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(March 2004)

20th General Conference of ICOM
02 – 08 October 2004 in Seoul/ South Korea
“Museums and Intangible Heritage”

XXVI Annual Symposium of ICOFOM
04 – 06 October 2004 in Seoul/ South Korea
“Museology and Intangible Heritage”

Dear ICOFOM Family, dear Friends,

the XXVI Annual Meeting of ICOFOM is included in the time period of General Conference of ICOM. It will take place from October 04 to 06, 2004. As we dealt with the theme “Museology, Tangible and Intangible Heritage” already in the year 2000 in Munich/Germany and Brno/Czech Republic, I would propose that we prepare the Conference in two steps: Firstly, to find out which contributions ICOFOM STUDY SERIES 32 present. There is a main copy and a supplement as “pdf.-file” in the ICOFOM website (<http://www.icofom.icom.org>). Secondly, to contribute to ICOFOM STUDY SERIES 35 (you are warmly invited) and to examine a theme that continues, completes and deepens the articles from ISS 32.

In this NEWSLETTER you will find particularly the Call for Papers. The specific ICOFOM-programme and the modalities for the Elections will be sent to you by March 15, 2004.

Call for Papers (dead-line: July 15, 2004)

Offers of papers are invited in respect of the general topic: “Museology and Intangible Heritage”

1. Museology and the Kinds of Intangible Heritage
 - Museology and the terms “intangible/virtual” and “immaterial/virtuel”
 - Reports on various aspects of Museology and Intangible Heritage
 - Museology and a certain type of museum in relation to Intangible Heritage

2. Museology, the museums and the intangible "environment"

- Museology and the relationship to the arts, nature and techniques
- Museology as an instrument to preserve the intangible heritage
- Museology, artists and intangible heritage
- Art and Creativity as Heritage

3. Ethical responsibility

- Museology, artists, historians, art historians, natural scientists etc. and intangible heritage
- Museologists and the responsibility to society

To promote your ideas, I shall quote excellent ideas of our colleagues from all over the world which were already published in ICOFOM STUDY Series 32: "Museology and the Intangible Heritage".

"Immaterial and virtual contents put some important museological questions: the translation of the words 'Intangible' and 'virtual' in English, 'immatériel' and 'virtuel' in French, is very delicate, because their meanings are ambiguous in each language. The question is not settled to know, if all the processes (specially dynamic) which are generally classified in immaterial range (because we cannot touch them) are not merely part of concrete and real things which are studied and exhibited with difficulty: these 'real things' that Duncan F. Cameron has named 'knitifact' since 1968."

(André Devallées, France)

"Immaterial patrimony means two ideas strong different of the culture. And these some pages plan a double objective: (1) to contest the obviousness of the already hackneyed notion of spiritual or cultural patrimony (first possible senses the immaterial patrimony) and (2) to focalise on the importance too often neglected of the potential reality of the 'cyberworld', that develops under our eyes an other culture, or an other figure of the cultural patrimony (second senses of the immaterial patrimony). Indeed, the risk is museological, because the mission of the museum depends largely on the senses that we grant to the term of patrimony, according to whether it concerns to it have to transmit a spiritual inheritance or, on the contrary, to recognize the reality of a new culture that disorientates us."

(Bernard Deloche, France)

« En ce qui concerne le Bénin, quelles sont les différentes catégories de biens culturels que l'on peut classer dans le vocable de patrimoine intangible ? Qu'en est-il de leur étude et quelles sont les perspectives `entrevoir pour leur meilleure pris en compte ?

Le patrimoine intangible, à l'opposé du patrimoine physique, est totalité des habitudes, des pratiques transmises de génération et qui constituent l'identité d'un peuple. Vu dans le contexte béninois, le patrimoine intangible peut se subdiviser en plusieurs sous catégories. »

(Patrick Effiboley, Bénin)

« Mais en tout cas, la société du XXIe siècle avec son modèle globalisateur doit redéfinir encore, la tâche. Est-ce que les perspectives sémiotiques et étiologiques imposent aujourd'hui `l'exposition narrative des musées du tiers monde des limites infranchissables ? où et comment seront conservés dans la mémoire du Patrimoine de l'Humanité, les créations des cultures locales ? Quel discours le racontera, ce du cadre global, ou celles de la diversité ? »

(Norma Rusconi, Argentina)

"For example, the arresting line, 'Art and creativity as heritage', provoked the thought that there existed a cognitive process by way of which artistic items are created and that this process in itself is a heritage and perhaps collectible? How would one begin to collect the artistic impulses

of indigenous peoples, or any people in that regard? We are aware that the results of the creative process are collectible – paintings, sculptures, baskets, pottery, architecture, weaponry, weaving, and in fact, the very stuff of a museum's collection has had the hand of human creativity shaping. But, what about the process of creation itself, is it collectible?"
(Lynn Maranda, Canada)

"However, it seems to me that the intangible heritage we wish to concern ourselves with is not exhausted in what in what museological theory we have termed the concept of museality, or, put more broadly, the meaning of the museum object, where it marks material structure, the determinants of which are on the one hand material and structure, and on the other form, by its meaning. The intangible heritage is not just the artistic value of the work of art, the symbolic value of the object, the scientific meaning of the specimen, the historical meaning of a reliquary and so on. That is too simple and one-sided an interpretation of the intangible heritage in its relation to museology and its cognitive world."
(Ivo Maroevic, Croatia)

Since then there have been a number of significant art projects in museums that illustrate the complex relationship that artists have with the museum: on the one hand a critical perspective on the practices and philosophy of museums and on the other delight and inspiration taken from museum collections. Australian art's attention to the museological issues has been vigilant since the 1980s and continues to be so. Not only this, but artists in Australia since the 1980s have been preoccupied with Australian history, particularly revisionist history and how it relates to contemporary Australian society. This reflects broader international trends in contemporary art where post-colonialism and its revision of colonial history has been influential. The past and how it is presented by museums is a key theme in contemporary Australian art practice. The exhibitions under examination in this decision represent some of the first instances where Australian museums adopted this trend in art recognising its potential use in museums and heritage spaces. Not only this, but they illustrate ways in which artists explore intangible heritage."
(Kate Gregory, Australia)

"The relationship between the Museum and the intangible heritage begins in the sphere of the imaginary. And here we should remind Bachelard, to whom imagination, more than the art of forming images, is the faculty of deforming the images supplied by perception. The imaginary would consist, therefore, rather than the capacity to think, in the imaging capacity of perception of Reality: to imagine a process, not associated to images as such, which constitute a movement of stabilization of the imaginative capacity (or potency). To Bachelard, to perceive and to imagine are as antithetic as presence and absence. To imagine would mean to be absent (of Reality), to throw oneself into future, to move, through impulse, towards a lawless universe. It is an eluding process, through which we can perceive the subtle shades of movement."
(Tereza Scheiner, Brazil)

"North American society does not value randomness. Garbage on the lawn is forcefully discouraged. More seriously so is intellectual and artistic creativity. The overwhelming importance assigned to science vis-à-vis the arts and humanities has fostered evaluation based on quantity. If we can measure it, it must be valid and valuable. But many of the things we value most are not easily measured: friendship, peace, clean water. Can we measure creativity? Can we measure the values of museums? Are these questions valid and valuable?"
(Ann Davis, Canada)

“ ‘Creativity belongs to the rich and the poor, to majorities and minorities, to literate and illiterate’ and the arts are the most easily recognizable form of creativity which offer each individual the possibility to communicate his reality and his own vision of the world.”
(Nelly Decarolis, Argentina)

“Human cultures are a product of interaction between people and the physical environment. Desert cultures, where food and water and scarce, differed significantly from jungle cultures, where natural resources abound, but which also pose different challenges for survival. The diverse geographical territories on earth interact with human intelligence and inventiveness to give birth to an enormous variety of human cultures spread all over the world. Each culture developed its own unique and distinctive material and nonmaterial heritage. The nonmaterial or intangible culture consists of all those ideas, values, norms, philosophy, language, beliefs that are used by its adherents to survive together as a group or a society. The intangible culture plays a crucial role in defining the mental options, or opportunities that the society believes is possible. It acts like the rudder of the ship guiding the members of the society in its journey through life. Thus the earth abounds with the richness and variety of human cultures, just as it is home to a diverse range of life forms.”
(Anita B. Shah, India)

ICOFOM will accept contributions up to 8 pages, references and literature included, to the academic discussions on Museum theory. They must be written in digital technique. Pages must be size A4, text written in Arial 11-size, saved as “doc.-“-files. If not possible, please use “rtf.” – or “txt.” – file. Please, use flow-text and don’t format.

Don’t forget: name and address of the author, the country and the institution. Offers of papers should be submitted as soon as possible. The absolute dead-line is July, 15, 2004. Papers presented after this dead-line cannot be included in ICOFOM Study series. Contributions may be sent to: Dr. Hildegard Vieregg, President of ICOFOM, Barer Straße 29, 80799 Munich/Germany. E-mail: vieregg@mpz.bayern.de

With my best regards
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