

ICME NEWS 56, MARCH 2010

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1. WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

The winter of 2009-2010, not over for some of you, has been particularly harsh. One of the major themes of the ICME/2010/Shanghai conference to be held next November invites discussions such as this. Other sessions for the conference are also taking shape. Details for the ICME portion of the triennial are still being hammered out. In brief, along with our sessions and annual members meeting, we are planning a joint reception with the ICEE committee on the evening of Monday, November 15. Plans are also underway for a cultural or museum visit on Tuesday, evening November 16. And the annual ICME dinner will be on Wednesday evening, November 17. As you know, Thursday, November 11 is the designated ICOM Excursion Day. Our Shanghai coordinator recommends that ICME members chose the Nantong tour (C6) to visit the dyeing and kite workshops - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nantong>

We have asked the organizers to designate the Ramada South Hotel Pudong Shanghai as the ICME hotel, for those of you who wish to stay together with other ICME members. Our Shanghai coordinator has been working hard to fill my requests. I would like to introduce her before we all descend upon Shanghai; afterall, she is a colleague. The ICME coordinator for the ICOM 2010 Shanghai triennial is Duan Mei. She is a graduate of Nankai University in Tianjin, and the Beijing Diplomatic College. She has served as a visiting scholar at the Museum of Ethnology in Japan and the Immigration Museum in Australia. As director of Museum of Cultural Palace of Nationalities, Duan Mei served as executive member of the council in the Chinese Museums of Natural History Association and the Beijing Museums Association. Currently, she is a researcher at the Museum of Cultural Palace of Nationalities in Beijing.

I realize that November seems like many months away. If you are like me, there are too many tasks and responsibilities to complete between now and then. Nevertheless, we need to be thinking of the future and it will be here before we know. All the best for a lovely and long awaited spring.

Annette B. Fromm

2. CALL FOR PAPERS

ICME/2010/Shanghai Annual Conference Shanghai, China, 7-12 November 2010

Introduction

ICME (the International Committee for Museums of Ethnography) is an international committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) devoted to ethnography (ethnology, anthropology, folk) museums focusing on local, national and international cultures. ICME is concerned with the challenges facing ethnographic museums and collections in a changing world.

ICME will hold its 2010 annual conference on 7-12 November, 2010, as part of the ICOM 22nd General Conference in Shanghai, China. Final details of the ICME conference are still being confirmed, but the general format of the annual meeting will consist of paper and discussion sessions.

The theme for ICOM 2010 is Museums for Social Harmony. The theme statement describes different approaches to the concept of harmony and invites to examinations of how museums can contribute to processes that are important for the development of societies.

In line with this, ICME/2010/Shanghai invites papers addressing the general conference theme, but specified to the following sub-themes:

The Challenging Museum/Challenging the Museum - Through this topic, we hope to look at how museums of cultures and societies address themes that are perceived as difficult, silenced, connected to dilemmas of various nature, etc. This theme will be followed up following the ICME/2010 meeting through an ICME Work Group chaired by Per B. Rekdal (p.b.rekdal@khm.uio.no). (see below for more information)

Submitting abstracts

Abstracts of between 250 and 300 words will be submitted for selection to the ICME Review Committee, chaired by Annette B. Fromm. Submissions should be sent to president@icme.icom.museum or annettefromm@hotmail.com by May 31, 2010. If you send the abstract as attachment, please also include the text of the abstract in the text of the e-mail itself.

The following information should be included with the abstract:

- Title of submitted paper
- Name(s) of Author(s)
- Affiliation(s) & full address(es)
- Abstract in English (between 250 and 300 words)
- Support equipment required

General conference information

Registration forms, registration fee information, hotels, and other details are available on the ICOM 22nd General Conference website - <http://icom.museum/general-conference2010.html>

Details of the ICME conference will be forthcoming on the ICME web site - <http://icme.icom.museum>

3. THE CHALLENGING MUSEUM/CHALLENGING THE MUSEUM

ICME invites discussions of approaches and experiences of how museums of cultures and societies address themes that are perceived as difficult, controversial, raising dilemmas, exploring delicate balances, like between the political/moral/publicity interests/professional/ethical.

We are not looking for the unanimously successful stories nor the easy ways. We'd rather debate cases with no clear conclusion, where our doubts and reflections are welcomed, but simple self-praise not.

We plan several types of sessions and discussions in order to fully introduce this topic. A theme-setting session will be coordinated and moderated by Mr. Rekdal. Additional sessions will further delve into this timely and introspective topic.

Expressions of interest may be sent to ICME Chair Annette Fromm (president@icme.icom.museum and annettefromm@hotmail.com) and Per B. Rekdal (p.b.rekdal@khm.uio.no). Abstracts of between 250 and 300 words should be submitted by April 31, 2010. Please mail us both since different spam filters have different and too often unfathomable prejudices.

4. ICME FELLOWSHIP FOR ICOM SHANGHAI 2010

Applications are invited for one ICME Fellowship from individual members of ICME from developing nations, having a minimum of three years continuous paid membership of ICOM for the years 2007, 2008, 2009. Applicants shall be engaged actively in curatorial, education, research and developmental work in a museum. The fellowships will be for the amount of 2000 euro and may be used to pay for both ways air ticket and reasonable daily allowance in Shanghai for seven days for participation in the next ICOM General Conference during 07-12 November, 2010, with a view to offer opportunities for enriching the on-going research of candidates through global interaction with ICOM members in different parts of the world.

Applications must reach the President and Treasurer, ICME by 31 May, 2010, along with the followings:

- 1) a 200 words statement of the applicant's motivation for attending the General Conference and the benefits which he/she expects to derive from it,
- 2) a curriculum vitae indicating, name, age, citizenship, home address, institutional address, contact phone, fax, e-mail address, details of qualification, employment positions, research experience
- 3) names and e-mail addresses of two eminent museum professionals, from whom references will be sought for by ICME.

The candidates must remain active in ICME and may be invited to make presentations in the International Committee meetings coinciding with the ICOM General Conference in Shanghai.

The award shall be announced on 30 June, 2010. Awards will be given strictly on merit and subject to fulfillment of all conditions. ICME reserves the right for the selection of candidates and shall hold the right of publishing the concerned research report of the selected candidate.

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And

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5. DIGITALIZING ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM OBJECTS IN WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Pauline van der Zee (University of Ghent, Belgium), Samia El Sheikh (Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt),
Raoul Weiler (University of Leuven, Belgium)

The initiative to digitalize ethnographic objects by means of Wikimedia Commons was launched at the 2009 ICOM/ICME conference in Seoul. The main objective is based on the fact that cultural diversity decreases at very high speed world wide. The loss of diversity is a concern expressed many times in UN declarations and publications and this initiative intends to be an adequate response to this threat and contributes to the preservation of the diversity. nutshell- consists in compiling the basic information about an object in a catalogue style: name, size, origin, materials, technique, date of acquisition, etc. accompanied by one, two or more photos. In the past ICOM has defined the structure of the meta-data, which has been accepted to be applied in this approach. See for instance the website of the Coptic Museum in Cairo:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Textile_Pieces_from_the_Coptic_Museum_in_Cairo

and of the Ethnographic Collections of Ghent University:

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special%3ASearch&redirs=0&search=evug&fulltext=Search&ns0=1&ns6=1&ns12=1&ns14=1> which have been introduced in Seoul by their initiators.

The information should ideally be in the main language(s) of the country of the museum, in English, and last but not least in the language of the origin of the object. In this way all participating museums will work at their own digitalization along the same lines.

Including these objects in Wikimedia Commons Browser keywords are also of importance for showing cultural diversity. The elaboration of a common thesaurus should be conceived and implemented as soon as possible. The Art and Architecture Thesaurus and other thesauruses can be used as guide, but they are far from being complete as it comes to ethnographic jargon. The aim is that museums will use the same words, spelling of names etc. in their files; especially when it comes to the stage that more information will be added to the objects. To that end we need to know which fields are important for the users of the system. Adding objects and museums in the wikimedia project also is a not only good way to create a kind of network between participating ethnographic museums, but also it will make them more visible.

The digital revolution has far-reaching effects, worldwide. From personal contacts with people in Oceanic regions, we know how important it is for them that attention is paid to their art and culture. The philosophy of the project is that information about the objects should be given in several languages and ideally also in the language of the ethnographic entity from which the objects originate. The latter aspect reflects the original approach of this project. Ethnographic objects of non-western small scale societies are often seen as persons, as ancestors or spirits. And it is likely that people prefer to speak or write about them in their own language. Of course it will not be possible to get access or reconstruct all these languages. The Wikimedia project may empower people to speak for themselves, as museums can speak about them. Dialogues imply a shared control over modes of representation. For instance, some people do not want their sacred objects to be published. In the reserves of museums, sacred objects of various cultural groups are sometimes hidden as a means of paying respect to the originating people. Some objects are so powerful that only initiated may look at them, and then only in very specific situations. Sacred and secret are indeed two of a kind, which means that putting pictures of sacred objects on internet cannot be envisioned, of course. Attention has to be paid to the multi-layered character of the objects. After all, ethnographic objects represent the diversity of cultures of which they can be seen as ambassadors. Last but not least, the perspective of having all objects on line, allows us not only to provide access to the objects of the reserves, which can reach up to 80-90 percent or more of collections, but allows us as well to facilitate research activities in these domains. Indeed Wikimedia Commons for ethnographic museums creates substantial added-value for all of us. The free and open access is very precious for helping to preserve cultural diversity. Information Technology makes it possible to make objects of the museum reserves visible, to create a virtual museum which is unique in the praxis of museography, and to facilitate future research activities.

6. REFLECTING EUROPE IN ITS MUSEUM OBJECTS

- they reflect hopes and anxieties of every specific historical situation,
- they show the panorama of human creativity despite war and persecution,
- they are witness of the finest examples of human expression, craftsmanship and inventory spirit.

With this open call for contributions we address all museums in Europe to participate in our joint endeavour. We encourage all National Committees of ICOM and other professional museums networks in Europe to disseminate this call and to initiate a debate about the process of selecting relevant objects.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

Format: 14x 14 cm, booklet illustrated with colored pictures

Language: English

Number of pages: 72

Printed copies: 5000

Dissemination: free of charge, except for postal fee.

The publication will first be distributed at the General Conference of ICOM in Shanghai, China (Nov. 7 to Nov. 12, 2010) and it can then be ordered by museums and professional organizations.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE?

Your contribution will consist of a royalty free reproduction of the object in form of a professional photograph (300 dpi) and an explanatory text referring to the object, its relevance and meaning in the context of the above mentioned aspects. Please make sure that the museum direction approves your choice and text, because the selection will refer to and mention the museum as well.

> We kindly ask you to send your contribution form, which you can download from the ICOM Europe website (www.icom-europe.org) filled out in English to: reflectingeurope@gmail.com no later than March 19, 2010. The result of the selection will be communicated on April 15, 2010.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The final selection of the objects to be included in the publication will be made by a joint committee of members of the Board of ICOM Europe and the Museum of Europe including:

PRIZE FOR THE BEST CONTRIBUTION

The best contribution will receive a travel grant given by ICOM Europe for the ICOM Europe Tour 2010 in China, which will be organized as a pre-conference tour of the General Conference of ICOM in Shanghai at the beginning of November 2010 (see: www.icom-europe.org).

Udo Goesswald, Chair ICOM Europe

Krzysztof Pomian, Scientific Director of the Museum of Europe

7. CALL FOR PAPERS

<http://www.afsnet.org/annualmeet/index.cfm>

November 17-21, American Anthropological Association Meeting, New Orleans.

<http://aaanet.org/meetings/Call-for-Papers.cfm>

chris.wingfield@prm.ox.ac.uk

July 5-8, 'Crises and Opportunities: Past, Present and Future', Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA)

18th Biennial Conference 2010, The University of Adelaide, Australia.

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/asaa2010/>

July, 24-27, International Conference of Indigenous and Cultural Psychology, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

<http://cicp.psikologi.ugm.ac.id>

August 18-20, Africa Media & Democracy Conference, Accra, Ghana . <http://www.amdmc.org>

October 3-6, 2010 IUAES Inter-Congress, From the Crossroads of Civilizations: Understanding Cultural Diversity to Connect Societies, Antalya, Turkey. <http://iuaes2010.org>

October 29-31, 'Media and Culture: Global Homogeneity and Local Identity', Penang Island, Malaysia.
<http://www.asianmediacongress.org>

November 12 -14, 11th International Joint World Cultural Tourism Conference, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China. <http://www.kasct.co.kr>

8. CONFERENCES

www.sru.uea.ac.uk/AncientandModern.php

<http://www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=170289>

April 2, Diversity of Places: Digital films on Places and Placemaking, Honolulu, Hawaii, United States.
<http://diversityinplace.org>

April 14-16, Transforming culture in the digital age, Tartu, Estonia. <http://transformingculture.eu>
<http://www.cultureandpower.org>

April 30, Conference on Intellectual Property, New Rochelle, New York, United States.
<http://www.iona.edu/cip>

<http://www.museums.ca/stjohns2010/en>

<http://www.gnel2010.uni-bayreuth.de/en/index.html>

May 21st 'Multiple belongings: Diaspora and Transnational Homes' Histories of Home SSN 2nd Annual Conference. British Library, London.
http://www.museumethnographersgroup.org.uk/?p=event_show&id=69

[Museums Without Borders](#) or www.aam-us.org

<http://conference.inotherwords.is>

<http://monubasin8.ntua.gr/>

<http://www.fsa.ulaval.ca/tourisme>

<http://www.nusacc.org/news/379-2010-htrs>

Evora, Portugal. <http://www.heritage2010.greenlines-institute.org/>

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/gradschools/reconmulti>

June 28, Consuming the Past: Library Resources for PGRs - An Interdisciplinary Conference and Training Day, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom.
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/cmrs/mrpdg/conference/conference2010/>

<http://www.easaonline.org/conferences/easa2010/index.htm>

July 7-9, 3rd Global Conference: Diasporas - Exploring Critical Issues, Oxford, United Kingdom.
<http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/at-the-interface/diversity-recognition/diasporas/>

July 20-22, International Conference on Sustainable Community Development 2010, Putrajaya, Malaysia. <http://ipsas.upm.edu.my/icosd2010/>

9. WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

Even though it may still seem far away the ICOM 2010 General Meeting in Shanghai is slowly approaching. This fact is reflected in this issue of ICME News. Apart from the general call for papers for the ICME sessions, we have a special introduction and call for papers for the session on 'Challenging the Museum/The Challenging Museum', the announcement of the ICME Fellowship for Shanghai 2010, and a call for contributions for a publication on 'Reflecting Europe in its Museum Objects'. We hope many of you will respond to these calls and contribute to making Shanghai 2010 rich in debate and knowledge sharing.

But what are the potential pitfalls for a project like this one, and how may the Wiki-format be adjusted to better apply to ethnographic concerns? The article by van der Zee, El Sheikh and Weiler introduces a number of these considerations and will hopefully work as a starting point for further discussions in Shanghai.

As always I will encourage all of you to contribute to ICME News with articles, exhibition presentations and reviews or points for discussion in order to make ICME News an engaged forum for our global network of ethnographers.

Deadline for the next ICME News letter is June 25. Please send news and contributions to editor@icme.icom.museum

Peter Bjerregaard

Editor, ICME News