical perspective of using mobile phones as a vehicle to enhance pupil's learning. The use of mobile phones facilitates the pupil's learning in the sense that the multi media phones enable the pupils to produce documentation of their experiences and by communicating these experiences to fellow pupils. We argue that mobile phones have a potential to support these learning processes as a personalised tool for documentation and communication.

Touch the World

As the title of Touch the World indicates, the exhibition allowed school children to touch and use the exhibited items during their visit to the museum. The main idea behind Touch the World was to make use of the UNESCO Collections inside the museum so that the children should not just look at objects in show cases, but touch the objects and do something actively with them.

The target group for the exhibition was 4th to 10th grade. Touch the World was divided into four workshops: clothes, food & cooking, exhibition, and music & film. Each workshop also focussed on a particular anthropological theme. In the clothes workshop children tried out different kinds of clothes and posed on a cat stand as an entrance to discussing cultural codes and the multitude of decoding possibilities related to symbols and codes. In the food & cooking workshop children made

tea, cut out a variety of exotic fruits, opened coconuts, etc. The workshop holder (a trained ethnographer) would explain abstract concepts such as structures of commerce and social organisation to the pupils. Such explanations would stem from objects present in the workshop as for instance a tiffin from India and evolve into telling about the tiffin walls of Mumbai. The exhibition workshop contained various artefacts such as a solar energy kitchen stove, kangas, drums, hand made toys made of recycled materials, the game bao pottery and baskets, all from Tanzania. In arranging their own exhibition the pupils were induced to consider the way contextualisation and juxtaposition improves the scope and depth of understanding. Finally, the children in the fourth group watched videos, listened to music CDs and read magazines in the music & film workshop. Both films, books and music were mediated by the workshop holder and used to exemplify the creative inventiveness that cultural hybridity and re-use of sounds and images in new ways instigate exemplified for instance by some of the most famous Danish music artists.

Instead of visiting all four workshops, the pedagogical idea behind the exhibition was that children in each group should communicate their experiences between groups by making presentations when they came back in the classroom. To support the children's choice of workshop, a wiki containing pictures and short descriptions of the exhibited items was available prior to the visit.

The groups in each workshop were equipped with two mobile phones with picture and video functionality. The objective of the mobile phones was that the children should use them to document their work in the workshops by taking pictures and speaking or writing notes. In that sense, the children worked as ethnographers collecting information from the exhibition. Further, the objective was that the children should use the mobile phones to communicate their experiences to the other pupils. Besides taking pictures, the children recorded videos, in which they presented the artefacts in their workshops (see examples of pupils' productions at <http://roerverden.dk/1/>). During the exhibition, computers (via bluetooth) collected the pictures from the children's phones and projected them "live" on a wall in the exhibition room. Furthermore, pictures, videos and notes were sent to the school, so when coming home the pupils could edit their pictures and videos into presentations to be shown to the other groups in the class. Finally the pictures and videos with comments from each class could be uploaded to a weblog at the museum.

Learning through communication and presentation

A main pedagogical principle of Touch the World was that the children should focus on how they would present the artefacts and their experiences to other children. When the children should communicate or present their experiences to others, they had to reflect on the artefacts. Following constructivist theory, this is a learning activity, because the children are activated; they must do something with the artefacts. The process of making such a presentation can be seen as a learning process, in which you make the artefacts "your own". Learning is an active process that involves the individual's use of tools. This does not mean that knowledge exists within the tool, but rather that it exists in the active use of the tool for a purpose. In that process, the individual makes the tool his/her own.

The constructivist approach of activation, engagement and appropriation was the basis for development of the learning environment in Touch the World. As we observed the activities in the exhibition, we identified two phases in the learning activities of the children:

3. Immediate and spontaneous interaction with the artefacts of the exhibition.

A phase of touching the world, experimenting, exploring and playing.

4. Reflective attitude towards the artefacts of the exhibition.

A phase of documentation, narrative construction and reflection.

In the first phase the activities of the pupils was dominated by exploration, examination, experimentation - much like play. When the mobile phones were introduced in the second phase, pupil's relationship with the exhibition was mediated. The pupils were asked to use the mobile devices to communicate and present their experiences. This triggered reflection. What happened was that the media created a distance between pupil and artefacts, and, thus, a space for reflection. Through the live projection of the pupils' documentation, the pupils were made aware of their own participation in the exhibition. This setup created a demand to narrate and document their experiences; i.e. to transform their experiences into stories. The role of the mobile media in this context was to create a reflective distance and to function as a tool for documentation and narration. The objective and the end result of the activities of the pupils was a product in the form of pictures and videos. An analysis of the videos show that the children really made the exhibition "their own" and presented their approaches in a variety of ways. Different kinds of videos include demonstrations of how to cut certain fruits and how to play on musical instruments, "TV show" presentations of artefacts, and "fashion shows" exhibiting clothes. Also, certain videos were developed as interviews between the children.

So, in conclusion we will argue that the study of "Touch the World" has shown that there is a learning potential of mobile phones to provide a personalised tool for documenting and communicating experiences in (and out of) museums. Applied to the Unesco collections what was really interesting was the way in which use of mobile phones enhanced the qualities already embedded in the ethnographic artefacts as hands-on materials. This may induce us to think carefully about what kind of new technologies we want to engage with in museum practice in order to enhance the information and pedagogical perspectives present in the kind of original material that is unique to the museum.

6. CALL FOR PAPERS

September 11-12, "Museums and Biographies", 2009 MGHG Meeting, National Gallery, London, UK.
<http://www.mghg.org/events/>

October 2-3, "Beyond Boundaries: Media, Culture and Identity in Europe ", Bahcesehir University, Istanbul, Turkey. <http://www.emcs.bahcesehir.edu.tr/conference.html>

October 20-21, "Aesthetic Dimension of Visual Culture", Institute of Art History, Prague, Czech Republic. <http://estetika.ff.cuni.cz/conference/>

October 21-25, "Examining the Ethics of Place", American Folklore Society 2009 Annual Meeting, Boise, Idaho, United States. <http://afsnet.org/annualmeet/index.cfm>

November 2009, "International festival of Audiovisiuel & of Multi-media on the Inheritance" FIAMP 2009, Turin, Italy. <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/avicom/index.php?section=0news&news=0>

December 13-15, "Re-thinking Community in Contemporary Anthropology", University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. <http://www.otago.ac.nz/asaanz/index.html>

February 18-20 2010, "Images of the Other in ethnic caricatures", Interdisciplinary Conference, Warsaw, Poland. <http://www.siefhome.org/images/stories/IMAGES.pdf>

7. UP-COMING CONFERENCES

June 10-12, "Trance, Mediums and New Media", Cologne, Germany. <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/termine/id=11569>

July 1-2, "Repertoires of Violence: Multidisciplinary Analyses of the Representation of Peace and Conflict", Centre for Peace Studies, York St John University, York, UK.

http://www2.yorksj.ac.uk/default.asp?Page_ID=6046

July 9-11, "Visuality / Materiality: Reviewing Theory, Method and Practice", The Royal Nstitute for British Artists, London, UK.

<http://www.geography.dur.ac.uk/conf/visualitymateriality/Home/tabid/2944/Default.aspx>

July 12-17, "The Art of Conflict Transformation: Culture and Conflict", 2nd International Summer Academy, Bern, Switzerland <http://www.conferencealerts.com/seeconf.mv?q=ca1mhxmx>

August 18-22, "Substances - Rethinking the material, the visual and the narrative in culture", The 31st Nordic Ethnology and Folklore Conference 2009, Helsinki, Finland.

<http://www.helsinki.fi/kansatiede/nefk/engindex.html>

August 24-26, "Transcultural Montage", University of Aarhus, Denmark.

<http://www.moesmus.dk/page.asp?sideid=1246&zcs=4>

September 1-4, "Objects - What Matters? Technology, Value and Social Change", CRESC 5th Annual Conference 2009, University of Manchester, UK.

<http://www.cresc.ac.uk/events/conference2009/index.html>

September 24-26, "The Best in Heritage", Dubrovnik, Croatia.

<http://www.thebestinheritage.com/home.php>

October 2-6, "The End/s of Anthropology", 108th AAA Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, United States.

<http://www.aaanet.org/meetings/index.cfm>

8. WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

With the second call for papers for the ICME 2009 Annual Meeting on "Museums for Reconciliation and Peace - the Role of Museums in the World" we hope that many of you will join us for the meeting in Seoul.

While dealing with large issues as reconciliation, peace, and intercultural understanding the two main articles of this ICME News focus on how we may deal with these issues in concrete exhibitions. The Museum of European Cultures in Berlin presents an experiment in exhibition making by letting two exhibitions meet in a new constellation. "Encounters" puts together an exhibition of photos from Hungary 1916-20 with a contemporary exhibition on traces of German culture in the border region between Croatia, Serbia and Hungary. By letting these who exhibitions come together on a common plane - as a large scale collage - the exhibition makes clear to the audience that the purpose of the display is not contained within the singular photo or installation element, but in the dynamics in

between these parts.

While radically different I think both exhibitions reveal the strong potential of the museum institution. Both "Encounters" and "Touch the world" can be seen as efforts to renew ways of exhibition making and probably also to reach new audiences. But at the same time both exhibitions reflect some of the classic virtues of the institution. "Encounters" stresses the capacity of the museum to create virtualities in which the past, present and future meets in the same room. By bringing together the two exhibitions reflecting each their historical epoques the exhibition both reflect changes and continuities in the region in a vivid experiential space.

"Touch the world" focusses on the way in which being confronted with original artefacts may establish a reflexive stance towards our conventional understanding of the world. This effect is enhanced by letting the children document the processes they are engaged in by use of mobile phones.

In this sense the two articles may work as a comment to the videos to be seen on the "Tropenmuseum for a change"-website. While the world of ethnographic museum certainly needs change - now and ever - I think we will do well making these changes from a sound reflection of what are the central contributions of the institution, and how these contributions may be worked out under the conditions of the present, rather than tracing what seem new and spectacular around us.

Peter Bjerregaard

The deadline for the next issue is August 26 2009. Please send news and contributions to:

editor@icme.icom.museum