

ICME 2023

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Museums and Change

TRANSFORMING OUR INSTITUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

**CALL FOR
PAPERS**

DECEMBER 03-07, 2023

MUSEUM OF ETHNOGRAPHY
Budapest-Hungary

Museums and Change

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CONFERENCE INTRODUCTION

For many years, the **International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography (ICME)** has organized its annual conferences in partnership with museums across the world, and with the support of ICOM's national, international committees and regional alliances. These annual events offer international forums for reflection and exchange of ideas about contemporary museological practices and the challenges confronted by ethnographic museums and collections from local, national, and/or global cultures and societies, as well as by other museums that aim to address issues of coloniality, indigeneity, diversity, (in)equality and social justice in their activities.

The **2023 ICME Annual Conference** has been organised in collaboration with **Museum of Ethnography in Budapest, Hungary** and will be hosted in their 'new home' in the City Park of Budapest. This new state-of-the-art building has been created as part of the Liget Budapest Project, a large-scale, ongoing urban cultural development project. This project also involved the relocation of the museum's extensive Hungarian and international collections and the development of a dedicated Museum Education space, MÉTA. As the opening of the new Museum of Ethnography in the City Park represents "an epic change for the museum", as claimed in its website, the institution offers an especially fitting setting for ICME 2023 Annual Conference, which will explore issues of change in contemporary museum practice and theory.

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The issue of change is not a new one in the museum sector. If there is one constant in our sector it is the imperative for museums to adapt to constant sociopolitical, economic, and environmental change and its associated uncertainties. Michael M. Ames (2013: 4) has argued that 'the future of successful museums will be of constant repositioning to adapt to, or outwit, the forces of change'. The paradoxical nature of organisational change within museums has been emphasized by Robert J. Janes in his groundbreaking 'Museums and the Paradox of Change' (2013), which points to the multiple challenges and opportunities of museum change.

During the last decade, diverse events have affected our planet including migratory and health crises, demands for cultural integration, political instability, and climate change. For instance, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia have witnessed unprecedented numbers of refugees and migrants. At the same time, the earth's biodiversity has seen alarming declines due to changes in land and sea use, overexploitation by extractive industries, invasive species or pollution. Discontent has also led to massive protests across the globe. Cultural, socioeconomic, and political change are impacting people's lives, their perceptions of the future, and the way museums are communicating our shared histories to new generations. Museums have strived to stay relevant, turning into spaces for self-representation, social awareness, emotional understanding and environmental activism, strengthening the fragile social tissue in many countries and fostering hope in their communities.

Arguably, however, the early 2020s have witnessed an especially significant wave of change within the museum sector triggered by major socioeconomic events including the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter and decolonizing movements, the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the crisis of living, rising levels of inflation and poverty, and a growing climate emergency. At sectorial level we have also experienced profound transformations including a new museum definition, decolonizing and restitution efforts, the embracement of digital technologies, tremendous IT changes and influence (AI), climate-friendly practices, and collaborations with activist groups.

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The aim of this conference is to focus on this period of accelerated change and explore how museums have sought to respond to these external and sectorial factors of change. With *Museums and Change*, we invite museum professionals and scholars to reflect on how museums have responded, or are seeking to respond, to these socioeconomic, political, cultural, intellectual and environmental factors of change. We are also interested in instances in which museums have sought to proactively foster internal change, moving beyond simply responding to external and sectorial pressures.

The conference will explore the topic of change in the light of the new museum definition that fosters sustainability, community participation and ethical communication. We aim to offer new insights into the predominant theory and practice by critically considering alternative perspectives and approaches to the topic of “museums and change”, moving away from Eurocentric, colonial and neoliberal logics. Thus, we are particularly keen to hear from colleagues whose professional practice and research focus on museums located in Eastern Europe and the Global South, thus fostering reflection on areas of the world with similarities and shared experiences. However, relevant papers addressing practices across the world are also welcome.

Proposals should fall within three broad thematic areas and address one or a few guiding questions below.

1. Responses to planetary (external) change: sociopolitical and health crises and activism

- *How have museums responded to recent sociopolitical, economic and health crises? (e.g., the crisis of living, rising levels of inflation and poverty, war, climate change, and migration)?*
- *Which actions are museums developing to interpret, tackle, record or address these crises affecting the world?*
- *How have museums sought to respond to activist movements including the Black Lives Matter and decolonizing movements?*
- *In which ways have activist groups pressurised museums to embrace change? To what extent have museums fostered productive collaborations with these groups?*
- *To what extent have these external factors of change triggered short-term transformations? Or have they*

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activated more long-term change?

- *What relationships have been built between museums and communities to protect natural resources?*
- *In which ways does migration nurture the construction of community heritage in museums devoted to world cultures?*

2. Responses to sectorial change

- *How have museums sought to activate the new museum definition? Which challenges have traditional institutional structures posed to these efforts?*
- *In which ways has the new definition fostered change in national cultural policies and further legal frameworks?*
- *To what extent has it shaped the functions of museums, or does it represent only a rhetorical transformation?*
- *To what extent has the embracement of digital technologies fostered the creation of accessible and inclusive institutions? Who may have been excluded by these trends?*

3. Organizational (internal) change: shifting institutional practices and logics

- *Which museum professionals and/or departments have led on processes of organizational change?*
- *Which kind of internal or external resistances or challenges have museums committed to change encountered?*
- *To what extent have international debates around museum decolonization permeated the international museum landscape? In which ways do these debates resonate (or not) with the realities of museums across the world, particularly in Eastern Europe and the Global South?*
- *In which (other) ways have museums sought to foster a locally relevant approach to transformation, reorienting them ways from the logic of coloniality (e.g. indigenous or participatory museologies)?*

If we particularly welcome proposal that focus on ethnographic, anthropology, world culture or society museums, we are very keen to hear from colleagues working in or on museums of every kind committed to issues of coloniality, indigeneity, diversity, (in)equality and social justice.

PROPOSALS

We call for papers, panels and workshops from colleagues who work on collections, exhibitions and programming that aim to diversify audiences and reconsider interpretive practice, whilst valuing and respecting traditional heritages and practices. Proposal for **papers (15 minutes)** or **panel** should not exceed **300 words**.

SUBMISSION & DEADLINES

The following information should be included with the abstract proposal:

- Title of submitted proposal
- Indicate if it is a paper, panel session or workshop
- Name(s) of Author(s) or presenters
- Affiliation(s) & full address(es)
- ICOM membership number (membership is not required)
- ICME Member yes/no (membership is not required)
- Technical requirements for the proposed presentation
- 100-word bio for each presenter

Abstracts should be sent to icom.icme@gmail.com by **15th of September 2023, midnight CET**. Accepted proposals will be notified by **1st of October 2023**.

The abstract language must be **submitted in English**. Presentations will be delivered in English or Hungarian with simultaneous translation.

Please note that we are currently planning a **follow-up publication**. Presenters will receive further information on the time-frame of the publication, length of papers and key deadlines.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Check the conference registration fees below in **Important dates & Info section**. The price includes coffee breaks, lunch and other expenses directly related to the organisation of the conference. Registration deadline for the conference is **15th of October 2023**. The registration form will be available soon on ICME's official website:

[ICME 2023 Conference & Registration](#)

POST- CONFERENCE TOUR

The post-conference tour is planned over two days (**6th and 7th of December**) and participants will be able to attend one or both days. The cost is **150 € per day** including the bus, lunch, museums and other expenses. The tour can be registered separately and paid for individually. A detailed programme will be published on the [ICME committee's website](#).

IMPORTANT DATES & INFO

CONFERENCE THEME:
Museum and Change

CONFERENCE DATES:
December 03-05, 2023

PLACE:
**Museum of Ethnography
Budapest, Hungary**

PROPOSALS SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
September 15, 2023

ACCEPTED PROPOSALS:
October 1, 2023

POST-CONFERENCE TOUR:
December 06-07, 2023

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION:
**until
October 15, 2023**

CONFERENCE FEE:

ICOM Members	220 €
Non-Members	240 €
Presenters	110 €
Students	110 €
Local participants	110 €
Hybrid/Online	90 €

Conference committee: ICME - Mario Buletić, Ralf Čeplak Mencin, Serena Iervolino, Heidi Mckinnon, Annamarija Rojas Múnera; **Néprajzi Múzeum/Museum of Ethnography, Budapest** - Almásine Kanyó Klára, Bazsó Borka Eszter, Berényi Marianna, Nagel Edith, Szép Barbara, Veres Gábor

Conference news and detailed practical info is available on ICME-ICOM official website:

<https://icme.mini.icom.museum>