



**Instituto Ricardo Brennand**

Recife, Brazil

**September 22-26, 2021**

**Call for Paper ICOM COMCOL**

**ORGANISERS**



**PARTNERS**









# REIMAGINE COLLECTING

## HOW COLLECTING CAN

## INSPIRE THE FUTURE

Connecting to the theme of the International Museum Day (IMD) 2021 “The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine”, COMCOL together with their host **Instituto Ricardo Brennand** will look into the future of collecting and how collections can be an inspiration for imagined futures. How can we use our collections and our practices of collecting to understand contemporary societies and find ways to shape their future together.

This also ties into an online series that COMCOL started with *We Are Museum* on this topic. In the conference this September we are bringing together collected thoughts from the series and take it a step further rethinking the practice of collecting as a strategy for collective care for the future.

The impact of COVID-19 on our world and museums in 2020 was, and still is, immense. We all had to adapt to a new situation, completely unprecedented and different to anything we had experienced in the past. To navigate multiple challenges, such as trying to keep ourselves and our families safe, while keeping our institutions visible and, most importantly, valuable for our audiences. At the same time, we have to consider questions such as: How will museums deal with the culture shock COVID-19 has provoked? Will they “freeze” or fundamentally transform themselves in these times of crisis?

During the last year, most institutions went through different phases: from being closed to being open, or open with restrictions; from embracing the digital in order to reach wider audiences to organizing small-scale activities; from focusing mainly on tourists to shifting the focus on neighboring communities and their support.

During the first few months, it seemed that digital content was essential for staying connected to the audiences that were confined to their homes. However, going digital also created an even bigger gap in terms of accessibility: those more familiar with online activities were almost “swamped” with information, whereas those not familiar enough, or without enough access to resources of all sorts were left completely out.

At the same time, issues of representation and inclusion came to the forefront through social movements, like “Black Lives Matter”. Protests against inequalities, legacies of the past that trouble our societies to this day, and the role of cultural institutions in supporting inclusion became more prominent than ever.

All this time, our institutions have been confronted with as many challenges as questions: How can we create meaningful online interaction that would not just try to imitate the physical visit in a virtual form? How can we adapt to reduced visitor numbers, social distancing inside the museum, and ensure that all, staff and public alike, remain safe? How has this new situation changed, or how is it changing the experience of culture? Can museums be places for solidarity?

Should we move our emphasis from planning new exhibitions to creating new immersive experiences and provide more interactive online practices? How can museums become more inclusive and represent those excluded in the past, but also those excluded in the present? How can museums move to a new era of decolonization and equal representation of all? How can museums respond to the pressing urgency of issues like climate change, increasing refugee numbers, political polarization?

How can we turn what we experience around, into a new understanding of what museums are, how they operate and what will they become in the future? How can we create a new, more relevant model of the Museum of the Future? This conference aims to bring all these questions to the forefront and to ask the participants to reflect on their recent experiences and plan the next steps for their institutions and the collecting processes of today.

The conference will welcome papers on the following topics:

- *Effects of the “New Normal” of the pandemic on collecting, collections and museums*
- *Contemporary praxis of collecting*
- *Collecting the crisis—ethics of collecting*
- *Private collectors / private museums in the future*
- *Collections and digital transformation / digital metamorphosis / the role of disruptive technologies*
- *Collecting the difficult present: refugee movements, environmental issues, political polarization*
- *Using existing museum collections as sources of inspiration to shape the future*

*(e.g. climate change issues, political polarization issues, pandemic objects of the past and pandemics today)*

• *Collections and mindfulness*

### **Submitting abstracts:**

Abstracts (between 250 and 300 words) should be sent through application form by **April 1st | 2021**:

<https://forms.gle/CjnfgZuoyjwMwhH17>

Approval of proposals will be announced by **May 1st | 2021**.

### **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 authors

Affiliation(s), e-mail address(es), and full address(es)

ICOM membership number

COMCOL member y/n

Technical requirements for the presentations

The abstract language is English. The conference will be in English and Portuguese with simultaneous translation. We warmly welcome proposals that go beyond traditional paper presentations and encompass also panels, pecha kucha sessions and workshop formats.

### **Conference publication:**

A digital conference publication is planned. Please inform us if you are not willing to be a part of the publication. Otherwise a full paper for the publication should be sent to: [comcol.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:comcol.secretary@gmail.com) by **01 September 2021**.