

COMCOL ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

CALL FOR PAPERS

Museums as Hubs of Contemporary Collecting: The Future of Collecting Traditions

On occasion of the 25th General Conference of ICOM in Kyoto, Japan, 1st – 7th of September 2019, COMCOL will hold its annual conference. During the 3rd of September, it will be a joint meeting together with the International Committee for Egyptology (CIPEG) and during the 4th of September it will be a joint meeting together with the International Committee for Documentation (CIDOC).

The theme of the annual conference is related to the theme of the General Conference. Within the context of *“Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition”* the committees’ focus will be on *“Museums as Hubs of Collecting: The Future of Collecting Traditions”*.

What will the future of collecting look like in a globalized world concerning the global and local museum? How will we handle the illicit traffic with objects and the problematic proveniences in museum collections? The museums and their collections have been frequently discussed in media lately. Questions are asked about who should “own” the collections, is it the museum where the objects have been kept for many years – or others? How can we share our collections in the future – and what about repatriation? Media also report on organized activists, that have chosen to take over galleries in London and New York. This raises questions about how museums can engage with communities nearby – communities that demand involvement. And how do we engage and create involvement around collections and communities that are far away in both time and location?

What collecting practices will evolve in the future? We see a growing interest in museums to collect the contemporary in rapid response, where museum staff is out on the streets collecting and documenting societal phenomena on the spot or via social media. What effects will that bring? And how will it influence the documentation of objects? What kind of systems will be needed and emerge in the future in our time of digitization, digital workflows and presentation methods using new technologies?

In the context of the general theme of 2019, COMCOL and its collaborators would like to explore these perspectives further together with you.

We hereby invite researchers, museum professionals and students to present papers on the topics below. We welcome papers that explore the issues from the perspective of theory, practice and/or ethics:

Contemporary Collecting in a Globalized World

Museums are part of the cultural landscape and function as cultural hubs in the society. In our globalized world, the museum collecting traditions must be challenged and new best-practices must emerge to adapt to new global perspectives. What do the contemporary collecting practices look like in our world today? How can a local collection get a global interest – and be of importance for all people in the society no matter who you are or how long you have lived there? How can contemporary collecting practices promote global inclusion? And can contemporary collecting and museum collections be agents promoting human rights? How?

Collecting Strategy in Times of Illicit Traffic and Problematic Proveniences

The interest in museum objects has increased globally and so has the trade with antiques. The illicit traffic and problematic proveniences are problems in our global world. The museums also keep collections that can hold objects with a problematic provenience. How can we be more aware and stop the illicit traffic of objects? What do we do with the objects that have problematic proveniences – or perhaps lack proveniences? What collecting strategies should we use? Which strategies do we have in the museum community to solve these issues? What do we need to develop?

Repatriation and Sharing Collections

Repatriation has become more common among museums all over the world. Human remains are reburied and objects are returned to different societies within a country or between countries. Strategies for repatriation are a concern of every museum today. Some countries also share their new archaeological findings with other countries, while other choose to keep them in their own country. How does repatriation and sharing (or non-sharing) of collections influence collaboration, research, collections and in the end the experience for the museum visitor?

Community involvement in Collections from Far Away (in time and location)

From both a global and a local museum perspective museum collections evolve through diverse community involvement. Over the years COMCOL annual conferences have given a lot of examples of good practices from all over the planet. To work inclusive together with communities in different ways, with a diverse range of perspectives collecting the contemporary, is crucial to make a solid contemporary collecting project today. But how can we work with communities and involve people as we look at museum collections which are far – in time and/or location – from the original culture? Like archaeological and ethnographic collections?

Traditions, Collections, Management Systems and Digital Tools

The issue of documentation is important. As CIDOC states:

Documentation is essential to all aspects of a museum's activities. Collections without adequate documentation are not true "museum" collections.

The collections are of more interest and importance to the public today than earlier in the museum tradition, but there are more to be done to make the collections accessible and interesting to the public. How can traditional documentation and collection management systems evolve as the needs for increased contextual collection knowledge is growing as well as the need for making the collections public and interesting online? How can documentation include an accessibility for the public?

Digitisation, digital workflows and presentation methods using new technologies – as seen as a whole – need to be based on documentation and standards and could allow much wider access. What digital strategies for working with collections are there? How are the standards being reflected in the digital strategies? Are there examples of best-practices?

For the topics as outlined above we invite papers that explore the issues from the perspective of theory, practice and/or ethics. Presentations are limited to 20 minutes. The conference and abstract language is English. We warmly welcome proposals which go beyond traditional paper presentations and encompass also panels, post-it sessions and workshops.

Submitting abstracts

Abstracts (between 250 and 300 words) should be sent to:

asa.stenstrom@vetlanda.se and riitta.kela@gmail.com

by **February 25th, 2019**.

Approval of proposals will be announced by March 18th, 2019.

The following information should be included with the abstract:

- Title of submitted proposal. Please indicate if it is a paper, workshop or panel contribution
- Name(s) of Author(s)
- Affiliation(s), e-mail address(es) and full address(es)
- Abstract in English (between 250 and 300 words)
- Technical requirements for the presentations

COMCOL is the International Committee for Collecting of the International Council of Museums, which aims to deepen discussions and share knowledge on the practice, theory and ethics of collecting and collections development.

CIPEG is the International Committee for Egyptology of the International Council of Museums, which aims to promote collaboration among colleagues for the study preservation, and presentation of Egyptian and Sudanese collections, monuments and sites. It seeks to foster collaboration among museums, universities and research institutes as well as supplying partnership opportunities, sharing resources, knowledge and experience for an international forum.

CIDOC is the International Committee for Documentation of the International Council of Museums, which provides the museum community with advice on good practice and developments in museum documentation.

We all welcome you all to Kyoto in 2019 – and to our annual conference!

Some practical Information

For general information and the official program of the 25th ICOM General Conference in Kyoto, please check the official website: <http://icom-kyoto-2019.org>

Conference Venue:

Kyoto International Conference Center (ICC Kyoto), Takaragaike, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606-0001, Japan: <http://www.icckyo.or.jp/en/>

Registration for the ICOM General conference:

See the official ICOM Kyoto website: <http://icom-kyoto-2019.org/reg-guideline.html>

Observe the Early bird fees!

Travel and Accommodations:

All details can be found in the official ICOM Kyoto website:

<http://icom-kyoto-2019.org/useful-info.html>

Additional information and a detailed program will be posted on the COMCOL website:

<http://network.icom.museum/comcol>

COMCOL Pre-conference in Nara

COMCOL is planning to host a pre-conference together with Japanese colleagues in Nara on the 29th of August to 31st of August, so please save the date. More information and a detailed program will be posted on the COMCOL website in 2019.