



**Västerbottens museum, Umeå**  
**COMCOL conference participants.**

Photo: Petter Engman

## ICOM COMCOL – Inspiration and Importance!

*Åsa Stenström*

Still filled with inspiration and a lot of gratitude and happiness after the successful COMCOL annual conference in December in Umeå, Sweden, I now welcome you to some interesting reading in our new issue of COMCOL Newsletter. You can find, among other things, a report from the conference where you can read more about what was discussed. Later this year COMCOL will also put a digital publication from the conference online, so all of you who didn't have the possibility to participate can be updated, and all of you who did participate can be reminded about the interesting content!

Last year was a successful year for COMCOL. The conference was attended by 90 participants from all over

### Contents

Introduction from the Chair <i>Åsa Stenström</i> .....	1
Contemporary Collections: Contested and Powerful - Annual conference 25-28 September 2018, Winnipeg, Canada <i>Danielle Kuijten</i> .....	3
Building Collections for the Future: COMCOL/CIDOC Joint Seminar in Rio <i>Gabriel Moore Bevilacqua and Claudia Porto</i> .....	5
Fear of deaccessioning and how to cope with that <i>Dieuwertje Wijsmuller</i> .....	8
Objects People Stories - City Lab Collection Check: collecting migration by participation <i>Aikaterini Dori</i> .....	11
Sounds of Changes (SoCh) <i>Torsten Nilsson</i> .....	17
Becoming a Guardian of Contemporary Collecting & Collections - Impressions of my first COMCOL conference <i>Christiane Lindner</i> .....	19
SAVE THE DATES ICOM Kyoto 2019 - Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition .....	22
Editorial .....	23



Västerbottens museum, Umeå, Sweden.  
Photo: Petter Engman

the world and 43 presentations were made, and among them two workshops were held. Two publications were issued, from our previous conferences in Celje 2014 and in Seoul in 2015. Both very interesting reading. You can find more information about them on our website.

A new working group was also started during the year, that will work with questions about shared collections, a very interesting topic in our museum world. You can find more information about this working group, and all the others, on the COMCOL website. Please take part, share your knowledge and get inspired!

The board of COMCOL also started working on planning up-coming conferences: the large general conference in Kyoto in 2019 and the conference in 2018 that will take place in Winnipeg, Canada, on the 26–29th of September. It is a collaboration between ICOM COMCOL and FIHRM – Federation of International Human Rights Museums where the Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg will be our host museum. Already when we started working with the theme for the annual conference in Umeå 2017: Guardians of Contemporary Collecting and Collections – Working with (contested) Collections and Narratives, we were aiming to reach other difficult issues like museums and human rights. How can the collections and the contemporary collecting practices promote human

rights and make the museum an important place for everyone – to visit and be part of? Can our collecting practices and collections promote human rights for real? How?

We started a dialogue with FIHRM and now we can look forward to a truly interesting and important annual conference that I hope as many of you as possible can take part in! On the COMCOL website you can find more information about how to send an abstract to the conference working team; how to apply for young members grants to participate and how to sign up! We'll meet in Winnipeg!

Finally, I wish you a truly nice time reading the Newsletter, I hope you get inspired in your daily work with collecting and collections! And remember that your work also can inspire others, so don't hesitate to send articles for our next Newsletter edition to the Newsletter team!



*Åsa Stenström*  
*Head of Collections and Ethnology at Västerbottens*  
*museum, Umeå, Sweden*  
*ICOM COMCOL Chair*



[asa.stenstrom@vbm.se](mailto:asa.stenstrom@vbm.se)

# Contemporary Collections: Contested and Powerful

Annual conference 25-28 September 2018, Winnipeg, Canada

*Danielle Kuijten*

We are pleased that this year the Federation of International Human Rights Museums (FIHRM) and the International ICOM Committee for Collecting (COMCOL) will come together to jointly hold their annual conference hosted by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) and the City of Human Rights Education (TheCoHRE) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

This year's theme is *contemporary collections: contested and powerful*. Building, conserving, stewarding, and exhibiting a collection has forever held enormous power over the education of current and future generations and the formation of canons of 'so-called' quality. In the current climate of contested realities - where objects are questioned, the multiplicity of perspectives is extremely diverse and contradictory, where news and information is subject to personalization, and media literacy is ever more important - the role of contemporary collecting is under great scrutiny.

Equally, museum collection efforts have never held more potential to promote human rights, equality, evoke empathy, and facilitate meaningful dialogue. International Museums Day 2017 proposes that museums are considered "an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures, and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among people." This asserted role sees museums leveraging their soft power to effect social, political, and environmental change.

How can contemporary collecting and museum collections promote human rights for all? How is difficult material collected? In what contexts? Are these contemporary collections exhibited in order to encourage reflection, dialogue, and understanding?

The 2018 conference will endeavor to explore the increasingly dynamic role that museum collections can play not only in preserving the present and the past for future generations, but in leveraging their



Photo: Aaron Cohen/CMHR-MCDP

soft power to promote democracy, human rights, and effect global change.

During this year's conference, we will consider the following themes:

- Democracy of collecting and collections . . .
- Documenting activism
- Museums in dialogue with the social and political contemporary scene
- Material and immaterial factors
- Changing significance of heritage in changing societies
- Linking past and present in collections and collecting
- Re-interpretation of collections and the issues that come with it

Through the agenda of the conference, we will collectively contemplate:

- How museums challenge traditional thinking of collecting and collections in order to tell difficult and contested stories.
- How museums use conflicting emotions around shared heritage.

- How museums encourage dialogue with different communities using their collections.

- How collections and collecting methods actively promote Human Rights and/or address Human Rights issues.

We are excited and hope that the joint program with FIHRM and CMHR, will create new relationships and insights for the participants.

Looking forward to welcoming our members in September in Winnipeg and to engage in an inspiring event in an inspiring environment.

To learn more about the conference, registration, location etc. please visit the COMCOL website:

<http://network.icom.museum/comcol/events/coming-comcol-conferences/>



Danielle Kuijten  
Vice President ICOM COMCOL



[heritageconcepting@gmail.com](mailto:heritageconcepting@gmail.com)



## FEATURED EXHIBITION

### MANDELA: STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM – OPEN DURING the 2018 conference IN WINNIPEG

Mandela's courage is inspiring and his story is dramatic, but he did not end apartheid alone. In South Africa and around the world, people were inspired by Mandela's example. They recognized that there would never be freedom in South Africa unless many people took action. In South Africa, many died in the struggle for freedom. Here in Canada, numerous individuals mobilized against apartheid, calling for boycotts against South Africa's apartheid regime.

*Mandela: Struggle for Freedom* is about one man, but it is also about the many who came together to oppose racism and injustice. It encourages you to ask important questions: How should I respond to injustice? How can we heal after human rights have been denied? How does the past affect my present?

*Mandela: Struggle for Freedom* tells a story of racism, oppression, resistance and reconciliation that changed the world forever – and continues to be relevant today.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) is the first museum solely dedicated to the evolution, celebration and future of human rights. Our aim is to build not only a national hub for human rights learning and discovery, but a new era of global human rights leadership.

Creating inspiring encounters with human rights, we will engage Canadians and our international visitors in an immersive, interactive experience that offers both the inspiration and tools to make a difference in the lives of others. We will welcome our visitors as partners on a journey to erase barriers and create meaningful, lasting change.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is the first national museum to be built in nearly half a century, and the first outside the National Capital Region.

CMHR images available here:  
[https://www.flickr.com/photos/cmhr\\_mcdp](https://www.flickr.com/photos/cmhr_mcdp)



S E M I N Á R I O

# CONSTRUINDO COLEÇÕES PARA O FUTURO

17 A 20 BOTAFOGO  
OUTUBRO RIO DE JANEIRO

Realização:



Apoio:



## *Building Collections for the Future: COMCOL/CIDOC Joint Seminar in Rio*

*Gabriel Moore Bevilacqua and Claudia Porto*

From 17 to 20 October, 2017, in Rio de Janeiro, COMCOL and CIDOC organised the first collaboration between these ICOM International Committees in Brazil. It addressed the challenges placed by contemporary collecting practices on museums and other heritage institutions.

Most of museums in Brazil, around 70% of the almost 4.000 existing institutions, are located in the more wealthy states in the southeast and south regions. About the same proportion (67% according to a 2010 research from IBRAM - Brazilian Institute of Museums) belong to the government (federal, state or city administrations). Even a good part of the remaining private institutions also depends on public funding to support their core activities. This level of dependency and imbalance associated with the lack of political continuity and support from the public sector help us to understand the challenges faced by

the museum field in Brazil. Some of these fragilities are counterbalanced by a strong understanding of the social role of museums and a very active community of professionals. However, the majority of museums in Brazil doesn't have collection policies and usually have a difficult time trying to control or even identifying their collections. The need for exchange and discussion of experiences regarding collection policies and management procedures implementation were one of the main motives to organize the event.

The seminar debated contemporary challenges and perspectives in the formation of museum collections, creating a space for museum professionals and researchers with different backgrounds to exchange and discuss ideas and tools related to four interconnected thematic lines:

1. New strategies for collection's outreach and research;
2. Collections management processes and procedures;
3. Building sustainable collection management policies;
4. Challenges to implement and maintain collection conservation plans.

Although collecting is a central process for museums and usually occupies an important place in their daily routine, few Brazilian institutions either created or effectively implemented collection management policies. The absence of directives regarding the development of collections is directly related to the fragility (or sometimes lack) of consistent curatorial

and technical processes underlying the operation of the institutions, ultimately generating significant problems for the representativeness and sustainability of the museum.

Over the last years, some cultural heritage institutions have put a great deal of effort into implementing a set of initiatives that could help them achieve financial stability. Also, much has been done in order to develop stronger links between museums and the communities they live in and/or target. Both matters are clearly of the utmost importance. But ignoring what, how and why we collect might be one of the biggest threats to the future of museums. Behind all these questions are political, cultural, social and individual contexts that together weave a complex web of meanings and interests.

Aiming to understand these dynamic interconnections and how they unfold into collecting processes and collections management should be mandatory, so that museums (and museum professionals) could fully comprehend their role and significance in a given community or society. Despite their importance, such issues are not usually addressed by the institution's managerial teams. Museums have a strong role in their communities; they should always work to make collecting policies as clear and transparent as possible.

The lack of up-to-date collection management policies jeopardizes core activities in museums, such as documentation, exhibition and outreach

programmes, which may become quite fragile. But writing a strong and meaningful collection policy is still a great challenge for museums, as much as the implementation of all procedures that transform theoretical or conceptual assumptions into methods and tools towards the sustainability of meaningful museums.

The political, social and economic instability that Brazil has been facing in more recent years presents a huge challenge for the survival of museums. The absence of a dynamic and consistent collecting policy in the vast majority of Brazilian public and private institutions only adds to the serious problems they are facing. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to assume that counterparts around the world do not face similar challenges - in fact, many of us have to deal with them on a daily basis.

These were the main thoughts that shaped the design of the programme of the seminar in Rio. Around them COMCOL and CIDOC brought together experts from six countries and different private and public institutions: *Rijksmuseum, Cultural Heritage Agency/ University of Utrecht and Heritage Concepting (Netherlands); Museo de Sitio Arturo Jiménez Borja-Puruchuco (Peru); Institut für Museumsforschung and Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr (Germany); Universidade do Porto (Portugal); and University College London and the National Conservation Service (UK)*. Brazilian institutions included *IBRAM (Brazilian Institute of Museums), Museu da Maré, SEC/ Estado de São Paulo (Secretary of*



Audience at the opening of the seminar.

Photos: Bianca Gens

*Culture, Sao Paulo State), SEC/ Espírito Santo (Secretary of Culture, Espírito Santo State), Universidade de São Paulo, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (FIOCRUZ), Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand – MASP, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Pinacoteca de São Paulo, Museu de Astronomia e Ciências Afins, Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), Câmara dos Deputados / Congresso Nacional (Chamber of Deputies, Congress of Brazil), Instituto Moreira Salles and Instituto Rubens Gerchman. Together they debated “New strategies for collection’s outreach and research”, “Collections management processes and procedures”, “Building sustainable collection management policies” and “Challenges to implement and maintain collection conservation plans”.*

Panels on the first days were followed by five workshops at MAR. The week ended with a meeting of Brazilian memory institutions to debate the creation of a network aiming to propose and articulate reflections, policies and guidelines for the sustainable development and management of collections in Brazil.

In total, around 130 heritage professionals and students attended the event, coming from different Brazilian states. A publication with the papers presented at the event, meetings, workshops and a new international seminar are being planned with partners for the next couple of years inspired by the quality and the variety of experiences shared in Rio de Janeiro around collecting and collections.

COMCOL-CIDOC seminar was only possible thanks to the support of and partnership with a group of agile and committed institutions. We therefore end this brief narrative with very special thanks to both ICOM and ICOM Brasil, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, the Netherlands Consulate General in Rio de Janeiro, Instituto Moreira Salles, Fundação Roberto Marinho, Sistemas do Futuro, Museu de Arte do Rio – MAR and Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa.



*Gabriel Moore Bevilacqua (vice-chair, CIDOC and collections manager at Instituto Moreira Salles)*



*[gabrielmoore@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielmoore@gmail.com)*



*Claudia Porto (COMCOL board member, museologist at the Chamber of Deputies/ Congress of Brazil)*



*[diaporto@gmail.com](mailto:diaporto@gmail.com)*



**Danielle Kuijten (COMCOL) and Monika Hagedom-Saupe at the opening panel.**  
Photos: Bianca Gens

# Fear of deaccessioning and how to cope with that

Dieuwertje Wijsmuller

Since my Masters Degree in Museology (2008), I specialized in deaccessioning and disposal as a collections management tool. The fact that museums (and other organizations for that matter) cannot keep collecting for eternity and that we need to think about what to keep for future generations was, and still is, rather new and provocative.

In 2016 I got the chance to research the current possibilities and attitudes towards deaccessioning and disposal in the EU, due to a grant given to me by the Dutch Mondriaanfund. My 2008 Masters thesis, which covered almost the same subject, was used as a benchmark, so I could study possible shifts and changes.

The results show that in the last ten years, seven countries adopted (new) legislation on deaccessioning and disposal and the number of countries that have an official guideline on the subject has doubled (from three to six). With the exception of Austria, all these countries are situated in the Northern part of Europe.

However, this does not mean that in other parts of the European Union no progress has been made. The shifts here are subtler and not yet formalized. The changes are happening on an informal level, meaning that the professional attitudes are slowly shifting towards a more positive attitude on deaccessioning and disposal. Even the Latin-tradition countries, where the principle of inalienability of museum objects reigns (such as France and Italy), ideas are spreading that disposal is a necessity, because of the ever-growing collections and thus ever-growing storage space challenges.

Looking at the general development of thinking about deaccessioning, all thinking has evolved from a practical awareness (storage problems), to curatorial awareness (what doesn't fit in the collections profile).

## Fears of deaccessioning

During my research, I found a common attitude in



Title: Collections Avalanche  
Credit: Ray Rieck ([www.activecollections.org](http://www.activecollections.org))

all countries: Fear. Fear of making mistakes, fear of losing the public trust and fear of imposed, unethical disposal.

## Making mistakes

Among museum professionals the concern is that in the future, objects that have been disposed of, will turn out to be of value, making the disposal decision invalid. Although disposal decisions are based upon the current knowledge of the history and present context of the institute and its collections, the chances are, that in hindsight the objects disposed of, may increase in relevance. This might be due to developments in research possibilities, access to new archival resources and/or other contextual factors. However, there are a few arguments that mitigate this fear.

Firstly, at the moment of the decision, it is thought to be the best decision that could be made. If all needed research is done, meeting due diligence and all is clearly documented, the decision can be defended with a clear conscience. In my opinion, the decision to *deaccession* an object is in fact the same as the decision to *accession* an object. Both are made by knowledgeable people, at that moment in time, in a context of available resources and information. By choosing an object for accessioning, others are not chosen, thus not being musealised. This decision could, in time, prove wrong as well.

Secondly, since it is virtually impossible to eliminate all uncertainties, imagine what would happen if nothing were ever to leave the collection. It would lead to unmanageable collections, overcrowded storage spaces, loss of overview and in time, even loss of value of its objects, simply because they become untraceable.



For those that think this is nonsense, see the figures of the 2011 ICCROM - Unesco worldwide international Storage Survey:

- 2 in 3 museums lack space
- 1 in 2 museums lack storage units and have overcrowded storage units
- 2 in 5 museums have large backlogs of objects to be accessioned
- 1 in 4 museums have no object movement register/ no accession register (or not up to date)/ no location codes for storage units or aisles/ no main catalogue (paper or computerized)
- 1 in 5 museums have large amounts of non-collection items in storage (rubbish, exhibition panels, packing materials, display showcases, personal effects of staff, etc.) or many objects stored outside designated storage areas (hallways, offices, etc.).

### Loss of public trust

We all know of examples of media uproar during or after disposal proposals. In the Netherlands, the sale of a painting by Marlene Dumas by the Gouda Museum and the proposed sale of a big part of the ethnological collection of the World Museum in Rotterdam caused extreme public dismay. The media, the museum sector itself and the public reacted with disgust and opposed the proposed sales.

As a result the director of the World Museum was prohibited from proceeding with the deaccession procedure by the City Council and the Gouda Museum nearly lost its accreditation.

What these deaccessioning cases have in common is that the reasons and the processes did not comply with current standards and were regarded as being somewhat shady. Both museums needed more financial resources and both museum directors decided to change their collections' profile to be allowed to sell parts of their collections. Both museum directors 'forgot' to consult their peer colleagues and thus did not comply with the LAMO (the Dutch guideline for disposing of museum objects). Neither was the process clearly communicated, let alone transparent.

Transparent communication is important for keeping the public trust. The 2006 public consultation on disposal by the British Museums Association showed that when people are informed about the disposal actions and reasons, they tend to react less fiercely and with greater understanding. What can be learned from this, is that deaccessioning should always be done on proper grounds, following current guidelines and/ or legislation and it should be actively communicated



Statue of Sekhemka  
Bibilovski 2014

to the public, preventing unnecessary tumult and the spread of fake news.

Under these circumstances, it is comforting to know, that most cases do not make the news, because they have gone about it correctly.

### Imposed unethical disposal

There is a big fear among museum professionals for unethical disposal decisions, being imposed by governmental entities. In most countries, collections are owned by different governments (national, provincial, regional, local) and the museum manages them for the government. My research showed that these governments are not always regarded as trustworthy partners or stakeholders.

The most common arguments lay in the short term interests of governments (generally 4 years) versus the long term interests for museums (eternity). Museums regard their objects as resources for explaining the past, present and future. For some governments, museum objects are mere assets, with a financial value, that in times of crisis, could be sacrificed what



## Museums and Deaccessioning Liesbeth Smit 2017 (The Online Scientist)

they perceive to be for the greater good.

The ICOM Code of Ethics states of 2017 the following: *Museums are responsible for the tangible and intangible natural and cultural heritage. Governing bodies and those concerned with the strategic direction and oversight of museums have a primary responsibility to protect and promote this heritage as well as the human, physical and financial resources made available for that purpose.*

The problem is, that most governmental representatives that 'deal' with culture, are not aware of this code and it is thus not obvious that governments endorse this code. This is exemplary in the 2014 sale of the Sekhemka statue by the Northampton Borough Council (UK). The statue was one of the top pieces of the Northampton Museum until the council decided to sell it and use its profits to fund the extension of the museum. As a result, the museum lost its accreditation by the Arts Council.

Even in France, where the principle of inalienation is steadfastly followed, local governments make wrong decisions. The Conseil Général de Côte-d'Or wanted to sell a painting by Vincent Feraud in 2014. Luckily, the national government prohibited this, ensuring that the painting stays in the *patrimoine nationale*.

Since there will most probably always be a division of strategy between collections owner and collections keeper, this distrust and fear cannot be completely overcome. It can be diminished though. As with every good deaccessioning and disposal project, creating engagement through communication is the key. Talk with the governmental representative that is responsible for your museum. Involve them in your concerns, explain your work and the ethics regarding it. Maybe even ask them to work at the museum for a few days, helping them to understand your point of view. Although this might sound obvious, I found

during my research that it is not. Participants of my workshops confided that they never had a neutral conversation on collections management issues such as deaccessioning with their governments.

### Conclusions

As can be read above, clear communication and creating governmental engagement are key in minimizing faults in and thus fear for deaccessioning. Museums should make clear that although they are not the owner of the collection, they are the owner of the collections management processes, which include deaccessioning and disposal. As a museum you should be in the lead in deciding on curatorial grounds which objects are eligible for disposal, instead of, or in consultation with your government. This shift in attitude will help diminish all kind of fears, for then correct procedures will be followed.

I realize that there is still a gap between theory and practice, but I hope this article will help reduce this gap and empower museums to start this conversation.

### Note:

More information on and results of the research on deaccessioning in Europe can be found on [www.museumsanddeaccessioning.com](http://www.museumsanddeaccessioning.com).

**References:**

ICCROM-Unesco, 2011, ICCROM-UNESCO International Storage Survey 2011 Summary of results, viewed on 27 March 2018, from [https://www.iccrom.org/wp-content/uploads/RE-ORG-StorageSurveyResults\\_English.pdf](https://www.iccrom.org/wp-content/uploads/RE-ORG-StorageSurveyResults_English.pdf)

ICOM, 2017, ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums, viewed on 27 March 2018, from [http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user\\_upload/pdf/Codes/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf](http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Codes/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf)

Museums Association, 2006, A public consultation on museum disposal, Fresh Minds London

Wijsmuller, D., 2018, Deaccessioning & Disposal in Europe 2008-2017, a research on possibilities and attitudes across the European Member States

Wijsmuller, D., 2008, Deaccessioning on an international level, opportunity or impossibility? Masters thesis Museology, Reinwardt Academy Amsterdam



*Dieuwertje Wijsmuller is a Dutch museologist, specialized in deaccessioning and disposal practices.*



[dieuwertje@ccc.co.nl](mailto:dieuwertje@ccc.co.nl)



Historical Museum Frankfurt

## Objects People Stories City Lab Collection Check: collecting migration by participation

*Aikaterini Dori*

The topic of “migration” has a long tradition in the Historical Museum Frankfurt. In 2004 the permanent exhibition “Von Fremden zu Frankfurtern” (“From foreigners to Frankfurters”) was opened. It was developed by the corporation of migrant groups and migrant associations. In the new museum there is no independent migration exhibition any more. Migration according to the museum director Jan Gerchow has been normalised and made part of the permanent exhibition. From October 2017 until February 2018



## Historical Museum Frankfurt

we carried out the project “City Lab Collection Check: collecting migration by participation”.

The main idea of the project was to look through, discuss and comment on objects from the museum collection as well as from lenders and project participants. Central to our series of workshops were the following questions: What is, from the perspective of the participants, a migration object? Which objects represent Frankfurter migration history? How and what collect in order to make migration and migration history visible in our museum and preserve it for future generations?

The “City Lab Collection Check: collecting migration by participation” had four aims: firstly the museum was supposed to be more open to the public. Secondly collecting objects as a central task of museums was to be made transparent. Thirdly it was crucial for us to take into account the voices of participants on the topics of “migration” and “collecting migration” and to make them heard in the museum. Fourthly it was the goal of the project to include new objects and their histories in the museum collection in order to close previous collection gaps. In the course of the project 34 new objects and 15 audio interviews were presented in

the workshop area of the special exhibition “Frankfurt Jetzt erforschen!” (“Explore Frankfurt Now!”) 23 of these objects will, together with the audio interviews, become a part of the museum collection.

Museums and collection curators have clear ideas which objects should be collected and which should not. The objects are inventoried in collection databases. Information about each one is recorded and attached to it. This information can be used by the museum employees and is usually not accessible to the public. In other words, museum visitors are usually not involved in the museum task of collecting, something we wanted to change with the “Collection Check Migration” and therefore involved a group of Frankfurters actively in our practice of collecting.

Specifically: in the Project “Collection Check Migration” we were not so much interested in learning how museums deal with the topic of “collecting migration” but rather in the opinion of people outside the museum microcosm. Therefore central questions in the workshops were the following: What makes an everyday object a migration object? How do the participants look at their own migration objects and those of the museum? Which objects do they find

exciting and suitable for the museum collection? What information on the objects is to be collected? What information is missing? How could the museum get access to the missing information?

We carried out five workshops with 13 participants, 11 of them with a history and experience of migration. Two of the participants were Frankfurters without migration background who were interested in the topic and/or had professional experience with it. The workshops took place in an area designed especially for this purpose in midst of the special exhibition "Frankfurt Jetzt erforschen!". The basic idea was that of the "Revisiting Collections" methodology already developed in Great Britain.

In the first workshop the participants were sensitised to the characteristics of museum objects as signifiers by means of a suitcase from our collection. Unfortunately there was no further leading information attached to the suitcase in the museum database. It was merely known that it had been part of the migration exhibition "Von Fremden zu Frankfurtern" ("From foreigners to Frankfurters") until 2011. Apart from this any contextual information was missing. The City Lab participants carefully examined the suitcase in small groups and discussed the question of whether such an object without a background would be suitable for our migration collection. Eventually the question of what role the suitcase played as a symbol for migration was discussed. In almost every migration collection and exhibition in Germany the suitcase is assigned a central role. However we were rather interested in how the participants looked upon this object.

In the second workshop participants were asked to bring their own objects and present them. On the basis of these objects we focused on the question of the criteria by which objects should be collected. In this and the following workshop we discussed what was, from the perspective of the participants, a migration object, and which objects should become part of the museum collection.

In the fourth workshop we carefully examined objects from the museum collection. The criteria developed in the preceding workshops were deepened, checked and tested regarding their applicability. Furthermore the objects were not only discussed but also connected with personal histories.

In the last workshop we devoted ourselves solely to the question of how to collect. Again, we took the objects

from the museum collection as the basis of our new group work. We tried out, worked out and discussed strategies important in the eyes of the participants in order to collect information about objects and to make migration visible in the museum.

Concluding our project we invited the public to a discussion. On 7 February 2018 Chrisula Dingiludi (participant), Jan Gerchow (director HMF), Armin von Ungern-Sternberg (Head of the Office for multicultural affairs of the City of Frankfurt ) Sandra Vacca (Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration in Germany) and I discussed together on the podium the following questions: How and what should a city museum collect in order to preserve migration history for today and for future generations? What role can participatory projects play in achieving this goal? It was our chief concern to include all City Lab participants in this discussion and in particular share our new insights and experiences from the workshops with the public.

### **Insights from the "Collection Check Migration"**

#### *It's all about the (hi)stories*

A main insight from our project proved to be that only objects with a story were rated as especially interesting and suitable for a migration collection. A further criterion for a "good migration object" was identified to be the connection between an individual story and (migration) history in general. From the perspective of the participants it is the intertwining of an individual biography and history in general that makes an object valuable for the museum. They agreed that it was not enough to just collect objects, documents and photographs. Instead the museum was expected to collect background information about an object: Who did the object belong to? What did it mean to its possessor? Concrete questions were asked about the objects from our collection: the textile scissor of an Italian immigrant evoked questions about what it meant to migrants in Frankfurt in the 1970s to open up a tailor's shop. Examining the photography of the theatrical group of the "Teatro Siciliano di Gallus" led to questions about the group members. Who took part? What play did they stage? One of the photographs exhibited in the "Collection Check" showed a house that was occupied by students and Italian activists. Looking at the photograph the participants wondered about the relation between the homeowner and the Italian activists.

In order to collect such stories behind objects and documents, people are needed; people who tell their stories and share their memories and knowledge. People give objects and documents a meaning. People who talk about and through the objects instead of listening to other people talking about them. In the workshops and in the closing discussion it became clear that museums should strive more than ever to secure such stories and that they should be concerned about preserving oral history especially when it comes to migration. The participants found interviews with lenders and contemporary witnesses, recorded storytelling gatherings and open discussions to be a suitable method.

### ***Empowerment or participation?***

The “Revisiting Collections” method is often connected to the term “Empowerment”. In the course of “Collection Check Migration” I came to realise that it is not so much about empowerment but rather about making participation possible, in other words creating a space for the histories of migrants. Migration objects are, like all other museum objects, silent. The things themselves do not speak. It is the people who talk through the objects and who know exactly what they want to say. They are not shy, they do not expect to be encouraged or requested to talk. In the “Collection Check Migration” the individual, personal and emotional meaning of objects was identified by the participants but it was stated as well that the objects stand for something greater. Several objects were for example seen as standing for the achievements of the guest workers who “rebuilt” the Federal Republic of Germany, others were seen as standing for the traumatic experiences of the “Kofferkinder” (“suitcase kids”). There were objects associated with flight and expulsion, objects conveying what it means to grow up with two languages and cultures. Other objects stood for the discrimination that participants went through because of their cultural and/or religious belonging but also for the pride some felt in belonging to a distinct group.

In the “Collection Check Migration” we gathered objects that many can identify with: “This is not only my story but a story standing for many.” I repeatedly heard this statement in the workshops and interviews with the lenders. My experience with the “Collection Check Migration” shows that it is not about helping people to find their voice. People already have a voice and speak up loudly: they speak through their objects. The only thing they expect is to be asked questions

and listened to carefully in a space where they can tell their stories through their objects. Museums and other memorial institutions therefore have to open themselves even more so that the memorial space provided by them is open to everybody and makes as many voices as possible heard, not only those of a majority.

### ***Representation***

Another insight from the project “Collection Check Migration” is that people with experience of migration in particular hardly ever see themselves represented in museums, not even in city museums. Their migration histories, backgrounds, biographies and positions on interpretive patterns of migration and migration objects may be different. However their concern is the same. It is about visibility, recognition and appreciation of their history and the history of their parents in a specific place: in the city museum, where the collective memory of urban society is secured and preserved. All the people I talked to in the course of the project consider themselves a part of this urban society. They understand their story as part of the city’s collective memory or they want their story to become part of it. The Swedish museum professional Åsa Stenström speaks of a “backpack” that each of us carries with us and that brings together our many different experiences. I would like to slightly change this picture: migrants and their descendants carry a “suitcase” filled with the “things” of their history which can also be “things” from the old homeland. They expect to find themselves in the museum with their metaphorical “suitcase”, not only – as is often the case – with the real piece of luggage! The project has made it clear that this is a great need in Frankfurt, especially for “guest workers” and their descendants.

### ***Discovering commonalities***

In the course of the project the participants discovered many commonalities while talking about migration. That is to say they discovered experiences and feelings connecting them even if their individual migration histories were different. For the participants this was a new insight that is also reflected in the collection criteria by which a migration object is defined as an object that conveys experiences or triggers feelings that are directly related to migration and shared by many people regardless of time and place. Among these commonalities was the relationship to Frankfurt showing that, for the participants, migration history is closely linked to the history of the cities to which they come. It became clear that migrants and their



## Historical Museum Frankfurt

descendants experienced and helped to shape city history together with all other residents. That too connects them with each other as well as with the city. The “belonging” was considered as something natural and self-evident.

My conversations with visitors every Tuesday in the exhibition gave a completely different account. Most visitors were particularly interested in who took part in the project. I often heard the comment that our group was not representative. “Representative” obviously meant people from the lowest social strata who hardly speak German and “groups that are difficult to integrate”. One visitor was very open about the topic of “language”. He found that the notes on the moderation cards had been written in very good German and were therefore not written by “migrants”. In my conversations with visitors it became clear to me that when it comes to “migration” a dividing line is drawn either directly or indirectly: a distinction was made between “us” and “the other”. “We” meant people with a German “background”. “The others” were all those who do not share this same background, come from somewhere else and live here. “The others” have been subdivided

into other categories: those who are integrated, those who need to integrate themselves, or those who are considered impossible to ever be integrated. But I had the biggest surprise by presenting the project to a group of museum professionals. A colleague made a comment that the participants “doesn’t look like migrants”. It was against this background that I began to wonder if in people’s minds migration has been normalised and considered an integral part of our urban society. I came to believe that a city museum should focus increasingly on the changes in urban society through migration in its exhibitions and events and especially it should reveal the role of migrants in these processes of change and renewal.

### *How to collect? Objects as vehicles of memory and narration*

My experience from the “Collection Check Migration” showed that first and second generation migrants are ready, happy and grateful to provide us with objects that are suitable for our migration collection. These objects are often not directly related to the country of origin but tell something about their life after emigration.

The participants not only provided us with objects and documents: together with these things they gave us a part of themselves and their personal history, a piece of their memories, experiences, personal insights, feelings and thus of their lives. Talking about these migration objects presents a great opportunity for dialogue. The objects turned out to be vehicles of memory and narration through which individual migration experiences and insights are communicated. The participants ascribed a high personal and emotional value to these objects. At the same time the greater collective meaning was identified. For this precise reason we should collect objects and their stories with greater sensitivity, respectfully and cautiously deal with lenders and donors, their objects and histories, both in the process of collecting and in the re-contextualization of their objects in an exhibition.

The “Collection Check Migration” showed that – even more than in collecting other topics – it should be about collecting the context of the objects. For only in this way can we preserve the voices of the people who speak about and through their objects; only in this way will the migrants’ view of history be brought to light. In my opinion this is the essence of “Collecting Migration” even if this means more work for the collection and exhibition curators as well as limiting their sovereignty of interpretation.



Aikaterini Dori <https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/stadtlabor/sammlungscheck>,



[aikaterinidori@yahoo.com](mailto:aikaterinidori@yahoo.com)

*Fellow Cultural Diversity and Migration, Historical  
Museum Frankfurt*

*Curator Collection Check: collecting migration by  
participation*

The project documentation “City LabCollection Check: collecting migration by participation” is published on April 20 2018.

Susanne Gesser, Angela Jannelli, Frankfurt Now! The City of Today and Tomorrow, in: *Frankfurt Museum - Guide to the Historical Museum Frankfurt*, 94-107.

Åsa Stenström in: *The Subjective Museum? The impact of participative strategies on the museum*, International Conference 26. – 28.6. 2017, Historisches Museum Frankfurt. Unpublished manuscript, publication is scheduled for spring 2019.



# Sounds of Changes (SoCh)

Torsten Nilsson

## New European sound project

Society is changing rapidly. When our time is described in the history books it will surely be compared with the industrial revolution. With the help of project the *Sounds of Changes* we wish to document a portion of this rapid change, namely the change in the acoustic landscape. How does today's world sound? By collecting today's sounds and soundscapes, we create reference material that can be used for historical comparisons and descriptions.

Ray Kurzweils, an American computer scientist and futurist has predicted that in 2029 artificial intelligence will reach the same intelligence level as the human brain. *Computers are now capable of learning and creating new knowledge entirely on their own and with no human help. By scanning the enormous content of the Internet, some computers "know" literally every single piece of public information (every scientific discovery, every book and movie, every public statement, etc.) generated by human beings.*

Kurzweil claims to know that a machine will pass the Turing test by 2029. The Turing test is a test, (developed by Alan Turing in 1950), of a machine's ability to exhibit intelligent behaviour equivalent to, or indistinguishable from, that of a human.



**First project meeting in Krakow**  
Photo Museum of Municipal Engineering



**Pro Freight Station Demonstration**  
Photo The Finnish Labour Museum Werstas

These rapid changes affect our way of living, both at home and at work. Every other profession can be automated in about 20 years' time, according to a study published by the Foundation for Strategic Research in Sweden.

## Sound in the museum landscape

How did things sound in the past? We can only make educated guesses. But with the help of the database that was built up in our previous projects we know much more about contemporary sound of those times. To collect sound is strongly associated with the possibilities of preserving sound. The oldest recording in existence is of a folk song from France.

*In 2008, a phonautograph paper recording made by Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville of "Au clair de la lune" on April 9<sup>th</sup> 1860, was digitally converted to sound by U.S. researchers. This one-line excerpt of the song was widely reported to have been the earliest recognizable recording of the human voice and the earliest recognizable recording of music. According to those researchers, the phonautograph recording contains the beginning of the song, "Au clair de la lune, mon ami Pierrot, prête moi".* Source: Wikipedia.

But everyday sounds are not captured in recordings. In the early 1900s, film began to create moving images that showed what society looked like. When film with sound arrived, there were recordings that could describe the sounds of society. Movie sound, however, is no reliable historical source, as movie soundtracks are used primarily to enhance the images displayed.

During ICOM'S General Conference 3-9 July 2016 a resolution was passed concerning the responsibility for museums with regard to the landscape that surrounds them, urban or rural.



### Womens day demonstration

Photo The Finnish Labour Museum Werstas

*This implies a dual duty; on the one hand, the management and upkeep of heritage in a sustainable development perspective for the territory; on the other, attention given to images and representations that identify and connote the landscape.*

The resolution noted the importance of: *Recognizing that such concept encompasses, soundscapes, olfactory, sensory and mental landscapes, and also the landscapes of memory and of conflict, often incorporated in places, objects, documents and images.*

Today there are technical resources that make it possible to document the sounds of today's society. But the resources are not always available. The sounds and soundscapes would be part of the museum's mission; this is something no one denies. Unfortunately, there is neither the time, knowledge nor resources to do this as a regular part of museum work.

### Power and gender – who is heard in society?

Power and gender will be an important part of the collection and interpretation of sounds and in the exhibits that museums produce based on the collected sounds.

- Are there masculine sounds?
- Are there feminine sounds?
- Who may be heard?
- Who may not be heard?
- Are sounds used in the acquisition of power?
- Which sounds signify whose power?
- Which sounds are allowed in urban space vs. sounds restricted to private sphere.
- Noise and silence in urban areas.

In recent years there has been a recurring debate about a mosque located in a southern suburb of Stockholm, Sweden. In February 2013 the Botkyrka Islamic Cultural Association submitted an application to the police for permission to begin with calls to prayer from the Fittja Mosque. As it is a recurring sound in a public place it had to be dealt with by the police. According to the Islamic Association in Botkyrka, it is a short call to prayer for 2-3 minutes per week, not five times a day as is normal in Muslim countries. In April 2013 the police granted temporary permission. The condition of the permit was that the loudspeakers, which were placed at the height of the balcony on the minaret's exterior, were only directed in three directions and that the noise level did not exceed 60 decibels. Following this decision there was an angry debate about the call to prayer where many different groups and individuals struggled to stop it from going ahead. What has also to be taken into consideration is the fact that the mosque is next to a three-lane motorway that drowns out the sound of the prayers.

### A strong collaboration

All participating museums have during the last fifteen years, in various constellations, participated in different projects in which they have collaborated, notably in various EU projects but also in other partnerships such as exhibitions and documentations. English serves as a good cooperative language even if none of the participating museums have English as their mother tongue.

- Muzeum Inżynierii Miejskiej, Poland
- LWL-Industriemuseum, Germany
- Museum of Work, Sweden
- Swedish Air Force Museum, Sweden
- Technical Museum of Slovenia, Slovenia
- The Finnish Labour Museum Werstas, Finland

The participating museums form a strong association and a broad front in the museum landscape. Most of the museums are national museums. The Museum of Work, the Finnish Labour Museum Werstas and the LWL-Industriemuseum are museums with a focus on social history. The Swedish Air Force Museum and the Technical Museum of Slovenia both work in the history of technology, and in both of these museums there are significant science center activities, which

also can be found at the Muzeum Inżynierii Miejskiej. LWL-Industriemuseum focusses on the history of work and culture and how it influenced the development of industrial society. At Muzeum Inżynierii Miejskiej, the story of the emergence of the modern city is explained as well as how municipal technology has affected the way we live. Together, our museums give a good image of the 20th century and industrial society. At the same time our museums are surrounded by today's whirlwind with a society that lives through the changes, and in which digitization plays an important role.

This project aims to document society's sounds and soundscapes. During the project, the participating museums will record 800 sounds loaded into a database, [www.workwithsounds.eu](http://www.workwithsounds.eu)

From this database sounds are exported to Europeana. In this way, the sounds become available. The recordings will contain the individual sounds of different objects, but also sound environments, so-called soundscapes. The database currently contains 733 sounds recorded through the old project *Work with Sounds*. The database works well and we have received a very positive response to it. It has been used by schools, musicians and museums.

The project's main target groups are young people with an interest in sound and museums.

Young people will participate in the programming of the social and technical changes we live with. An understanding of old and new sounds in the soundscape can be important pieces of the puzzle. At the same time they can take sound knowledge with them and apply them in creative processes such as creating music, games construction and other creative industries.

Objects in museums are displayed in exhibitions or stored in warehouses but they are rarely or never used. By creating a sound database there are countless possibilities for museums to complement their exhibitions with authentic sound.

Join the movement – Make history heard!



*Torsten Nilsson, project leader and head of Collections unit, Swedish Air Force Museum.*



[torsten.nilsson@flygvapenmuseum.se](mailto:torsten.nilsson@flygvapenmuseum.se)



Photo: Petter Engman, Västerbottens museum, Sweden.

## *Becoming a Guardian of Contemporary Collecting & Collections*

### **Impressions of my first COMCOL conference**

*Christiane Lindner*

From 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> December 2017 COMCOL members from all over the world met for the annual conference in Umeå, Sweden. Umeå presented itself as a fairytale winter wonderland providing us with a lot of snow and winter feelings. This made the daily walk to Västerbottens Museum, where the conference took place, a delightful and sometimes adventurous (at some point, unfortunately, the snow turned into ice) experience. Having battled ice and snow, we were rewarded with tea, coffee and Swedish Fika, a wonderful culinary invention that was much appreciated. Warm, fed and happy we were well prepared for each conference day.

The conference was kicked off by COMCOL chair Åsa Stenström, who, after a warm welcome, singlehandedly performed an initiation ritual by declaring all attendants guardians of contemporary collecting. It was the perfect motivation for the following four days and eight sessions of intense discussion, inspiring conversations, moving examples of practices and many questions. The following is an attempt at summarizing the conference, of course destined to remain subjective and incomplete.

Session 1 provided an introduction into contemporary collecting in Scandinavia with presentations on the history and present practices of the collection networks of SAMDOK, DOSS, TAKO and NORSAM. It led to questions about future forms of collaborative collecting on a national and international level in the light of growing globalization.

Session 2 on contemporary collecting contained many inspiring case studies of current practices, highlighting the powerful impact that collecting can have in the present: from collecting stories of refugees, because their children will be part of our society in the future and have to be able to see their stories represented (Peter du Rietz, National Museum of Science and Technology), to museums providing a digital platform for grief after a terror attack (Elisabeth Boogh, & Anna Ulfstrand, Stockholm City Museum) and playing an active role in community building by using collecting as a way to connect people (Mette Tapdrup Mortensen, Kroppedal Museum). Alexandra Bounia raised important ethical questions on the role of museums in documenting and collecting the refugee crisis of 2015. Questions like “Is it too soon to collect stories of people that just arrived on the Greek shores?”, “Do we have the right?” and “Are museums even the best places to tell those stories?” still make me think a lot about both the power and the responsibility of museum practice.

In session 3 on methodology, participatory strategies to include the public both in content production and also in decision making were discussed. At the end of the session we divided into working groups to discuss aspects of de-accessioning.

Session 4 was focused on the concept of democratic collecting, discussing the role of stories about disability. Cecilia Bygdell & Diana Chafik questioned if stories about disability have to be only of interest for people with impairments, or if they can be used to get insight about general developments in history. Christine Bylund highlighted the distrust of people with disabilities to institutions like museums due to misrepresentation and lack of belonging. In the discussion it was agreed that people with disabilities should not only be represented in museums but also included as knowledge producers.

In session 5 titled “letting go” questions were raised if we should shift from guarding collections to using them and the relationship between community needs and the process of musealisation. Shikibu Horiuchi presented a case of liquid collecting at Nara National Museum, Japan, where the exhibition room containing statues from temples is both a room of fine art and of

worship. Statues are kept by the museum, but can be removed when they are needed for religious rituals.

The thought of community needs and a changing role of museums continued in session 6 on inclusive art collections. Koosje Hofman, Reinwardt Academie, reflected on Berlin street art and its documentation concluding with the question if we are even needed as guardians, when communities document themselves?



Ricardo Porto



Photo: Petter Engman,  
Västerbottens museum, Umeå, Sweden.

Session 7 focused on the role museums and collections can play in community building and forging connections. William Gamboa Sierra presented the case of the Glass Museum in Bogotá, a community museum every aspect of which (even the mission statement) was created by the community itself. Rebecca Naidoo, Durban Local History Museums, highlighted the power of museums as social agents and their ability to provide public healing as the best platforms to deal with contested histories. The session ended with Arjen Kok, Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, questioning if a classical museum is the right tool to revitalize a community and addressing our changing role as guardians by asking if protecting objects also means isolating them.

In the final session on the topic of connecting and collecting memories Anna Fredholm talked about the active efforts of the National War Museum to add more voices to the collection by collecting stories of previous marginalized groups and highlighted the possibilities to create understanding and empathy by connecting stories from refugee children to childhood memories of the Second World War. The session ended with a presentation of the COMCOL working group on sharing collections, which included case studies and questions and concluded in the wish to have more honest bad practice discussions.

After four intense days the conference was ended by the closing remarks of COMCOL chair Åsa Stenström who captured the spirit of the conference by claiming that for her, being guardians of contemporary collecting means most of all, that we should be guardians of opening up the collections and not to keep people out because the museum belongs to the people. I continue to be inspired by her words and by the conference as

a whole. I was amazed by the warm atmosphere and the honest conversations, both of which made this conference very special to me.

I would like to thank the Board of COMCOL, especially Åsa Stenström and Danielle Kujiten for my wonderful stipend, and also Léontine Meijer-van Mensch, my wonderful mentor, who encouraged me to join COMCOL and made it possible for me to attend the conference in Umeå. And I want to thank all the COMCOL members who made me feel so welcome. I hope to see all of you again for more inspiring talks and discussions at one of the next annual conferences.

It would be a grave omission to end this report without mentioning the superb hosting by Åsa and her team at Västerbottens Museum, who took such great care of us: from giving us tours of the museum, to answering all kinds of questions, to feeding us with a never-ending stream of Swedish delights, my personal highlight being the four courses of Swedish



Photo: Petter Engman,  
Västerbottens museum, Umeå, Sweden.

Christmas dinner. I can honestly say that I have never been so full in my entire life. Thank you very much for the wonderful time in Sweden!



*Christiane Lindner Museologist and Guardian of Contemporary Collecting*



*christiane.lindner@student.ahk.nl*

# ICOM



## KYOTO 2019



## ***SAVE THE DATES ICOM Kyoto 2019***

### **Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition**

In 2019 COMCOL will have a pre-conference in Nara from 29-31 August before heading of to Kyoto for the General ICOM conference: Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition from 1-7 September.

#### **NARA 29-31 August**

Together with the Nara National Museum COMCOL will organize 3 pre-conference days where we will explore the theme of the conference in connection to collecting having the amazing cultural richness of Nara and their collecting praxis as inspiration. The museum is located in a corner of Nara Park surrounded by the Tōdai-ji Temple, the Kōfuku-ji Temple, and the Kasuga Taisha Shrine. With the cooperation of temples, shrines, and other cultural properties' owners, they conserve and study cultural properties, including artworks and archeological artifacts related to Buddhist art. They also hold exhibitions to encourage the understanding of the quality of and fascination with Buddhist art cultivated through deep faith in Buddhism, as well as the profound culture and historical background of Buddhist art.

#### **Kyoto 1-7 September**

From Nara we will travel to KYOTO for the official start of the triannual. In 2019 the theme is Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition, which aims to highlight the changing role of museums in today's society: "Amidst altering social, economic, and political environments, once-static institutions are reinventing themselves to become more interactive, audience-focused centres of culture. As part of this transformation, museums are working to create more cohesive, shared visions amongst their employees and in partnership with other institutions and the communities they serve.

As museums increasingly grow into their roles as cultural hubs, they are also finding new ways to honour their collections, their histories, and their legacies, making these traditions relevant to an increasingly diverse and global contemporary audience."

A big variety of discussions and exchange of ideas on museum-related issues will sweep the city during this week as all committees and their members from all over the world will gather to participate. From excursions to workshops give you opportunities to engage with other museum professionals and enthusiasts and to broaden your experience and understanding of the museum world.

We will keep you posted on our website and facebook. You can also keep a close eye on facebook and the conference website of the Kyoto committee for the latest news: <http://icom-kyoto-2019.org/index.html>

## EDITORIAL

COMCOL – Committee for Collecting – is the International Committee of ICOM dedicated to deepening discussions and sharing knowledge of the practice, theory and ethics of collecting and collection development. COMCOL Newsletter provides a forum for developing the work of COMCOL and we welcome contributions from museum professionals, scholars and students all over the world: short essays on projects, reflections, conference/seminar reports, specific questions, notices about useful reading material, invitations to cooperate, introductions to new research or other matters. Views and opinions published in the newsletter are the views of the contributors. Contributions for the next issue are welcomed by 1 October 2018. Please contact the editors if you wish to discuss a theme or topic for publication. COMCOL Newsletter is available at COMCOL's website <http://network.icom.museum/comcol/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/comcol.icom>

**Editors****Riitta Kela,**

Helsinki City Museum, Finland [riitta.kela@hel.fi](mailto:riitta.kela@hel.fi)

**Eva Fägerborg,**

Solna, Sweden [eva.faegerborg@gmail.com](mailto:eva.faegerborg@gmail.com)

**Erin Caswell,**

London, UK [erin.caswell@gmail.com](mailto:erin.caswell@gmail.com)

**Catherine Marshall,**

Dublin, Ireland [catherinemarshall5@yahoo.com](mailto:catherinemarshall5@yahoo.com)

**Judith Coombes,**

Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, Sydney, Australia, [Judith.Coombes@maas.museum](mailto:Judith.Coombes@maas.museum)