

Collecting with(in) the City

Amsterdam 9-11 October 2024

CAMOC – COMCOL conference 2024



9 October:

Start with city Tours - Exploring Amsterdam

Morning: Breakfast at Imagine IC and program in Amsterdam Southeast

Afternoon: Explore other parts of the city of Amsterdam

Evening: Welcoming/opening drinks at the Amsterdam Museum (Amstel 51) from 17-19.00h

10-11 October

Conference days @ Pakhuis de Zwijger with keynotes, dialogue sessions, papers, practices, posters, artistic interventions, workshops and highlight sessions.

Call for Proposals

In October 2024 the ICOM International Committees CAMOC (City Museums) and COMCOL (Collecting) will join forces again to revisit collecting and (re)presenting in and with the city, by investigating the fluidity of the borders between museums and cities. The conference *Collecting with(in) the City* will be hosted by the Amsterdam Museum in partnership with Imagine IC, and will focus on what collecting with and in a city means and how the museums and cultural heritage institutions of today do this.

This core focus invites us to consider some urgent conceptual questions: What can museums capture beyond objects? (How) can they collect city rhythms, sounds, or smells? Can you collect the people that create and use a city? How can contemporary collecting be inspired by existing collections, and how can looking at collections with new (outside) perspectives bring new insights? What remnants of the past live in the present and how do they manifest? How should museums care for new urban narratives and for the people they concern? When working on a new balance of expertise and expectations, what inequalities and power relations emerge in (city) museums? How do shifting ideas about ownership and authority affect collecting and exhibiting practices?

For museums, these questions are becoming ever more relevant, as the balance between tangible and intangible heritage is shifting. Museums and heritage institutions are collecting not only objects but also stories and experiences. And increasingly they do so in various participatory forms with inhabitants, who can become partners in co-creation processes and projects. Thus, as collecting cities may include contemporary urban spaces, as well as urban lives and urban narratives, these questions also touch on critical discourses on power, reciprocity, and impact. Who can/do you partner with? What does this process of collaborating with networks and communities in a city look like? What makes collaborations mutually beneficial? In other words, collaborative and participatory collecting raises various issues worth studying, from ethics and legalities to sociological and psychological questions, as well as, of course, from a museology perspective.

Suggested Topics and Themes

The conference is a space for heritage practitioners from all over the world to reflect on collecting in and within a city. We welcome anyone from any professional field who is interested in these matters to submit proposals on the following topics:

Power and (In)equalities

How do museums reveal power asymmetries, inequalities and power play when collecting? How do we decide what knowledge is relevant? How do you take multivocality as a starting point in collecting and documenting? What power disbalances do (city) museum collections reveal? How can we rethink collections with a colonial heritage? How can we acknowledge the needs and claims of indigenous communities? How do we navigate different and often contrary voices (in the same collection)?

Creative Engagements

How do artists and creative makers surmount challenges in translating phenomena to relevant user experiences and interfaces? How can collaborations help produce knowledge of the traumatic, sacred, humorous, or mundane city? How do the community and artists craft in tandem, producing knowledge process, practice, and product? What are the challenges when choosing artists to collaborate with? What aspects of co-curation extend beyond the collecting process?

Fluid Borders

Where does the city start and where does it end? Is the city only a physical space? How do museums deal with new collection mobility? How do they deal with objects moving in and out of the museum? How do we approach questions on privacy, ownership and (ritual) use of museum objects? What are the ethical and legal challenges that this fluidity poses?

Tangible and Intangible

How can we connect the tangible and the intangible? What are good practices for collecting and documenting (new/urban) traditions? How can museums play a role in safeguarding the living heritage of communities? How can we reinterpret existing collections? How can we research the function of objects as part of living traditions? Can we approach stories as (digital) museum objects? (How) can we present stories beyond the traditional ways of audio or video?

Concepts of Care

When collecting, how do we practice *care*? How should we define care in the context of co-creation? What do we need as competences for co-creation or participatory collecting? What are the ethical boundaries in collaborating with partners, individuals or communities? How do we equally value different knowledge systems?

The Hosts and the Host City

Amsterdam Museum has been collecting the city in various ways since the founding of the museum in 1926, but in the last decades the focus has shifted more and more to the contemporary city. In 2020 they began the program 'Collecting the City', based on co-creation with communities. *Imagine IC*, a heritage organization based in Amsterdam Southeast, has been active almost 25 years in documenting current social relations through participatory heritage work. The collaboration between the two hosts is a great opportunity to share and explore how city museums and heritage institutions from all over the world deal with (contemporary) collecting and rethinking collecting practices.

What Can I Contribute?

We welcome proposals for traditional paper presentations, as well as workshops, dialogue sessions, highlight sessions, artistic interventions, and posters. We prefer practical cases over academic approaches.

- *Paper & Practices* (individual or shared presentation up to 15 minutes)
- *Workshops* (90-120 minute sessions by one or more facilitators that provide practical takeaways)
- *Dialogue session* (60 minute session of moderator and 2-4 speakers to share perspectives on a focused topic)
- *Highlight session* (20 images in 6 minutes and 40 seconds)
- *Artistic intervention* (please explain in the proposal how attendees will experience or interact with it)
- *Poster* (graphic presentation with up to 300 words to be shared with attendees in gallery setting)

The selection committee may recommend organizing accepted submissions into different models for presentations (standard oral presentations, dialogue sessions, highlight sessions, round tables). Further guidance will be provided upon completion of the evaluation process, depending on the number and profile of the successful applicants.

How Do I Submit my Proposal?

All abstracts (between 250 and 300 words) should be sent through the online form at <https://forms.office.com/e/3t6gXFwe1N>.

The deadline for all abstract submissions is **15 April 2024, 23:59 CET**. Approval of proposals will be announced by 15 May 2024.

You will be asked to include the following information with your abstract proposal:

- Title of submitted proposal.
- Type of contribution (paper/practice, workshop, dialogue session, highlight session, artistic intervention, poster).
- The selected session themes.
- Name(s) of the authors/presenters.
- Affiliation(s).
- E-mail address(es).
- City and country
- Short biography (max. 75 words)
- COMCOL member yes/no (membership is not required)
- CAMOC member yes/no (membership is not required)
- Technical requirements for the proposed presentations

Please note that the abstract must be submitted in English, as the conference language is English.

Contact and Further Questions

If you seek financial support for physical attendance, the following options are available. Some ICOM's national committees give out travel grants to attend conferences. To find out more, reach out to your national committee. There are also (limited) grants available for CAMOC and COMCOL members.

For any questions for CAMOC, please send an email to secretary.camoc@icom.museum

For any questions for COMCOL, please send an email to secretary.comcol@icom.museum

Scientific committee on behalf of CAMOC and COMCOL:

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