

Museological News

Semi-annual bulletin
of ICOM International Committee
for Museology

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no 14 (March 1990)

Dear colleagues

This is the second issue of *Museological News* since the 1989 General Conference. For several reasons I was not able to produce two issues last year as was planned. This does not mean that nothing has happened. In this issue you will find the report of our successful 1990 annual conference in Zambia, where we were hosted by President Kaunda. You'll also find information about our next annual conference, which will be held in Switzerland.

Last year has been a difficult but challenging year for our colleagues in East Europe. There are new possibilities now to strengthen ties with the international museological community. I know there is a great interest to join international bodies like ICOFOM. ICOFOM from its part has always shown much interest in the developments of museological theory and practice in East Europe. In this issue you will find some information about our current research project concerning museums under revolutionary change.

Thanks to the cooperation of Mathilde Bellaigue and Andre Desvallees, French speaking members will receive a French edition of *Museological News*. I hope we will be able to continue this in the future.

Peter van Mensch

New members

Between 16 April and 31 August 1990 44 colleagues have been registered as new members of our committee:

North America	14
Latin America	2
Asia	5
Europe	19
Oceania	4

Only 12 new members indicated that they wanted to be voting member in ICOFOM. The 32 non-voting members are registered as voting member in 14 different international committees, with a preference for CECA (7), ICMAH (4), INTERCOM (3), ICAMT (3), and ICTOP (3).



ICOFOM '90 ZAMBIA

CONFERENCE ON MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE PRESERVATION

Report of the 13th annual conference of the ICOM International Committee for Museology, Livingstone-Mfuwe (Zambia), 1-12 October 1990.

Twenty-five museologists from all over the world attended the 1990 annual conference, 10 from host country Zambia, 4 from other African countries (Lesoto, Mozambique, Namibia), and 11 from countries outside Africa (Brazil, Finland, France, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden). Despite the limited resources the organizing committee, chaired by ICOFOM's vice-president Manyando Mukela, succeeded in preparing a programme which balanced work and leisure. For those coming from outside Africa the localities chosen provided an excellent opportunity to get a better understanding of the landscape and the interaction of culture and nature. The setting of the conference thus contributed to its success in a manifold way.

Programme

- 01 Oct. 1 opening session
 a welcome remarks by Manyando Mukela, chairman of the organizing committee
 b short address by Peter van Mensch, president of ICOFOM
 c short address by Vinos Sofka, member of the Executive Council of ICOM, representing Alpha Konare, president of ICOM
 d opening address by S.C. Mwiimbwa, Provincial Political Secretary for Southern Province of the Republic of Zambia
 2 keynote address by Lazarus Tembo, MP, Minister of State for Culture (Ministry of Labour, Social Development and Culture): "Storing the discarded cloak - a challenge for museums"
 keynote address by Dr Malumbo
 3 Philip Simbotwe, managing director of Environmental Sciences Consultancy Company Ltd, Livingstone: "Museology and environmental conservation"
- 02 Oct. 1 Tereza Scheiner (Brazil): "Museums and natural heritage; alternatives and limits of action"
 2 Andre Desvallees (France): "Quelques naives remarques sur le rapport entre museologie et environnement"
 3 visit to the Victoria Falls area, including the Victoria Falls Field Museum
- 03 Oct. 1 visit to the Livingstone Museum
 2 excursion to Mukuni village
 3 Absolom Mulongo (Zambia): "The role of museums in cultural preservation"
- 04 Oct. 1 Francis Shalwindi (Zambia): "Utilization of dambos in Zambia"

- 2 visit to the Railway Museum
 3 lunch on Makumbi Boat at the invitation of ICOM National Committee of Zambia
 4 discussion "Should environmental education be included in the educational programmes of technical museums?"
- 05 Oct. 1 Flexon Mizinga (Zambia): "Museology and problems in the preservation of cultural heritage"
 2 Manyando Mukela (Zambia): "Museology and the movable natural heritage with special reference to Zambia"
 3 John Aage Gjestrum (Norway): "Ecomuseum Toten in Norway"
 4 visit to Maramba Cultural Village
- 06 Oct. visit to Zimbabwe (Victoria Falls)
- 07 Oct. visit to Tonga Museum and Crafts Project, Choma
- 08 Oct. 1 visit to Political Museum, Lusaka
 2 visit to Zintu Crafts Museum Project, Lusaka
 3 evening game drive in Luangwa Valley National Park (Mfuwe area)
- 09 Oct. 1 morning game drive in Luangwa Valley National Park (Mfuwe area)
 2 ICOFOM business meeting
 3 discussion "To what extent should the perspective of the community concerned be included in the decisions concerning preservation, research and communication?"
 4 Peter van Mensch (Netherlands): "What is museology?"
- 10 Oct. 1 group discussions about conclusions and recommendations
 2 group reports and plenary discussion about conclusions and recommendations
- 11 Oct. 1 formulation of resolutions
 2 visit to Crocodile Farm
 3 visit to cultural village
- 12 Oct. 1 Ntsema Khitsane (Lesotho): "Report on the annual conference of CECA, held at Gaborone, Botswana"
 2 closing session
 3 meeting with the Hon. Pickson Chitambala, Minister of Tourism at the Ministry of Tourism, Lusaka
 4 working dinner at State House, hosted by His Excellency Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia

The meetings on 1-5 Oct. were held at Musi-o-Tunya Intercontinental Hotel at Livingstone; the meetings on 9-12 Oct. were held at Mfuwe Lodge in Luangwa Valley National Park. The

Musi-o-Tunya Hotel is beautifully situated, very close to the Victoria Falls. Unfortunately, at the end of the dry season (and because of human interferences upstream) there was little water. A walk to the Zimbabwe side of the falls gave a more spectacular view. The meeting place in Mfuwe was situated in a national park. It was occasionally visited by Vervet Monkeys, baboons, and at night by Pukus (antelopes), Elephants and Hippos. During game drives in the early morning, the late afternoon and the night we saw many animals like lion, elephant, buffalo, puku, zebra, waterbuck, giraffe, etc., etc. During the closing session a herd of 100 elephants passed the lodge as if they wanted to say goodbye.

ICOFOM Study Series

Eleven papers that were sent in advance were published in ICOFOM Study Series 17. Eight additional papers that were presented during the conference will eventually be published in ICOFOM Study Series 18, together with opening addresses, summaries and conclusions.

Symposium

The original theme of the conference was 'Museums and the environment - natural and cultural'. During the preparations the Zambian organizers chose for a slightly different perspective: 'Museums and heritage preservation'. It was therefore decided not to use the proposed break-down of the topic (see Museological News 13) as basic structure for the discussions. The discussions of the first three days were chaired by Vinos Sofka; the others by Peter van Mensch. Summaries were presented by Tereza Scheiner, Gunilla Cedrenius, Solange Machamo and Peter van Mensch. The first draft of the conclusions was compiled by John Pallett, Pythias Mbewe and Peter van Mensch; the final draft was prepared by Manyando Mukela, Vinos Sofka and Peter van Mensch.

Business matters

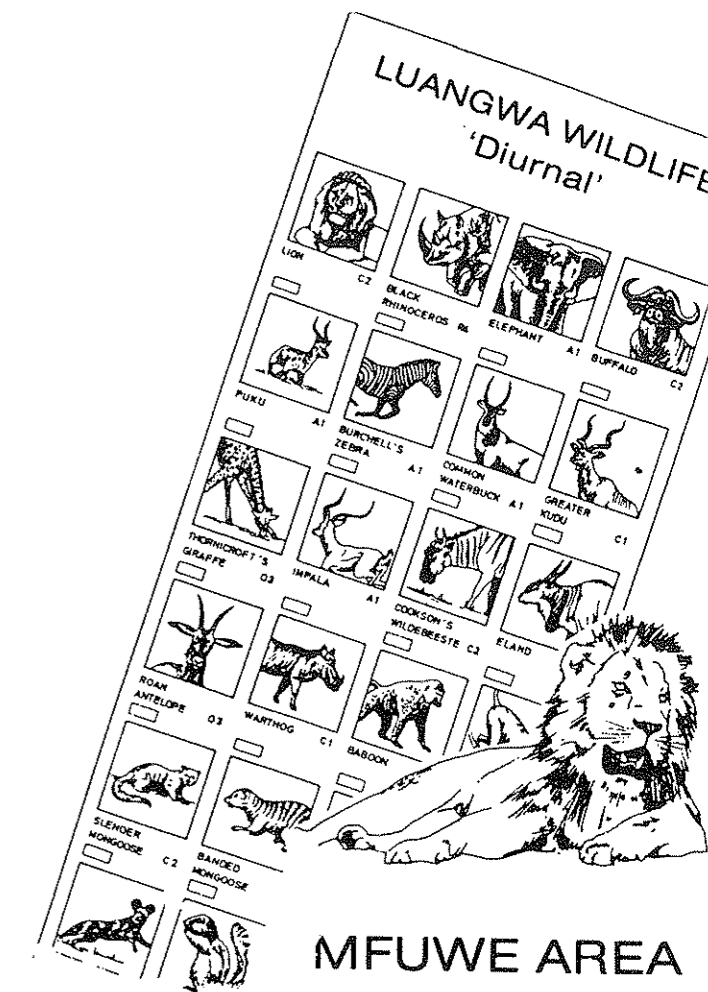
A business meeting was held in Mfuwe on 9 October. Eight regular members attended this meeting, with six observers (and occasionally visited by some monkeys).

- projected activities

Information was given about the 14th annual conference, which will be held in Switzerland in Sept. 1991. The members requested to be informed about the dates as soon as possible. ICOFOM has been invited to meet in Greece in 1993.

- national working groups: USA

The United States working group of ICOFOM met for its third annual meeting in Chicago on May 11, 1990 in conjunction with the American Association of Museums. At that meeting the 1990 symposium theme was discussed. A report on this discussion was sent on behalf of the US members of ICOFOM by Judith Spielbauer. The members present at the meeting at Mfuwe expressed their gratitude to this initiative.



MFUWE AREA

- regional working groups: Latin America

Tereza Scheiner and Nelly Decarolis will prepare a regional working group for South America. The inclusion of Middle America and the Caribbean is still being discussed.

- regional working groups: Asia

Regional coordinator Sochiro Tsuruta reported on his initiatives. In 1991 an informal meeting of Japanese and Chinese museologists will be organised. Vinos Sofka reported on a meeting of

- museological research

Peter van Mensch reported on a project initiated by Tomislav Sola on "Museums under revolutionary change", highlighting the current museum developments in East Europe. Members present at the meeting remarked that museums in Africa endure similar experiences.

Vinos Sofka reported on an initiative of Marc Barblan (member of ICOFOM) to study the contribution of museums to the protection of our environment. This project will be sponsored by several organizations, among which ICOM. Unfortunately, due to bureaucratic procedures Marc Barblan was not able to attend the meetings in Zambia.

- publications

ISS 17 was published with papers sent in preparation of the 1990 annual conference. ISS 18, containing additional symposium papers, will be published as soon as possible. Papers sent in preparation of the 1991 conference will be published as ISS 19. It was suggested to



copy ISS on microfiche in order to make this material more accessible.

MN 13 was published in April. MN 14 will be published in November. In view of the costs involved, MN will only be sent to active members (i.e. members who have paid their membership dues).

- membership

The official number of members is growing, but there is a problem that due to bureaucratic procedures members in different parts of the world are not able to pay their dues on time. These members continuously disappear and appear on the official membership lists which are distributed by ICOM.

- Executive Council

Vinos Sofka reported on the EC meeting in June 1990 and introduced the new working method of the EC.

Meetings with Zambian authorities

On 12 October the participants of the conference were invited at the Ministry of Tourism to meet the Hon. Pickson Chitambala, Minister of Tourism and, as such, responsible for the national museums. Also present were the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism, Mr T. Daka, the Assistant Secretary, Mr H.M. Chisuta, the chairman of the National Museums Board, Mr L.E. Mukwato, and the board's secretary, Mr Nawa Mataa.

On the same day the non-Zambian participants of the conference were invited to meet His Excellency Dr Kenneth Kaunda, President of the Republic of Zambia, and to join him at a working dinner at State House, Lusaka. Introduced by the Hon. Pickson Chitambala, Minister of Tourism, ICOFOM's chairman Peter van Mensch reported on the conference and presented the conclusions and recommendations. Vinos Sofka spoke on behalf of ICOM's president Alpha Konare. The meeting and dinner were

attended by different ministers and other high officials. The speeches by His Excellency Dr. Kaunda and Peter van Mensch were broadcasted by the Zambian television and radio.

ICOFOM'90 Zambia
Museums and heritage preservation

Conclusions and recommendations

Museum workers from different parts of the world, gathered at the 13th Annual Meeting of the ICOM International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) on 'Museums and heritage preservation' in October, 1990, in Zambia,

stating that after decades of unlimited exploitation of the earth's riches leading to deterioration of the environment in the name of progress, the quality of the environment has become the main concern in the world today and the need for its safeguarding the urgent goal,

convinced that museums as social institutions and museology as a scientific discipline have an important role to play in promoting sustainable development, in which the right of the human family to a healthy and productive environment is in harmony with nature,

emphasizing the mission of the committee which is to discuss the theory of museology, including the social role of museums in the contemporary world,

acknowledging that the work of museums depend on the specific socio-economic conditions,

present to ICOFOM membership, ICOM and its national and international committees, and the museum world in general, as well as everybody concerned, following proposals:

- 1 With regard to the mission of museum the concepts 'development', 'environment' and 'heritage' should be used in a broad sense as sum total of cultural and natural processes seen in their mutual interrelatedness.
- 2 The problems concerning socio-economic and cultural development, the quality of the environment, and the preservation of heritage should be considered from a global perspective as they are interrelated on a global scale.
- 3 The broad concepts of development, environment and heritage, as well as the global perspective should be incorporated in the three main responsibilities of museums, being preservation, research, and education.
- 4 The broadened perspective of museum work involves interdisciplinary approaches and action. Concern for the environment is not only a matter for natural history museums. Environmental issues should also be included in the work of all other types of museums.
- 5 The participation of individuals and communities in all three functions of the museum, i.e. preservation, research and education, is a 'conditio sine qua non' for the effective contribution of museums to the development of society.
- 6 Museums should, in conjunction with other institutes, actively discourage the negative by-products of tourism, while promoting tourism for the benefit of tourists as well as the natural and cultural heritage itself.

7 Following the mission of museums as outlined above, museums should refrain - as much as possible - from using materials that in their manufacture or in their use might contribute to further degradation of the environment.

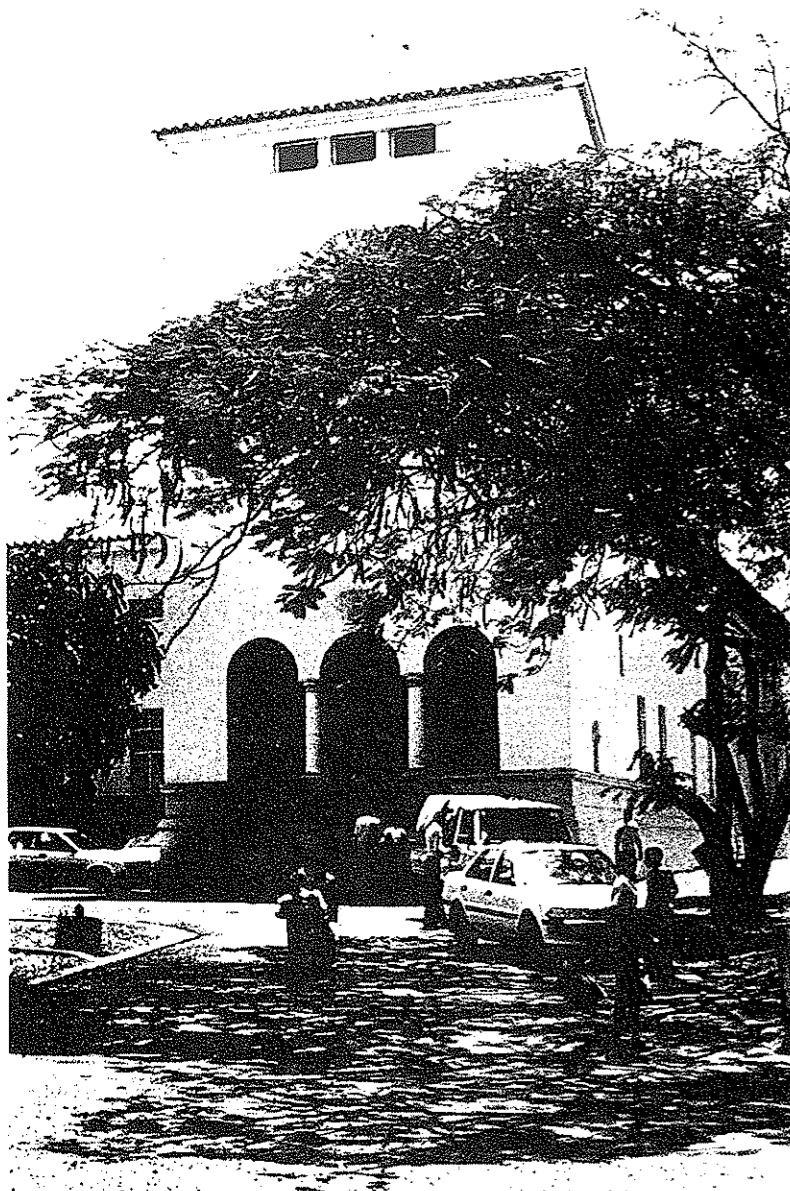
8 In order to develop the social role of museums and to ensure the contribution of their responsibilities, the committee urges the authorities concerned to contribute to the training of museum personnel by establishing museological courses at university and technical levels and by facilitating professional exchange between institutions.

9 In addition to training it is of crucial importance that all museum workers observe a professional code of ethics. National museums associations as well as individual museums are urgently asked to pursue the formulation of an appropriate code of ethics, based of the ICOM Code of Professional Ethics.

10 In view of the above the national authorities, particularly those of the SADCC countries, are asked to improve, wherever necessary, museum networks in their respective countries, in order to balance museum action on national, regional and local level.

The committee is aware of the fact that many conferences in the past have come to similar conclusions and have published similar recommendations. However, many of these recommendations were neglected and were not included in international and national policies and practical action. The present degradation of man's natural and cultural resources calls for re-emphasis of these proposals. The well-being of the world of tomorrow, requires joined action now.

Mfuwe, 11 October 1990.



Livingstone Museum

In memoriam

On June 11th, 1990, our colleague Waldisa Russio Camargo Guarnieri died. It came as a shock to everyone who knew her. As founder and director of the Instituto de Museologia at Sao Paulo (Brazil) she has given a valuable contribution to the development of museum theory and museum practice in Brazil. Waldisa Russi was one of the first Brazilian members of ICOFOM. Partly due to her enthusiasm the number of Brazilian members increased from 3 in 1983 to 70 now. From 1980-1986 she was member of the board. She contributed to Museological Working Papers and ICOFOM Study Series. She will be remembered by her ICOFOM friends as a strong personality, with a well developed feeling for the social responsibility of museums.

(pvm)

Meanwhile Cde Kaunda has said that preservation of culture was vital to stop technology from completely destroying the country's heritage.

Speaking at State House on Friday night when he hosted a dinner for members of the international committee for museology (Icofom) from all parts of the world, he said he was glad that there were people who worked and cared for preservation of cultural environment in the country.

The President said unless the museums and heritage preservation group worked hand in hand with Zambia the country's programmes would be meaningless.

"We are not working on the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) that will involve the people in conservation at world level. Such programmes can only be ignored by any country at their own risk," he said.

It was part of the country's programme to see that the environment of Zambia was not destroyed by man whose struggle was to eat.

"If we fail to live to our expectations as presented in the papers from the group it will not be because we lack interest but because we have no means to implement our programmes," he said.

Congratulations

We congratulate our former president and present honorary president, Vinos Sofka, with the honour rendered to him by the University of Uppsala (Sweden). This university granted him the title 'doctor honoris causa' for his work in the field of museology.

(pvm)

SUNDAY TIMES OF ZAMBIA

SUNDAY, October 14, 1990

Vol. 8 No. 1074

ICOFOM research project

Museums under revolutionary change

During the past year museum workers of East Europe have experienced important changes in the political structure of their countries which affected the social role of museums. Old legitimations fell to pieces, new ones have to be defined. One question, of the many that had to be answered, was for example: are the so-called museums of the revolutionary movement obsolete and should they be closed, or should they be kept and given new tasks? Unfortunately, the discussion about the social and political legitimation of museums is biased by the difficult economic situation in almost all countries concerned. Lack of funds prevents museums to adapt their galleries, while some museums are even closed because the new authorities refuse to spend money on what they consider to be instruments of a discredited regime.

The ICOM International Committee for Museology has taken the initiative to carry out a research project concerning 'museums under revolutionary change'. For each country in East Europe, including the former German Democratic Republic, two colleagues are asked to report on the situation in their respective countries.

Some of the questions that will be dealt with are: How did/do the political changes affect museum work? What kind of changes were necessary as to the content of the exhibitions and other activities? Are any initiatives taken to preserve documents and objects of the past period? Are any initiatives taken to document the recent changes? What are the main problems museums are confronted with at the moment? What do you expect for the future? Which help can ICOFOM/ICOM offer?

During the last week of September a seminar will be organized in Yugoslavia. On the basis of the reports and other material conclusions will be drawn which will be presented to ICOFOM at its annual meeting in October. The final report will be sent to ICOM (to be presented officially at the General Conference in 1992) and the different governments concerned.

Those who are interested are asked to contact

Dr Tomislav Sola
Katedra za Muzeologiju
Filozofski Fakultet
Salajeva 3
41000 Zagreb
(Yugoslavia)

fax 38 41 513834

ICOFOM Triennial Programme 1992-1995

The board has started with the preparations of next Triennial Programme. The years 1989-1992 have formed a transitional period. After a periode of rapid expansion it is not yet clear in which direction the committee is heading. At the annual meeting in Vevey, Switzerland, the board will present some ideas as to the future of the committee and its working method. All members are invited to contribute to the preparation of the committee's policy documents by sending us comments, proposals, etc. In particular we are interested to be informed about possible themes for coming meetings.

Please send your suggestions to

Peter van Mensch
Reinwardt Academie
Van den Brandelerkade 24 A
2313 GW Leiden
(Netherlands)

fax 31 71 132241

seminar "Museums under revolutionary change"
23-28 September, 1991
Interuniversity Centre, Dubrovnik (Yugoslavia)
all information: Dr Tomislav Sola, Zagreb

Grupo Regional del ICOFOM para America Latina y el Caribe

Following the Triennial Programme 1990-1992 ICOFOM's board members Nelly Decarolis and Tereza Scheiner took the initiative to contact our members in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to establish a regional working group. The purpose of this group will be to promote, dynamize and document, in Latin America, the study and investigation of museum theory. This will make possible a wider participation of ICOFOM members of the region in the activities of the committee through discussions, publications and professional exchange. The programme of activities to be developed will include:

- production of texts about previously selected themes, in Portuguese and Spanish;
- organization of annual meetings, at a regional level, to discuss and evaluate the content of the works produced;
- joint production of a document with the results and proposals of such meetings, to be sent to the annual meetings and symposia of ICOFOM;
- annual publication of the conclusions of each regional meeting and of texts produced in Latin America about museum theory;
- systematic diffusion of information related to ICOFOM, through a bilingual bulletin;
- professional exchange at all levels, in works related to museum theory.

In February the first issue of ICOFOM/LAM was published in Spanish and Portuguese, with information about the initiative mentioned above, and the results of the Zambia '90 meeting.

For more information please contact:

Nelly Decarolis Tereza Scheiner
Rodriguez Pena 1427-10 B Rua Peri, 299/301
1021 Buenos Aires 22460 Rio de Janeiro
Argentina Brazil

fax 541 961 9627

fax 55 21 2550185

ICOFOM annual conference and symposium
"The language of exhibitions"
4-14 October, 1991
Alimentarium, Vevey (Switzerland)
all information: Dr Martin Schärer, Vevey

US-ICOFOM

In 1988 ICOFOM board member Judith Spielbauer initiated the first national working group within our committee. The constitutive meeting was held on June 5, 1988, in connection with the AAM conference in Pittsburg.

It is the purpose of US-ICOFOM to support and further the aims of ICOFOM by

- providing access to ICOFOM when attending annual meetings of ICOFOM is not possible;
- providing opportunities to study and develop museology within the framework of US perspectives;
- contributing US experiences and perspectives to the work of ICOFOM and the international museology community.

The working produces a newsletter containing information about the activities of ICOFOM and US-ICOFOM. For more information please contact:

Judith Spielbauer
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Harrison Hall
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio 45056
U.S.A.

fax 1 513 5293841

Annual Conference 1990

It is my pleasure to inform you, on behalf of the organizing committee, about our next annual conference. This conference will be held in Vevey, Switzerland, October 4-14, 1991.

The town of Vevey is situated in the region of the Lake of Geneva (Riviere vaudoise), one hour from Geneva, 15 min. from Lausanne. In 1991 the Swiss Confederation is celebrating its 700 years of existence. Although this is not the main reason to have our 14th annual conference in this country, it will certainly add to the general atmosphere.

draft programme

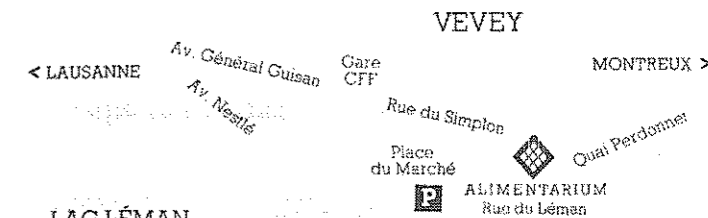
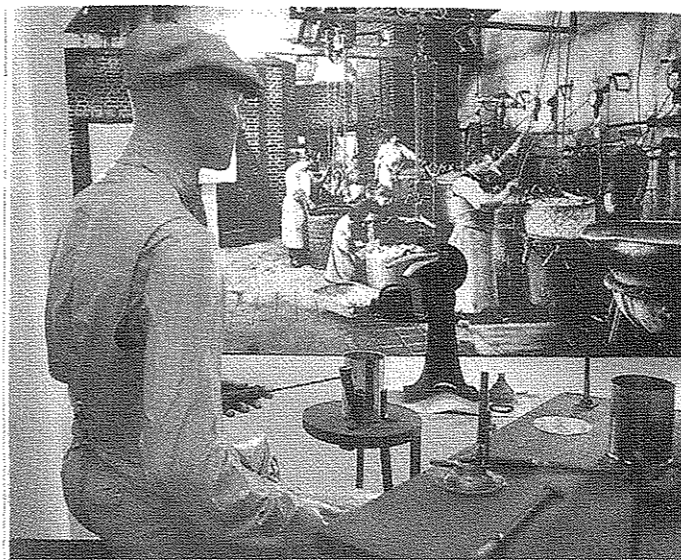
- 4 Oct. Arriving.
Evening: welcome meeting
- 5-6 Oct. Symposium "The language of exhibitions I: theoretical aspects"
- 7-11 Oct. "Switzerland - a huge exhibition"
Visit of important, symbolic, amazing and very normal places in and outside museums throughout the country and local discussions on the various languages of exhibitions. Including seminars on
 - the state of museums and museology in Switzerland, and
 - museological developments in East Europe, as well as
 - the ICOFOM annual meeting.
- 12-13 Oct Symposium "The language of exhibitions II: practical aspects"
- 14 Oct. Departure

The approximative costs are 1700 Swiss Francs (about \$ 1400) per person, covering all expenses. Subsidies for delegates from East Europe and from developing countries is possible.

Address for all organizational purposes and further informations:

Dr Martin R. Schärer
Alimentarium
Case postale 13
CH-1800 Vevey (Switzerland)

phone +41 21 924 41 11
fax +41 21 924 45 63



ALIMENTARIUM, Musée de l'Alimentation.

ICOFOM annual symposium

The annual ICOFOM symposium is one of the main scientific activities of the committee and decisive means to achieve its objectives in the field of museology, as expressed in the Internal Rules of ICOFOM. It has been established as a place for direct discussion and debate of museological issues. Its principal aim is to gather valuable knowledge of general significance for museology by calling on the experience of museum workers and museological institutions in different countries. To search for solutions of museological problems and through them meet the needs of the world of museums in another purpose of this activity.

The theme of the 1991 annual symposium, 'The language of exhibitions' deals with the way we, the museum people, communicate with our audience. The exhibition form is one of a number of mass media possibilities, and even though the exhibition is increasingly regarded as a single component in a multi-media presentation, it is certainly the most characteristic medium used by museums.

All members of the committee and other interested colleagues are invited to contribute to our symposium either by joining us in Vevey, or by sending us a paper on the theme of the symposium. An introductory sketch of the theme and some guidelines for participation are given hereafter. Please take good note of the deadline for sending the manuscripts: August 1.

ICOFOM annual symposium

Guidelines for the participants

There are three principles that apply to the participation at ICOFOM scientific activities:

- Symposia, like other scientific activities, are open to everybody interested, especially from the field of museums and from the departments or institutions of museology or museum studies, but also other sciences and branches involved with museum management and operations, no matter whether they are or not members of ICOFOM or ICOM.

- The participation at the symposium includes the right to attend the activity and listen to the discussion and intervene in it, as well as to write the paper, to comment in writing the other's papers and to present the ideas at the activity and views when the conclusions are or have been drawn. The participation is voluntary. The Committee has no available funds, and a reimbursement of participation costs, such as travel expenses, accommodations, translations of the texts etc. cannot be granted.

- Taking into account the economic, practical and other limitations of the real possibility to attend international meetings, both participation in person and participation in spirit by only writing papers and comments are practiced, in order to encourage the members to join in the work and to increase the exchange of ideas and experience.

The discussions at the symposium are based on key-note speeches and the written material published in ICOFOM Study Series. Interventions from the auditorium are expected and taken into consideration.

Guidelines for participation by writing

Basic papers on the topic written by the members of ICOFOM and experts invited from outside are the ground work for the symposium. These papers have

- to be typed on A4 (European format) in clear print in order to make possible direct and immediate reproduction of the papers in the Committee's preprints (i.e. ICOFOM Study Series). Because of tight time limitations, neither editorial encroachments concerning the contents or the language, nor retyping can be done.

- to be made in both ICOM languages, i.e. in English and French. If this is not possible, an abstract of about half a page should be sent in the other language. This is very important if communication between all participants on all papers be ensured.

- to be a maximum of 8 pages per language.
- to be sent directly to the editor of ICOFOM Study Series,

Dr Vinos Sofka fax +46 8 6607284
Statens Historiska Museum
Box 5405
S 11484 Stockholm (Sweden)

The language of exhibitions

An exhibition is an artificial setting. Within this setting a wide range of elements is used according to some strategy. Margaret Hall mentions two main strategies: the taxonomic and the thematic approach. Similarly Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley distinguish between four strategies: objective and aesthetic (as two forms of the taxonomic approach) as opposed to narrative and situational (as two forms of the thematic approach). According to the taxonomic approach, material is displayed by classification alone. This classification is either based on instrumental rationality (objective display), or on the anti-rationalism of aestheticized objectivity (aesthetic display). Both types of display assumes an informed public. The thematic approach involves telling a story. The visitor is guided to make connections and to follow the development of the thesis as it evolves in the exhibition. This might be realized through a simple linear approach, following a book- or film-like sequentiality (narrative display) or through reconstructed naturalistic period contexts (situational display).

This brief survey of exhibition types indicates the diversity of possibilities to organise the museum material on display. Each approach is the manifestation of a suspension of reality, a 'dreamland' (David Prince). It is the museum (the curator) that creates this 'dreamland'. Objects are bestowed with meanings they did not have before. This materialized dreamland communicates interpretations. If the visitor wants to be a part of this dreamland he/she has to accept the judgements and interpretations that constitute it, because there is always the museum as a medium that stands between him/her and the object.

An exhibition is the result of a process of selection and manipulation of the information emitted by museum items. This process does not remove the information contained within the object, but it offers the visitor a strictly guided choice: 'An exhibition creates an almost totally closed information-communication system' (Ivo Maroevic). All dreamlands are not the same. Art, science and historical exhibitions have distinct formal characteristics, connected with different attitudes towards individual objects. Whereas, for example, for art historians each object is unique and has to be continually re-examined with fresh eyes, zoologists deal with material which have for them a generic rather than a specific significance.

Besides different approaches as to strategy, there are also different approaches as to style. Exhibitions can be presented in different styles. With this respect there seem to be two diverging tendencies resulting from a change in museum policy. According to Peter Cannon-Brookes the traditional 'arms-length relationship' between the museum and its users echoes the pastoral role of the priest. New museum policies seem to choose the pedagogical role of the schoolteacher or perhaps the commercial role of the merchant. The art collections have as yet remained the most

resistant, whilst more and more natural history specimens and technological artefacts disappear into store to be replaced by manufactured didactic displays incorporating a minimum of original specimens and a maximum of interactive audiovisuals (educational design). Science centres show this development in extreme. However, this telematic revolution within museums is counterbalanced by a strong tendency to evocation, the creation of an atmosphere in a theatrical way (experience design). Paradoxically modern technology has also been introduced to perfect this type of display (audio-animatronics).

The narrative and situational types of display are usually seen as improvements as compared to the taxonomic displays. The perfection of these approaches, however, has led to a development in exhibition design in opposite direction. This development is sometimes referred to as 'new museology'. Characteristic of this approach is the introduction of political content into the displays. The public is shown how the past may be manipulated and misrepresented for present purposes. Artefacts are broken from fixed chronological narrative and from their original contexts and reassembled with contemporary artefacts similarly decontextualized. Exaggeration, irony, humour and absurdity are introduced as means of stripping the self-evident meaning of the artefact of its power. In short, exhibition design should emphasize authorship and changing perceptions of the artefactual past.

This rough sketch of approaches and tendencies in exhibition design may indicate the topicality of the theme of ICOFOM's 1991 symposium. Communication is one of the key concerns in museology. So, let us take up the challenging theme of "The language of exhibitions".

Peter van Mensch

This introductory sketch has been based on following publications:

Margaret Hall, On display. A design grammar for museum exhibitions (London 1987).

Gottfried Korff, 'Objekt und Information im Widerstreit', Museumskunde 49, 1984, (2): 83-93.

M.Shanks & C.Tilley, Reconstructing archaeology (Cambridge 1987) Chapter 4, Presenting the past: towards a redemptive aesthetic for the museum.

The basic papers should be sent before August 1 1991. The basic papers that are received in time will be published as ICOFOM Study Series 19 and will be distributed among the authors and the participants of the symposium itself.



International Council of Museums International Committee for Museology

Founded 1976.

honorary chairman Jan Jelinek (Czechoslovakia)
Vinos Sofka (Sweden)

chairman Peter van Mensch (Netherl.)
vice-chairman Mathilde Bellaigue (France)
Manyando Mukela (Zambia)
Judith Spielbauer (USA)

secretary Nelly Decarolis (Argentina)
Martin Schürer (Switzerland)

member Andre Desvallees (France)
Don McMichael (Australia)
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Tereza Scheiner (Brazil)
Klaus Schreiner (Germany)
Tomislav Sola (Yugoslavia)
Zbynek Stránský (Czechoslovakia)

permanent adviser Vinos Sofka (Sweden)

coordinator Asia Soichiro Tsuruta (Japan)

The aims of the committee are:

- 1 to establish museology as a scientific discipline;
- 2 to study and to assist in the development of museums and the museum profession, to study their role in society, their activities and their functions;
- 3 to encourage critical analysis of the main trends of museology.

ICOFOM's host museum for 1991

The idea of opening a food museum dates from 1978. Two years later, with this aim in mind, Nestlé established the Alimentarium Foundation. On 21 June 1985, the new museum was inaugurated; it informs visitors about past and present problems connected with food and nourishment.

People must eat to live – a fact so evident it tends to hide the really complex problems involved in feeding a specific village, city, region or country at a given time. A large network of closely related factors that are constantly changing determines what food will be eaten in any given place.

Production in the widest sense of the term (farming, animal husbandry, hunting and gathering) is the first step foodstuffs take on the road from producer to consumer. Cooking and eating are the last stages on this road. The greater the division of labour in the society that produced the food, the more stages there are on the road from producer to consumer. Processing and preserving food outside the home, transportation and trade all become increasingly important.

At present, three sections of the museum are open to the public; scientific, ethnological and historical aspects of food and nutrition are on display in them. The exhibits are lively and dynamic, and cover a surface of around 900 m².

Temporary exhibitions on themes from all domains of food and nourishment are planned.

