

International Journal of
*Intangible
Heritage*

Vol.1 2006



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

<http://www.ijih.org>

The *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* is a refereed academic and professional English language journal dedicated to the promotion of the understanding of all aspects of the intangible heritage of the world, and the communication of research and examples of good professional practice. Proposals for contributions to future annual volumes of the *Journal* are actively sought from all countries, professions and specialisms. (See the *Instructions for authors* in this volume for more details.)

Editorial Advisory Committee:

KIM Hongnam (Korea, Chairperson), Rosmarie BEIER-DE HAAN (Germany), CHOE Chong-pil (Korea)
Miklós CSERI (Hungary), Alissandra CUMMINS (Barbados), Nguyen Van HUY (Vietnam)
Roger JANELLI (USA), KIM Byung-mo (Korea), LEE Samuel (Korea)
Gerald MCMASTER (Canada), MIYATA Shigeyuki (Japan), Tereza C. Moletta SCHEINER (Brazil)

Editorial Board:

Patrick BOYLAN (UK), Henry C. Jatti BREDEKAMP (South Africa), CHUN Kyungsoo (Korea),
Louise CORT (USA), Amareswar GALLA (Australia), GAO Bingzhong (China)
Laurel KENDALL (USA), YIM Dawnhee (Korea)

Publisher:

The National Folk Museum of Korea

Publication Secretariat:

The National Folk Museum of Korea
Sejongno 1-1, Jongno-gu, Seoul, Korea
secretariat@ijih.org
Tel: +82 2 3704 3101, 3106, 3109
Fax: +82 2 3704 3149

Editorial Coordination:

HAN Minho (Division Director, NFMK), YANG Jongsung (Senior Curator, NFMK)
KIM Jongsok (Curator, NFMK), RHO Sunhee (Curatorial Assistant, NFMK)

Editor-in-Chief:

Patrick BOYLAN (UK)

Text Editor:

Pamela INDER (UK)

Design:

GNA Communications (Korea)
CHANG Dongseok (Designer, GNA), CHO Kyoungseun (Designer, GNA), CHOI Inbyoung (Manager, GNA)

© 2006. The National Folk Museum of Korea and the various authors.
Government Publications Registration Number: 11-1370152-000089-10
ISSN: 1975-4019

International Journal of
Intangible Heritage

Vol.1 2006

Contents

- 07** Welcome to the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*: Alissandra Cummins, President of ICOM
- 09** Foreword: Choe Chong-pil, Chairperson, Korean National Committee of ICOM
- 10** Introducing the International Journal of Intangible Heritage: Kim Hongnam, Chairperson, Editorial Advisory Committee and Patrick Boylan, Editor-in-Chief
- 13** Intangible Heritage: A Pacific Case Study at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa: Kolokesa Uafā Māhina-Tuai
- 25** The Difficulties in Interpreting *Mediterranean Voices*: Exhibiting Intangibles Using New Technologies: Margaret Hart Robertson
- 35** The Role of Museums in the Preservation of Living Heritage: Experiences of the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology: Nguyen Van Huy
- 43** Linking the Present with the Past through Intangible Heritage in History Museums: Sally Yerkovich
- 53** The Intangible Heritage: a Challenge and an Opportunity for Museums and Museum Professional Training: Patrick J. Boylan
- 67** Preserving the Ephemeral: the International Museums Day 2004 in Mexico: Silvia Singer
- 75** Transforming Representations of Intangible Heritage at Iziko (National) Museums, South Africa: Henry C. Jatti Bredekamp
- 83** *Inspiration Africa!* Using Tangible and Intangible Heritage to Promote Social Inclusion Amongst Young People with Disabilities: Viv Golding
- 94** Brief Biographies of the Authors
- 97** Instructions to Contributors

Welcome to the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*



The concept of 'intangible heritage' has taken on great importance within the international museum community (and of course more widely) over recent years. This is apparent in the international effort led by organisations such as UNESCO and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) to protect expressions of cultural diversity such as languages, music, dance, theatre, social practices (rituals and celebrations) and traditional knowledge. The *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, adopted in October 2003 by UNESCO's General Conference, has now entered into force (on April 20, 2006) with a total of 47 countries having deposited their instruments of ratification (16 in Europe, 9 in Asia, 9 in Africa, 7 in Latin America, and 6 Arab states). This overwhelming success for the collaborative international commitment to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is the solid foundation upon which this new *Journal* embarks on its mission.

The recently passed *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* adopted by UNESCO in October 2005 further attests to the aim of strengthening achievements in this domain. In addition, ICOM is intensifying efforts with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to explore new ways of defining intellectual property through an understanding of intangible cultural heritage employing new instruments more suitable for the latter's ultimate protection.

The foundation of ICOM was very much influenced by an appreciation in the museum world, especially in France, of the value of expressions of what was then referred to as folklore, and through an anthropological understanding of the sacred forms of cultural heritage. Theory and practice went hand in hand in Europe between the First and Second World Wars to a degree uncommon today. Especially influential was Marcel Mauss, the leading French philosopher of modern sociology, anthropology and ethnography of the 1920s and 1930s. He was a major influence on Georges Henri Rivière who was to become the founding Director of ICOM. With other followers of Marcel Mauss, such as Yvonne Oddon, creator of the UNESCO-ICOM Documentation Centre, Rivière went from practical involvement in aiding the anthropologist and museum director Paul Rivet with exhibits of Oceanic, Amerindian and African provenance during the transformation of the Musée d'Ethnographie into the Musée de l'Homme in the mid-1930s and then in laying the foundations of what became the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires.

In leading ICOM as its first Director from 1948 to 1965, Rivière developed a cogent theory and practice of the importance of traditional folklore and values. This was carried forward through the *Ethics of Acquisition* (1970), forerunner to today's *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* (adopted in 1986, most recently revised and unanimously approved in Seoul in 2004, and published in 2006). Indeed, the practices of acquisition, documentation, and exhibition were, in great part, the bases for the world's first international museum organisation with expressions of traditional culture (both tangible and intangible) in mind. Though Georges Henri Rivière handed over the directorship of ICOM to Hugues de Varine in 1965, he served as the highly influential Permanent Adviser to the organisation and as head of its Training Unit, while at the same time teaching museology at the University of Paris until shortly before his death in 1985.

In the late 1960s he was at last able to apply his long-held principles and values as director for the development of the new, specially designed museum in the Bois de Boulogne, Paris, for what became independent of the

Musée de l'Homme as the Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires (MNATP), building on what Rivière had first launched as part of the Musée de l'Homme at the Trocadéro in the 1930s. Opened in two stages in 1972 and 1975 (by which time Rivière had officially retired under French Civil Service rules), the new MNATP building accommodated, alongside the Museum and its curatorial staff, a much larger number of ethnographers, linguists, art historians and other experts employed by the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France's elite national scientific research service). These worked in parallel with the museum in what quickly became France's national research unit for the study of both the material and the intangible heritage of the country.

Furthermore, Rivière, along with Hugues de Varine, his collaborator and successor as Director of ICOM, promoted very actively the value and potential contribution of museums and the wider cultural sector in community development and empowerment. This was seen in particular in their promotion of what they termed 'ecomuseums' – a word first used during ICOM's 1971 General Conference in Grenoble and Paris. These were seen as expressions of a 'new museology', providing facilities for housing, and promoting equally, much more than what is typically seen within the walls of a traditional museum. This wider context must include, it is argued, the traditions, feelings and artistic and cultural expressions of the ecomuseum's community and territory – their intangible heritage. The 2003 Intangible Heritage Convention's commitment to *communities, groups and in some cases individuals* who recognise the value of the intangible cultural heritage is identical to that of those who create, devise and run these museums and other such 'community' and 'site' museums.

This new *Journal of the Intangible Heritage* will therefore provide a major service to cultural and community development within the field of museums, but also of course far beyond these. It is very much hoped that it will help to shape the discourse, and improve understanding of how intangible and tangible heritage are inextricably linked to one another.

ICOM's living tradition of investigating, supporting, and protecting intangible heritage is demonstrated by its active participation in the technical and scientific evaluation of nominations for UNESCO's Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, in the work of members of its International Committee on Museum Ethnology (ICME) among other ICOM Committees, and the work of ICOM Korea in both its successful organisation of the ICOM 2004 General Conference on Museums and the Intangible Heritage, our first General Conference in Asia, and in promoting the now well established Korean cultural heritage protection model of 'Living Heritage' internationally. All of these, and many similar, initiatives are worthy heirs to ICOM's sixty years of service to, and development of, the cultural heritage in its broadest sense. This common cause of preserving the universal spirit of cultural diversity can be likened to the *spirit of the gift*, as Marcel Mauss termed it in 1924. This also describes ICOM's purpose in supporting this first international journal dedicated to the intangible heritage.

The new *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*, which has been promoted by the National Folk Museum of Korea and the Korean National Committee of ICOM with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Korea, is an exceptional initiative. The first scholarly journal of its kind, the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* will not just report but, we hope, will help to create new knowledge that will be disseminated to all corners of the world. We trust that this will help to create an irreducible bond between cultures across the world and consolidate common values by researching, protecting, and celebrating both the differences and similarities that are the intangible treasure of humanity's heritage. ICOM is deeply grateful for this *spirit of the gift* that the promoters of this *Journal* are offering the international heritage community.

Alissandra Cummins
President, International Council of Museums (ICOM)

Foreword



People are constantly creating new cultural expressions as a way to adapt themselves to natural and social environments that are constantly changing. Once a community introduces newly created culture, its members learn and practice it: this is how human society progresses. Also both traditional and new culture is being transmitted to the next generation through language and other expressions and keeps accumulating. Consequently culture is unavoidably always in a state of change. Cultural transformation can be the result of several different factors: for example, internal conflicts, frequent contacts with neighbouring cultures, or the assimilation of new cultures. For this reason, universality and particularity can be equally influential in relation to almost every ethnic culture that can be found across the world. 'Universality', in this sense, means the common values of all human culture, while 'particularity' is seen in cultural distinctiveness.

Therefore the cultural particularity or distinctiveness of a country can be one of the standards that define a people's culture. In other words, every piece of the tangible heritage, whether a building, monument, work of art or specimen, also contains its own intangible heritage value and arguably the tangible expression is now valued because of its intangible associations. From this perspective, we need to bring out and integrate those aspects that connect these two concepts. In the case of the tangible heritage of collections of specimens and works of art, the museum is the traditional place where people can preserve and study both aspects of them most efficiently and effectively.

According to the ICOM definition, a museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment. In this definition, the material evidence includes both tangible heritage and visually transformed intangible heritage. Consequently a museum needs to archive, visualise, and document all kinds of testimonies to human culture and history from its creation to its final condition, and not least the intangible heritage information associated with its collections, by using various forms of audiovisual and digital equipment. The documentation of these intangible elements can, for example, be used as the key to interpreting the collections or as additional references for future exhibitions. Even more important perhaps they can also be a great help in understanding the value and integrity of different cultures.

The most important thing to the museum in its researching, educating and exhibiting of the intangible heritage, is to recognise the cultural diversity that is based on cultural relativism. If this is done, different ethnic groups or other culturally distinct populations will come to respect each other and, it is hoped, this in turn will lead to continual development of each people's culture. Therefore the intangible heritage is a most important testimony to the cultural diversity, creativity and identity of human race.

Choe Chong-pil
Chairperson, Korean National Committee, International Council of Museums (ICOM)

Introducing the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*



The *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* is a refereed academic and professional journal that embraces theory and practice in relation to the study, preservation, interpretation and promotion of the intangible heritage. Over recent years, academics, researchers and professionals in many different parts of the cultural sector have increasingly been collecting, systematising, documenting and communicating the intangible heritage, and in particular supporting its traditional cultural expressions. This new *Journal* therefore seeks to serve as a spotlight on this important and growing aspect of heritage studies.

It is certainly true that traditionally the concerns and interests of governments, cultural institutions and specialists across the world have been focused very largely on tangible heritage issues: on monuments and sites, museums, libraries, archives and their collections. Recognising the great importance of intangible heritage creates a new cultural insight and can unveil a new cultural paradigm that has long been overlooked or at least seriously undervalued. More active exchanges between international researchers and heritage bearers, for example through this *Journal* will, we very much hope, rapidly increase to the benefit of the understanding and sustainable development of the intangible heritage.

In 2003 the General Assembly of UNESCO adopted by consensus the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. The following year UNESCO published a major series of papers about the intangible heritage in a double issue of its prestigious quarterly journal *Museums International* (no. 221/2, May 2004), and later the same year the International Council of Museums (ICOM) held its triennial General Conference in Seoul, Korea, with the theme of *Museums and the Intangible Heritage*. One of the important achievements of ICOM 2004 Seoul is that it presented for the first time the Asian civilisation under a new perspective. Arguably, ICOM's commitment to supporting and promoting the preservation and development of the intangible heritage was one of the most important steps forward taken by the organisation since its creation in 1946.

Following the adoption of the new UNESCO Convention (which came into force among its first 47 States Parties on 21 April 2006) and the theme and achievements of ICOM 2004, the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* has been launched to serve as a comprehensive academic journal on the intangible heritage, as defined in the UNESCO Convention:

- (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage
- (b) performing arts
- (c) social practices, rituals and festive events
- (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- (e) traditional craftsmanship

In particular, the *Journal* aims to promote international communication, and the exchange of ideas, research, investigation, conservation, transmission, and performance relating to any aspect of the intangible heritage among scholars, researchers, professionals, educationalists other practitioners and organisations involved in the intangible heritage sector. The *Journal* and its organisers and publishers also aim to play an international

role in promoting professional and academic exchange and co-operative working with other institutions and organisations to produce and disseminate this journal.

Originally conceived as the result of informal discussions during the ICOM 2004 General Conference in Seoul, over the subsequent 18 months there have been extensive contacts with museum directors and intangible heritage experts from many countries and many specialisations, seeking to raise and confirm awareness of the importance of intangible heritage and of the need for greater opportunities for academic and professional publication and information exchange in relation to it. In order to support these efforts the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Korea has now allocated funds to support this *Journal* project through the National Folk Museum of Korea.

It is very important to stress that though the original idea for this *Journal* as well as its organisation and management lie within the museums sector, and most notably with the staff and other resources of the National Folk Museum of Korea, the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* is intended to cover all aspects of the intangible heritage as defined above, and not just the work of museums in relation to it.

Working with the Editorial Advisory Committee and Editorial Board, which between them draw members from thirteen countries, the Publication Secretariat, Editors and the designers and printers have now produced this first annual volume of the *Journal*. We wish to express our most grateful thanks to all of these, to the President of ICOM, Alissandra Cummins, and the Chairperson of the Korean National Committee of ICOM, Professor Choe Chong-pil, for their support and their forewords to this first volume. Most of all, of course, thanks are due to the authors of the various papers who have been willing to share their views and experiences with colleagues around the world.

The *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* is being distributed to a very large number of key institutions in the heritage sector around the world, including national and specialist museums and libraries, as well as to universities and other institutions researching the intangible heritage or working on staff training and on education and communication in the heritage field. In addition all published papers will be available for downloading from the *Journal's* own web site at: <http://www.ijih.org/>. We trust that this very wide dissemination of the *Journal* will be a spur to further academic activities and studies and publication in relation to all aspects of study of the intangible heritage.

Kim Hongnam

Director, The National Folk Museum of Korea and Chairperson of the Editorial Advisory Committee

Patrick Boylan

Professor Emeritus, Heritage Policy and Management, City University London and Editor-in-Chief

Left: *Mangudaetaggut*, a shamanic ritual of Korea has long been performed as a regional tradition to pray for good luck and longevity. This parade carries a great shaman on a flowered palanquin and is believed to purify the village and its shamanic shrine.

Right: May Day festivities in Padstow, Cornwall: believed to be one of England's oldest surviving 'calendar customs'. The children's dance through the town is led by their own half-size 'hobby-horse'.



01 Intangible Heritage: A Pacific Case Study at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

Kolokesa Uafā Māhina-Tuai

Curator Pacific Cultures, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, New Zealand

Intangible Heritage: A Pacific Case Study at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

● Kolokesa Uafā Māhina-Tuai

Curator Pacific Cultures, Museum of New Zealand
Te Papa Tongarewa, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa has a large collection of Pacific material, but, despite the museum's commitment to represent the cultures of all New Zealand's peoples and its recognition of the importance of intangible heritage, it has only been partially successful in demonstrating. Objects have been de-contextualised and some of their cultural significance has been lost, as has happened with many other Pacific collections in museums worldwide. The exhibition *Culture Moves! Dance Costumes of the Pacific* was set up to complement the conference *Culture Moves! Dance in Oceania for hiva to hip hop* held at Te Papa in November 2005. It provided an opportunity for the museum to show its commitment to the idea of intangible heritage. The paper deals with the problems involved in the collection, display and interpretation of dance costumes and describes some of the solutions. It recommends the approach of the Vanuatu Culture Centre's Fieldworkers to the collection and recording of intangible material as a model which Te Papa tried to follow in the creation of this exhibition and as one that would be appropriate for other projects and other museums.

Introduction

The Pacific region encompasses living and transforming cultures that include both tangible and intangible components. Museum institutions, worldwide, have long been associated with the tangible aspect of Pacific cultures, in terms of the amassed Pacific material wealth that they have collected/acquired and currently have in

their care. In the early phases of museums, in private collections and 'cabinets of curiosities,' Pacific items were regarded as 'curiosities' of the unknown exotic 'other' and, often served to represent the status of collectors and other individuals as being well-travelled and knowledgeable. The development of the 'cabinets of curiosity' into public museum institutions, in some cases

took on a scientific approach where Pacific collections came to be regarded as specimens of different peoples and races, and were interpreted accordingly. This scientifically-driven collecting required an objective approach where Pacific collections were classified and displayed in a systematic fashion. This objective approach would further de-contextualise Pacific collections by disregarding any intangible or anecdotal meanings items may have possessed.

For a long time, the displays of Pacific collections in museums have represented Pacific cultures as static. As a result, museums have been criticised for their contribution to the estrangement of the collections they hold from their original functions. In far too many cases the walls of museum institutions literally confine Pacific collections to passive contexts, marginalising their original functions and interpreting them according to established Western museological practices and world views. The representation of Pacific cultures as static is an issue that is now being addressed and continually revised by many museums. The focus on representing Pacific cultures as dynamic and changing comes at a time when Pacific peoples, whose cultures are represented, have also been included in museums' decision-making processes. This is through the consultation process that is established between museum institutions and communities. In this respect the approach of the museum regarding Pacific collections has gone from the elitist, scientific and authoritative voice of the institution and academics, to a more plural, inclusive and culturally sensitive approach. This historical background is comparable to the history of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) and the representation and interpretation of its Pacific collection¹. Before discussing the Pacific collection a brief overview of Te Papa is required to set the context.

Te Papa

Te Papa's significance as a museum institution in the Pacific is in part its commitment to being a bicultural organisation². This is through acknowledging the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi³ and the equal recognition and representation of its two signatories - Tangata Whenua, (those who belong to the land by right of first discovery or Māori) and Tangata Tiriti, (those who belong to the country by right of the Treaty of Waitangi, or European). The bi-cultural ethos provides the foundation that shaped Te Papa in its incipient stages of development and infiltrates into the conceptual and operating framework of the organisation, right through to governance level. Although bi-culturalism at Te Papa is a reflection of the partnership between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti, the latter also encompasses *the cultural identity of the more recent settlers of New Zealand...multicultural heritages...and their place in the Pacific and the wider world*(Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2002: 6).

Te Papa's obligation to represent multicultural heritages is bound by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992, and particularly Section 8 of the Act, which requires that the Board shall:

- Have regard to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the people of New Zealand, and to the contributions they have made and continue to make to New Zealand's cultural life and the fabric of New Zealand society;
- Endeavour to ensure both that the Museum expresses and recognises the 'mana'⁴ and significance of Māori, European, and other major traditions and cultural heritages, and provide the means to contribute effectively to the Museum as a

statement of New Zealand's identity. [Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa website, <http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/TePapa/English/AboutTePapa/AboutUs/WhatWeDo/The+Act.htm#>]

This clause in the Act acknowledges the multicultural make-up of New Zealand society today which is now home to many ethnic groups including Pacific peoples.⁵

Te Papa originated from the merging of the National Museum and the National Art Gallery in 1992 and was opened in 1998⁶. The incorporation of an indigenous approach - through knowledge and understanding founded on Māori custom, culture and protocol - provides a framework that allows for the acknowledgement of intangible manifestations of heritage. This indigenous approach is particularly evident in the current Collection Development Policy in the recognition that Māori are the spiritual owners of their 'taonga' (treasures) and that Te Papa is only the guardian of these treasures (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2003: 6). The guiding principles set out for the care and management of taonga Māori are aligned with Māori knowledge, custom and protocol. This is put into practice through partnerships developed between the museum and various Māori 'iwi' or tribes.

Intangible heritage

Intangible heritage is defined in the UNESCO Intangible Heritage Convention as:

The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity... (UNESCO 2003: 2)

Implicit in this part of the definition is the interconnection between the intangible – *practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills* - and the tangible – *instruments, objects and artefacts and*

cultural spaces. Te Papa has acknowledged this interconnection not only through the documentation of the associated stories and history of its collections but through telling of these stories within exhibition spaces. The definition also includes other manifestations of intangible heritage such as:

...oral traditions and expressions... language, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship.
(UNESCO 2003: 2)

As a bi-cultural organisation, Te Papa has, since its inception, put into practice the concept of museums and intangible heritage within and outside the museum context, through the recognition and acknowledgement of or Māori knowledge systems. However, this has primarily been in connection with knowledge related to items in collections or exhibitions with a strong narrative base, but is not emphasised in the museum's actual collection.

Pacific collections

The museum's Pacific collection does not at present emphasise the intangible elements of Pacific cultures. Te Papa's 'Acquisition Strategy' sets out the desired outcomes, strategy, directions and priorities for collection development in all collection areas. The current focus is only on collecting tangible material culture. This is indicative of the museum's acquisition priorities which have a strong emphasis on collecting heritage items and specifically items created and used by New Zealanders of Pacific descent, and items that represent expressions of Pacific identity in New Zealand (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2004b: 3). This strong emphasis on the tangible is not compatible with the guiding principles set out in the Collection Development Policy which states that:

Te Papa will collect significant cultural property and information related to its mission, in order to document, illustrate and explore the natural and cultural heritage of New Zealand, and those parts of the world that have contributed to its natural and cultural identity.
(Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2003: 5).
It continues to explain that it does this:

To capture the imagination of New Zealand by exploring our national identity; to give physical and visual presence to the concepts, values, ideas and information that Te Papa disseminates to users by all media; and to form part of the record of scholarship and mātauranga Māori⁷.

The museum's acquisition strategy therefore needs to be better aligned with this policy statement.

Te Papa is currently re-developing the acquisition strategy of its Pacific Collections that will involve a more structured and active role in collecting intangible forms of expression. Because Te Papa has already established the conceptual foundation for including intangible heritage, it is now simply a matter of emphasising this by incorporating a statement into the acquisition strategy to follow through with its implementation. It will be this implementation process that will be the challenging task. This is where the unique approach developed by the Vanuatu Culture Centre (VCC) is of particular interest.

Vanuatu Culture Centre (VCC) and fieldworkers

Vanuatu is unique in the Pacific region for its cultural fieldworkers' network programme, widely seen as a model for community participation in cultural heritage management (Huffmann 1999). The programme was set up in the mid-1970s at the VCC which now comprises of the National Museum, the National Library, the National Film and Sound Unit, the National Cultural and Historic Sites Survey with the later additions of the Women's

Culture Project, established in 1993, and the Vanuatu Young People's Project, established in 1997 (Regenvanu 2002). The work carried out by fieldworkers is focused primarily on collecting in the area of intangible heritage through the documentation of oral histories, genealogies, rituals and performances. The fieldworkers are people from within the local community who are chosen to represent the culturally diverse areas in Vanuatu. Fieldworkers are trained in the use of resources for recording and documentation. This training takes place at an annual two-week workshop, where fieldworkers gather to share their experiences and decide on the theme of research for the following year. The National Film and Sound Unit is responsible for compiling and database storage of work from the fieldworkers. This unit has state-of-the-art film and sound recording, production and archiving facilities that have enabled it to build up a substantial film and audio collection.

The successful approach taken by the VCC through its network of fieldworkers is attributed to many factors. Most of these factors are distinct and particular to Vanuatu in terms of the cultural context that the fieldworkers programme has developed and grown since its establishment in the 1970s⁸. The fieldworkers' network operates on a voluntary basis. It is this voluntary aspect that contributes significantly to its success because it draws on people with a genuine interest and passion for preserving, maintaining and reviving Vanuatu culture. Another contributory factor is that the fieldworkers' programme involves an ongoing relationship with the VCC. These two factors can offer some guidance for implementing the approach taken by Te Papa. Instead of duplicating the fieldworkers' approach, certain elements

will be drawn on to develop a strategy that is appropriate for Te Papa and its current relationships with Pacific communities⁹.

Te Papa and Pacific communities

Te Papa's consultation with the Pacific communities prior to, and since its opening in 1998, has been on a project-by-project basis (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2004a). One project relates to the development of Te Papa's Pacific exhibition, *Mana Pasifika*¹⁰, which involved two Pacific Advisory Committees¹¹. Other areas where consultation with Pacific communities takes place are with regards to collections development for referrals or acquisitions, and for contributions to publications and public programmes.

Te Papa's Pacific collection is comprised of both historical and contemporary items and consists of about 13,000 items that represent most, if not all, of the Pacific region. Pacific communities have responded in creative and innovative ways to their environment herein New Zealand through expressions of local identity that merge with their own traditions, knowledge and practices. The material elements of these expressions are represented in the collection through Te Papa's active approach of collecting contemporary items produced by Pacific peoples in New Zealand. This has resulted in a significant contemporary collection of Pacific material culture that is possibly unique to Te Papa (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2004a). What is lacking is an equal representation of the intangible forms of

expressions such as oratory, theatre, dance and music. The collection may contain associated material forms such as costumes or related archival material but this does not sufficiently capture the essence of these ephemeral expressions.

Culture Moves! Intangible expressions at Te Papa¹²

An opportunity to explore Pacific intangible forms of expression came about in the development of the *Culture Moves! Dance costumes of the Pacific* exhibition¹³. This exhibition presents a selection of historical and contemporary dance costumes from Te Papa's Pacific Collections. It was developed to coincide and complement the *Culture Moves! Dance in Oceania from hiva to hip hop* conference, held in November 2005¹⁴. Both the exhibition and the conference provided opportunities to develop and cement ideas about the significance of intangible heritage, in this case performance arts, within a museum context, and to explore its representation in the Pacific Collections.

Te Papa hosted the *Culture Moves! Dance in Oceania from hiva to hip hop* conference, and for four days and two nights provided a space for

.....choreographers, dancers, composers, curators, costume makers, scholars, writers, musicians, and artists to participate in a discussion on the knowledge and practice of dance in Oceania across cultural, national, academic, and aesthetic boundaries
<http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis/dance/about.htm>].



Figure 1: Dance skirt, dance belt and breast plate

Figure 2: Eharo masks



For the duration of the conference, Te Papa was temporarily a living space of living treasures, in terms of the wealth of knowledge and experience that each participant contributed. One of the discussion panels in the conference looked at documenting dance, exploring questions of why dance should be documented and how may it be stored and recorded in an institutional context, and what type of relationships are possible between dance communities and people who document them. Some of these questions were explored in the development of *Culture Moves! Dance costumes of the Pacific*.

Although dance is ephemeral in nature, it is represented in Te Papa's Pacific Collections in various tangible forms by dance regalia and dance related items. While dance costumes can be considered on their own, they can only be fully appreciated when displayed within the contextual framework of their origin - the dance genres they are associated with, and the particular occasions for which they were made and worn. This contextual framework is explored in *Culture Moves! Dance costumes of the Pacific* through the combination of objects, photographs and audiovisuals.

The exhibition concept is based around two main objectives - to explore the aesthetic qualities of the dance costumes of the Pacific and to capture its close connection to music and dance. The aesthetic qualities are explored in the exhibition through the selection of costumes illustrating the diverse styles and materials found throughout the Pacific. This includes costumes that have incorporated new materials and styles such as the use of synthetic as opposed to natural fibres. In order to

capture the close connection between costumes, dance and music, audiovisuals were proposed as a means of providing viewers with snapshot performances from selected Island nations with costumes on display. This in turn would offer viewers a more holistic appreciation of dance costumes on display.

With the exhibition concept in place, the next phase involved the challenging tasks of selecting dance costumes and identifying relevant photographs and film footage. A survey of the Pacific Collections was carried out and an initial selection of dance costumes was made. During this process gaps in our representation were noted and plans were made for new acquisitions.

One criteria in the selection process was to include as many complete dance costumes as possible. This was a challenge with regards to our historical collections. All of the historical dance-related items in our Pacific Collections were only parts of complete dance costumes. This was the case with various dance items from Papua New Guinea that were featured in the exhibition, such as the dance skirt from East Sepik Province area, a breast plate and dance belt from the Eastern Highlands, and 'eharo' masks (or dance masks) from Orokolo, Gulf Province (Fig 1 & Fig 2).

In contrast to the lack of complete historical dance costumes, our contemporary collections were more complete. Featured in the exhibition are a complete female dance costume from Tokelau and a complete male costume from the Cook Islands. There were, however, a few exceptions such as the female New Zealand Māori costume, where we selected various parts



Figure 3(Left): Tuvalu skirt

Figure 4(Right): Exhibition introduction label graphic

to make a whole, and the costume from Tuvalu, of which we only had the skirt. The Tuvalu skirt was used as our main 'signature' graphic for the exhibition (Fig 3 & Fig 4).

The selection process also took into consideration an even representation of costumes from the Pacific. After making an initial selection from the Pacific Collections, an attempt was made to acquire new costumes from areas in the Pacific that were not represented. Because of time constraints and the limited exhibition budget, our wider Pacific community networks to an extent largely influenced the Pacific nations that were included in the exhibition. The exhibition included costumes from Tokelau, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, Tonga, Samoa, Niue, Rapanui (Easter Island), New Zealand, Hawaii, Kiribati, Belau, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.

With nations such as Belau and Vanuatu featured in the exhibition we were very much dependent on the expert advice of individuals from their respective cultural institutions - Belau National Museum and the Vanuatu Cultural Centre. In our brief to institutions and individuals¹⁵, we requested complete dance costumes, photographs that captured costumes worn in performance and video footage showing the context of the performance where the costumes were worn. Belau National Museum assisted us in acquiring both male and female dance costumes. The female costume (Fig 5) included in the exhibition is a combination of new and used. That is, the pandanus bra top is brand-new and the skirt with its components, were worn as part of the opening performance at the 9th Festival of Pacific Arts¹⁶ hosted by Belauin 2004. Vanuatu Culture Centre went a step further by sending a staff member to Lamap in the island of Malakula to document naluwan mekam - a dance performed as part of

a grade-taking ceremony¹⁷ and they acquired a costume that was worn for this dance. This costume, along with the footage, is featured in the exhibition.

We also had the opportunity to document and acquire costumes from one of New Zealand's own Pacific festivals, the annual 'Polyfest,' officially known as the 'ASB Auckland Secondary Schools Māori and Pacific Islands Cultural Festival'. This festival is the largest Polynesian dance festival in the world, and is held in March of every year in Auckland - the largest Polynesian city in the world. 'Polyfest' is a three-day event that combines music, dance and art. It is a visual feast for performers and spectators alike, with the five core competing groups - New Zealand Maori, Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, and Niue - performing simultaneously on five stages. Female costumes from Tonga and Samoa, and a male costume from Niue are featured in the exhibition (Fig 6) along with film footage from the 'Polyfest.'

Running simultaneously with the acquisition process was the development of the *Culture Moves!* exhibition. This involved an exhibition team that comprised of various roles such as the project manager, curator, concept developer, interpreter, designer and writer. There were two main obstacles that are worth highlighting here; one that was evident from the outset and the other emerged as the exhibition progressed. What was apparent in the early stages of development was the clichéd mindset that Pacific dance is simply bright, colourful and vibrant. These features are true on a superficial level, but when one looks beyond this outer surface there is depth, aesthetics, sophistication, elegance, precision and even subtlety. This clichéd view was an issue that came up for discussion,

particularly in relation to the exhibition graphics.

The second obstacle was the task of ensuring that we did not lose sight of the main objectives of the exhibition. These objectives, as mentioned earlier were to explore the aesthetic qualities of the dance costumes of the Pacific and to capture their close connection to music and performance. The former was easily achieved through the selection process but the latter was more difficult to achieve. Photographs and audiovisuals are the two mediums in the exhibition that represent music and dance. In order to illustrate the close connection between dance costumes, music and performance, all three distinct, yet related, elements had to be fused in a way that was dynamic. This in turn would create a dynamic and lively space that brought the costumes to life in their glass cases. Working towards this goal was at times trying, especially when it was not used as the reference point for decisions that were made.

The physical layout of the exhibition space (Fig 7) and the location of the three audiovisuals to the sides of the cases (Fig 2) offered a challenge right from the outset, but also provided the boundaries within which we had to work. There are six large cases and each case had enough space for three costumes. Two audiovisuals showed performances that featured the costumes on display. The third audiovisual focused on preparations for Kiribati dance –illustrating through photographs the making of dance costumes, dressing performers and the performance itself. The photographs showed images of dancers, or a dancer, captured in performance, wearing either the costumes on display or similar ones. The plan was to produce large poster-sized images that would be

placed inside each case and behind each costume, in an overlapping juxtaposition to create a sense of movement for the viewers. This plan brought about several discussions, with the main concern being that the cases would be too cluttered if every costume had an accompanying image. A compromise was reached of only having the centre costume with a poster-sized image and the costumes on either side having smaller images on the labelrails. Unfortunately, in the end the centre images were still too small to have the desired effect of bringing the costumes to life.

Throughout the exhibition development process there was a tendency for the dance costumes to take precedence over representations of music and dance – perhaps because of their status as collection items. Music and dance, embodied in audiovisuals and photographs, were treated more as a means of enhancing the dance costumes rather than having their own status. This may highlight one of the reasons why it is important to represent intangible heritage in the collections so that it is given its due status within the museum context.

The whole process, and the fieldwork involved in the acquisition of new dance costumes, proved to be challenging and time-consuming but it was a valuable and worthwhile experience. It also provided an opportunity to add more complete dance costumes to Te Papa's Pacific Collections and initiated the first step in collecting intangible material. Te Papa now has its first collections of intangible expressions in the stories and performances that were acquired and documented (on film footage and photographs) on our behalf and those

Figure 5: Belau dance costume in the foreground





Figure 6: Tongan, Niuean and Samoan dance costumes worn at Polyfest.

Figure 7: Layout of the exhibition space.

that we documented and acquired ourselves. The next step is to work out the logistics of how intangible forms of expressions can best be represented in Te Papa's Pacific Collections and most importantly to validate its inclusion within Te Papa's Collection Development Policy.

Conclusion

The Vanuatu fieldworkers' network approach provides a model that would accommodate and encourage representatives from the diverse Pacific communities in New Zealand. Te Papa has many Pacific networks from which fieldworkers can be recruited. What will be difficult to implement is the crucial voluntary element. Only time will reveal people's genuine interest and passion in the programme and in the possibilities they see the museum offering.

Staffing levels have increased, with two full time Pacific curatorial positions established in 2004, an improvement on the 5 position of the two previous years. These new developments provide an opportunity for Te Papa to change the emphasis of its acquisitions strategy to reflect a different engagement with Pacific peoples. The proximity of Pacific peoples in relation to New Zealand demands that museums with Pacific collections reconsider how they are developed and managed. These processes should view the tangible and intangible aspects of Pacific cultures as mutually interdependent.

But this does not mean that museums more distant from Pacific communities should not also act to re-evaluate how, and what, they document and collect. Telecommunications technology, the internet, online museum collections and publications are making the world smaller. Pacific collections and curatorial practices

are more open to international scrutiny than ever before. Peoples in the South Pacific can view and interact with collections and curators in Europe, the United States and Asia. The 'cabinets of curiosities' are bursting open and with this comes a new responsibility to reconsider how we do things.

Pacific cultures are living cultures, and this can only be reflected in a Pacific collection and curatorial practice that conceptually and practically encompasses both the tangible and intangible in mutual and holistic ways. Pacific collections have gone through many phases of representation and interpretation, which run parallel to the development of museological theory and practice. The concept and practice of museums and intangible heritage is therefore better understood when the historical context of museums and its collections is taken into consideration and, used as a basis for the decisions that we make in the present. This is best expressed in the following quote from Dr 'Okusitino Māhina, lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Auckland.

In the Pacific, it is generally thought that people walk forward into the past and they walk backward into the future, where the past and the future are constantly fused and diffused in the present. In this way, the actual past is put in front of people as a guiding principle in the ever-changing present, and because the elusive future is yet to take place, it must always be brought to bear on their past experiences, situating it behind them in the conflicting present. This means that the onus of preserving the past and mapping of the future – whether they be for culture's sake, humanity or future generations – rests squarely on our shoulders in the present.

(personal communication, 2003) 🇳🇵

NOTES

1. For a comprehensive overview of the history of Te Papa see *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* (2004d).
2. For more information see Te Papa's website
<http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/TePapa/English/AboutTePapa/AboutUs/>
3. The Treaty of Waitangi is New Zealand's founding document and was signed in 1840 by Māori chiefs and representatives of the British Crown.
4. 'Mana' can mean authority, power or prestige, depending on the context in which it is used.
5. 'Pacific peoples' in the context of this paper refers, but is not restricted, to people of Samoan, Cook Islands, Tongan, Fijian, Tokelauan, Niuean and Tuvaluan descent. For more information see Teaiwa, T and Mallon, S. (2005) and Macpherson, C., Spoonely P., and Anae, M. (eds) (2001).
6. For more information see *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*. (2004d) (pp ix –xii).
7. Mātauranga Māori is a dynamic and evolving system of knowledge used by Tangata Whenua (Māori) to explain, interpret and understand the world in which they live. It is framed by genealogy and kinship connections between all things and is evidenced through stories and history, prayer/incantation, songs and knowledge arising from interaction with the universe and the natural environment/world. (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. (2004c: 14).
8. For published material on the Vanuatu Culture Centre See L. Bolton, Introduction and D. Tyron Ni-Vanuatu Research and Researchers in *University of Sydney*, (pp. 1-15).
9. Pacific communities within New Zealand are comprised of, but not restricted to, people from island nations such as Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Fiji, Tokelau, Niue and Tuvalu. For a more detailed account of Pacific peoples in New Zealand, refer to Macpherson, C., Spoonely P., and Anae, M. (eds) (2001).
10. *Mana Pasifika* is a celebration of the Pacific people and their cultures both within New Zealand and the wider Pacific. The exhibition has been up since the opening of Te Papa in 1998. It is currently being re-developed with a focus on the history of Pacific peoples (other than Māori) in New Zealand.
11. For more information about the two Pacific Advisory Committees see *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* (2004a) on Te Papa's website http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/4450A92A-7144-4A42-AEFD-5B3B7D0A5C2C/0/Pacific_peoples.pdf
12. The bulk of this paper was written in 2004 and presented at the *Museums and Intangible Heritage* conference in Seoul, Korea, October 2004. The conference was the International Council of Museums (ICOM) 20th General Conference. This section of the paper was written in early 2006 with some insights into the progress and process that Te Papa is working through with regards to Pacific intangible heritage.
13. This exhibition runs from September 2005 to August 2006.
14. The exhibition name *Culture Moves!* was inspired by the title of the conference.
15. These individuals included collectors, costume makers, dance practitioners and academics.
16. The Festival of Pacific Arts began in 1972 (under the name of South Pacific Arts Festival) and is hosted every four years by various nations in the Pacific region. It is a significant international festival of visual and performing arts in the Pacific.
17. Grade-taking ceremonies mark the steps taken by influential men as they move through a formal system of grades, gaining power and rank at each step.

REFERENCES

- Davidson, J., 1991. Pacific Collections: The National Museum of New Zealand / Te Whare Taonga O Aotearoa., *Pacific Arts - Journal of the Pacific Arts Association* (3) 9-13.
- Huffmann, K., 1999, *Communities and Fieldworkers: The Vanuatu Experience*. An unpublished paper presented at the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) 2nd Museum Directors Workshop, National Museum, Port Vila, August 17 – 21.

- Macpherson, C., Spoonley, P., Anae, M (eds), 2001, *Tangata o te Moana Nui: The Evolving Identities of Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa / New Zealand*, (Palmerston North, N.Z.: Dunmore Press)
- Māhina, K., 2002. 'Museums without Walls': *Collecting in the Pacific*. An unpublished paper written as partial fulfilment for a course called 'Cultures of Collecting', Art History Department, Victoria University of Wellington, N.Z.
- Mallon, S., Senior Curator Pacific Cultures, Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa, 2005, personal discussions.
- Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa., 2002. *Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Bicultural Policy* [Adopted in 1994 and reviewed in 2002], (Wellington, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa)
- Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa., 2003. *Collection Development Policy August 2001* [Updated November 2002, July 2003] (Wellington, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa)
- Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa., 2004a. *Pacific Peoples and Te Papa: Activities and Consultation since opening 1998*. (Wellington, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa).
- Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa., 2004b. *Acquisitions Strategy 2004/2005*, (Wellington, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa)
- Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa., 2004c. *Mātauranga Māori Strategy He Ara Whainga* (Wellington, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa)
- Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2004d. *Icōns ngātaonga: from the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*, (Wellington, N.Z., Te Papa Press)
- Regenvanu, R., 2002. *The situation of cultural heritage preservation, promotion and participation: Country Report: Vanuatu*. An unpublished paper presented to the Pacific Culture Ministers Meeting, Noumea, September 2002.
- Teaiwa, T and Mallon, S 2005. Bivalent Kinship Pacific People in New Zealand in Liu, James, H. L., McCreanor, T., McIntosh and T., Teaiwa, T. (eds), 2005. *New Zealand Identities: Departures and Destinations* (Wellington, N.Z., Victoria University Press)
- University of Sydney (1999) OCEANIA, Volume 70 (1), pp.1-15.

INTERNET SOURCES

- *Culture Moves! Dance in Oceania from hiva to hip hop website*, <http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis/dance/index.htm>
- Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa website, *The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992*, <http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/TePapa/English/AboutTePapa/AboutUs/WhatWeDo/The+Act.htm#>
- UNESCO, 2003. *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, Article 2– Definition, Pg 2. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf>

02 The Difficulties of Interpreting *Mediterranean Voices*: Exhibiting Intangibles Using New Technologies

Margaret Hart Robertson

Senior Lecturer, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

The Difficulties of Interpreting *Mediterranean Voices*: Exhibiting Intangibles Using New Technologies

● **Margaret Hart Robertson**

Senior Lecturer, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

ABSTRACT

Within the framework of the European Union's EuroMed Heritage II programme, 2001-2004, thirteen partners worked together with London Metropolitan University as co-ordinator within the *Mediterranean Voices* project. This was designed to research the intangible heritage of these cosmopolitan communities, the 'glocalisation' in globalisation, as made manifest through the oral testimonies of the ordinary citizens with respect to everyday life in the city. This paper investigates the tensions arising from (1) translating private interviews onto a highly public medium such as is the IT database without producing 'reification' (2) the value of oral history in the museum and how it can be used to re-value intangible heritage (3) the difficulties of exhibiting information on intangible heritage, based on implicit background knowledge, and designed as 'triggers' of memory and reminiscences, to audiences lacking the requisite contextualisation, either for spatial reasons (people from mainland Spain or other countries, new immigrant communities) or for motives associated with time (people of the younger generations who have not been exposed to the reality exhibited). The paper also, and most importantly, analyses (4) the role of the museum as an 'activator' of memory and a centre for discussion and promotion of community identity, sense of place and belonging as opposed to its modernist conception as an educator of the 'uncultured' masses and archive of encyclopaedic wisdom.

In the post-museum many voices are heard.
(Hooper-Greenhill, 2002: 144)

With the joint Barcelona Declaration of November 1995, the European Union (EU) and 12 prospective partner

countries from the Mediterranean's southern and eastern shores, launched a new Europe-Mediterranean Partnership (EuroMed) that aims to transform the Mediterranean region into an area of peace, stability and shared prosperity. The region's heritage was soon

identified as a priority within Euro-Med, and EuroMed Heritage I was launched in 1999 with the aim of supporting Mediterranean countries in their efforts to promote and care for their heritage. This was followed in 2001 by EuroMed Heritage II, which supported 18 international cooperation projects and laid particular emphasis on preserving the Mediterranean's 'non-material' (i.e. intangible) heritage.

One of these 18 projects was *Mediterranean Voices*, a programme coordinated by London Metropolitan University with thirteen other partners (Alexandria, Bethlehem, Beirut, Ancona/Bologna, Chania, Cyprus [Nicosia North], Cyprus [Nicosia South], Ciutat de Mallorca, Granada, Istanbul, Malta [La Valletta], Marseilles and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria). This was a coordinated study of the intangible heritage of these thirteen cosmopolitan centres based on the recorded oral testimonies of the citizens, and communicated to the wider public through a new IT database with web access (<http://www.med-voices.org>).

The programme also included an exhibition coordinated by the London Metropolitan University: *Voices and Echoes: Reminiscences of the Mediterranean in the Atlantic*. This was organised and part-funded within the EuroMed *Mediterranean Voices* initiative, with matched funding by the Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria. The exhibition was shown in the Casa de Colón, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, between the 23rd November and 18th December 2004 (and in the end extended because of public demand through to the beginning of February 2005).

The project responded to a perceived need for greater public participation in cultural tourism and matters pertaining to community identity together with projection of 'sense of place', in an ever more standardised and

'aseptically cultured', globalised world. As such, it was an attempt to let 'muted' voices be heard, the voices of the ordinary people, talking about how they make sense of their past and their present. It was an attempt to consolidate the intangible heritage of who we are and where we come from, the 'roots' and the 'routes', in order to fortify local self-esteem and help others understand the 'true' historical memory of the places involved, as opposed to what is 'said' or left 'unsaid' in the official history books, written, as Paul Thompson (1978:5) puts it, ... *in an age of bureaucracy, state power, science, and statistics*.

The project faced different challenges in the different places - or the same challenge to varying degrees, depending upon the perspectives taken. However, in a globalised world, where globalisation has only been understood and 'interpreted' on an economic basis, *Mediterranean Voices* was an attempt to move towards a social re-interpretation of our realities as global citizens (if such a term can exist as pointed out by Turner (1993:177) when citing the etymological roots of the word 'citizen') and everything that 'community' represents, outside the purely statistical, monetary values promoted by the EEC. As Paul Thompson says in his book, *The Voice of the Past*, the project was using oral history (built out of oral testimonies) to

... bring history into, and out of, the community. [Oral history] helps the less privileged, and especially the old, towards dignity and self-confidence. It makes for contact - and thence understanding - between social classes, and between generations. And to individual historians and others, with shared meanings, it can give a sense of belonging to a place or in time. In short, it



makes for fuller human beings.
 (Thompson 1978:24)

The project, which began back in May 2002, posed various problems for the participant members, universities and NGOs, not least of which was the tension of exposing a private anthropological interview on a highly public medium such as the web, and avoiding the reification of the testimonies and the community involved as a result. The idea of promoting a database to be accessed on the web was audience-based, in that the web allows for communities (in this case, the Mediterranean), cultures and collections to be linked across the world, whilst the actual information provided was designed by way of 'activators' of individual thought and virtual discussion. The project, thus, was using IT, the most dangerous enemy of memory and conscious thoughts, and the promoter of individual endeavour over community, to promote a different type of cultural tourism from the 'encyclopaedic' and 'red carpet' versions in existence, a cultural tourism based on governance and community participation, in the broadest possible sense of the word 'community'.

Another of the products created in the project design was the exhibition as an activator of debate, and as a trigger for the establishment of a new role for the museum in the community. In other words, the project aimed also at re-discovering the role of the museum, (the intangible heritage of the museum), as stimulator and centre of creativity for the future, as a Muse, the offspring of Zeus (the God of Energy and Supreme Knowledge) and

Mnemosyne (the God of Memory), instead of a passive caretaker of the institutionalised past and transmitter of education to the uncultured masses.

Knowledge is no longer unified and monolithic, it becomes fragmented and multi-vocal. There is no necessary unified perspective – rather a cacophony of voices may be heard that present a range of views, experiences and values. The voice of the museum is one among many.
 (Hooper-Greenhill 2000:152)

This new role of the museum as a social centre and community nexus was considered to be of particular relevance in a traditional tourist resort, such as the island of Gran Canaria, where visitors tend to 'consume' places and climate, rather than to connect with the specific reality and different culture, to observe, to learn and to really 'broaden horizons', in other words, to have local contact. The 'fast food' type of cultural visit produces serious disadvantages for the local community, in the case of Real Las Palmas, the historical centre of the cosmopolitan city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. It exacerbates existing traffic problems in the narrow streets of Vegueta, and distorts municipal priorities (since tourism is accountable for 80% of the direct and indirect employment on the island). It also produces the elimination of traditional forms of domestic consumption and trade, in favour of outlets designed to cater towards the tourist (with as little interactivity as possible in order to increase speed of turnover, and reduce the problem of communication). Most importantly, perhaps,

it has led to a progressive 'gentrification' and 'heritage-isation' of the city centre, forcing the traditional communities out, and gradually destroying community. The pay-off, in terms of revenue created for the locals in the area by tourism, is minimal given that the visit is designed to take in only a few spots, considered to be key, with the Casa-Museo de Colón (The Columbus' House-Museum) figuring high on the list, in a one hour visit, which is included en route to the hinterland of the island. Thus, no benefits are perceived or received by the local community, and their identity is further and further undermined, as central elements in the 'binding' and social health of the residents, such as the 'corner shop', disappear to make way for classier, more sterile establishments designed to attract the tourists who are merely 'passing through'.

Cultural tourism is a necessity for a place such as Gran Canaria which is a mature tourist resort, and which needs to 'recycle' from the hedonist and mindless 'no place, no face,' 'sun, sea and sex' image, to promoting the differential of the Canary identity, a world apart in nature from that of Spain, the country to which the Archipelago 'belongs' as of the 15th century onwards, and from that of nearby Africa. This is not only necessary to continue to compete in the highly competitive world of tourism, that is, for external promotion, but also for internal consumption, due to the fact that the islands, above all the Eastern islands and the province of Las Palmas, are being constantly exposed to the pressure of illegal immigration from the sub-Saharan region of North Africa (formerly Spanish). Community identity is at risk,

on an island such as Gran Canaria, described as a 'bridge between three Continents', when the school intake numbers reflect a larger proportion of students from outside the island than locals, as has been the case for the last two years, with extremes reached on islands such as Fuerteventura, where over 60% of the resident population is from elsewhere. The benevolent climate of the Canary Islands, and the perceived 'security' of the Archipelago, allow for 365 day tourism per year, thus attracting workers from all parts. The community on the Canary Islands, who remember the days of emigration for survival in the past, have always proved to be hospitable towards people from other cultures in search of a better life. However, the cut-off point in tolerance and goodwill towards immigrant populations, which place heavy demands on health and welfare systems, and occupy local employment, is about to be reached, as can be detected in the levels of student violence and bullying reported lately in the secondary schools.

Thus, the *Mediterranean Voices* project, with its heavy bias towards sense of identity and community and 'belonging', was seen to be a useful tool to reach out and talk to the residents, and allow their voices to be heard, at a crucial time of re-plotting of routes for sustainability. As Thompson says:

Reality is complex and many-sided and it is a primary merit of oral history that, to a much greater extent than most sources, it allows the original multiplicity of standpoints to be recreated.





This was what the exhibition of *Voices and Echoes. Reminiscences of the Mediterranean in the Atlantic*, held in the Casa de Colón, in the centre of the historical part of the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, set out to do.

Today, cultural maps are being re-plotted and re-territorialised. Re-plotting involves bringing to visibility nodes of significance that were formerly subsumed and rendered invisible within large Western-derived universal narratives; and re-territorialisation entails the projection and exploration of new territories formerly left off the cultural map.

(Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 140)

Although perceived of as an initial difficulty, all of our informants and interviewees, together with the participants in the exhibition, understood why the Canary Islands should have been included in a 'Mediterranean' project. We did not have to explain why Braudel had considered the Archipelago vital to the interpretation of the Mediterranean, thereby proving that the frames of reference and cultural values, the 'roots' and the 'routes' were, indeed, shared.

The exhibition of the Las Palmas de Gran Canaria team was thus designed to achieve various goals and with various target groups in mind. The first goal, and the most important from the point of view of future sustainable development for the project, was to give visibility to the project of *Mediterranean Voices*, and the vital part to be played by the community at large in the

promotion and projection of their 'sense of identity,' the 'glocal' (global/local) reality, thereby avoiding the easy standardisation typical of a global economy. It was considered that information was necessary to this effect, but that 'formation' or training in the use of the said information was also required for any kind of 'reform' to be achieved. Thus, public participation was to be channelled, first, into the supply and exchange of information, information which had been sifted out from the oral interviews made with the ordinary people, usually the elderly, of the area. Then, training or 'formation' was given, so that the community could use the material efficiently to achieve set goals, designed for 'reforming' the shape of the cultural tourism on offer, and putting the local people 'in the picture' by allowing them a say in the decision-making process. Involving local people and recording the voices of ordinary people afforded a whole wealth of information, in the form of interviews, photos and personal objects or mementoes, to which the museum does not generally have access. It also put in motion a whole series of community and school initiatives (children interviewing grandparents and forming their own databases with a view to future exhibitions) which guarantee the sustainability of the project in the area.

The database of *Mediterranean Voices* is structured over seven themes (People, Living Together, Work, Play, Worship, Objects and Spaces) with some seven or eight sub-themes per heading. Interviews were targeted, insofar as they could be, to cull information on each of the themes and sub-themes over some sixty-two hours of interviews. The interviews were then transcribed and

coded by theme and sub-theme, to provide further working documents for researchers. Since the database was limited in size, given the number of partners and due to the need to provide speed of access, only a very small proportion of the work carried out in the four-year project is, in fact, reflected in www.med-voices.org. The bulk of the work has been reserved for future educational applications, research and archives. Overlapping information and coincident themes over the sixty oral testimonies were considered to be significant oral history markers and were thus chosen for the design of the exhibition.

The exhibition was structured to achieve different things for the different age and groups within the community. The only people capable of reconstructing the physical reality of the city, which has changed dramatically in shape over the last fifty years, are our elders. The historical memory of these informants is invaluable. However, respect for the elderly and their knowledge has been lost, to a great extent, with elderly people, in many cases, relegated to dominoes and INSERSO trips. We decided to try to promote greater inter-generational dialogue and respect through the exhibition. Photographs were used to trigger reminiscences in the interviews, and these were recorded on video to be used in the exhibition for (1) the older generation, making the memories more vivid and developing the idea of shared history whilst (2) reinforcing the sketchy visual memories of the generation in between and (3) creating memories for the younger generations for whom the photos alone mean nothing.

The exhibition also worked, physically, on three different levels. The area connecting with the House-Museum of Columbus, the patio of the Casa de Colón, which was accessible to all visitors (including tourists) was designed to give the overall 'community' of the project. The partners of the *Mediterranean Voices* project were represented in a series of 'sense-scapes,' consisting of images chosen by the partners to best represent their project, the colours most identified with their places and a series of elements such as typical sounds, smells and textures, foods, herbs and musical instruments. The idea was to show how much the sense-scape of the Mediterranean had in common, and how rich the area was in stimuli and memory activators which were not merely visual. Another part of the central patio was devoted to a game called 'imagíname' (literally, 'Imagine me' or 'Put me in images') where locals and

foreigners alike had to try and identify the people in the pictures with the partners represented in the sense-scapes. Again, the idea was to move away from stereotypes, break down barriers to understanding and community, and to re-construct and re-form images. The patio was also used throughout the day to carry out 'hands-on' workshops, designed by age, for the parties of school kids who visited, ranging from playing with the toys of the past through to learning herbal remedies, and, at night-time, for musical rehearsals and presentations given by neighbourhood associations. The second level of the exhibition looked at the local 'reality' as it existed in the past using the metaphor of 'lost spaces' – looking at real areas that had been lost, together with intangible 'social spaces' that had disappeared. The third level looked at leisure pursuits, private space and memory, again analysing the tangible and intangible aspects that had disappeared, and touching upon subjects such as honesty, dialogue and community existence as opposed to individual enterprise and pleasure.

The 'space' worked upon was the space of Real Las Palmas, the original walled city, from the 1930s onwards. The thirties were an important time in Spain and in the Canary Islands, given the fact that the country was torn apart by a Civil War, with the islands strategically placed for German and British war deployments. At that time, the population which existed inside the old walled city of Real Las Palmas, was manageable, a world where everybody knew everybody else. With the development of the port facilities, the area of La Isleta and the beach at Las Canteras, both trading and social patterns changed within the city, and have continued to do so up to the present day. At present, the historical memory of the population of the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, most of whom are still relatively young, may only date back to Democracy, (that is to the seventies), with a minority, though an enormously active minority, with a greater shared 'historical' memory of the times of Franco and the dictatorship, of scarcity, and emigration for survival. Only a very small proportion of the citizens remember the times of rationing and political repression, which have influenced the fates of the more outstanding members of the community (figures such as Alonso Quesada, the poet, Néstor, the artist, Pérez Galdós, the novelist and Negrín, the politician who suffered stigmatisation and public ignominy for many years for their views). Moreover, as was mentioned before, the pressure of immigration from Europe, Latin America and,



above all, Africa, in recent years, means that many people living in Gran Canaria only have a historical memory which dates back to their arrival in the community. The team shared the concept proposed by Urry (1991) that for the consolidation of a strong community, capable of resisting outside pressure and 'unfair' comparisons with others, such as the European tourists, there must be a shared sense of time, space and historical memory. *Voices and Echoes* was an attempt to construct or re-construct negotiated historical memory, through dialogue.

There were also three levels of interpretation. First, for the people who merely required their memory to be re-activated, there were the photos (without any explanations whatsoever), 'written illustrations' taken from famous people's autobiographies or from the work of poets and writers, and PowerPoint presentations which intermingled photos with extracts from interviews. Second, the younger generations were given a brief explanation of some of the exhibits on display (besides the illustrative workshops), and invited to come back to the museum with their grandparents and parents to get a better and more personal interpretation of the exhibition.

Moreover, a number of guides from the University group of *Peritia et Doctrina* (older students, generally over 65, who have gone back to formal education after retirement) were commissioned to help with explanations. They were particularly well-placed to do this, having also participated in the interviewing process. Thirdly, to help with the tourists, there were also volunteers from the University's Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, who 'interpreted' the reality of the past for the tourists.

To use Hooper-Greenhill's definition of 'object' (2000:104):

An 'object' ... may be a thing, an intention, or a target for feelings or actions. Although the dictionary separates out these definitions, in practice, at least in relation to objects, they are intertwined – things do not exist outside interpretations of their meaning and significance.

The 'object,' or intention, of the exhibition was to stimulate perceptions and consolidate memories and associations of the 'objects,' in the sense of two- and

three-dimensional artefacts placed on display, in the minds of the 'objects' of our exhibition, that is, the local community. We used multi-sensorial stimuli to make the conscious or random recall of the past to be as easy as possible. We know from educational and psychological studies that:

It would seem that we remember 90% of what we do, 75% of what we see and 20% of what we hear, so that learning is more efficient when the whole body intervenes in the process, since this requires more elaboration.

(Vallejo-Nágera and Colom Marañón, 2004:224. Author's own translation)

The whole exhibition was designed like a database for people to browse around, but in company rather than alone, using other people's memories to fill in the perceived gaps in information, as opposed to merely seeking out an explanation on Google or in Encarta.

For that same reason, we carefully positioned the themes of the database, using the Roman room system of association. The architecture of the colonial-style building of the Casa de Colón, in the heart of the old part of the city, was re-interpreted and used as a metaphor and an associative trigger. The central patio became the 'patio de los socios', where we gave an overview of the whole project, with the 'sense-scapes' of the partners, the colours, the scents, the sounds and the textures central to the understanding of the Mediterranean world. The room devoted to men and their projection over the various themes of the database was larger than that of the women, with less projection in Society in the Past, and separated from them by a whole series of passageways. The 'riscos,' the steep cliff areas where the original settlers built their dwellings, ran along the perimeter of the staircase, reminding the visitor of their complicated topography and that they were, at one and the same time, the backdrop and a cohesive force in community life in the past. The 'azotea' or flat roof, was placed on the highest level inside the exhibition, beside an open balcony which afforded a view over the flat roofs as they remain today. And the stairwell, which is usually neglected in exhibitions, together with the landing between floors, was used to illustrate the 'lost or forgotten spaces.' Thus, we 'plotted' topics to be remembered within the 'map' or framework of the museum exhibition.

Using interactive tools such as cut-out figures with which to have your photo taken against full-size landscapes of the past, the team tried to impress the images visually on the memories of all the visitors. The audiovisuals were used to reinforce auditory memory whilst the smells of the past (the dressing table with its perfumes, or the barber's with the products of past times) were introduced subtly to consolidate memories by olfactory association. The exhibition was designed so that the person physically entered the database and thus wandered around the subjects, just as they can browse around the electronic version, thereby using kinaesthesia to reinforce memory and association.

The catalogue was designed for the visitors to be able to store their own photos in the back folder and thus create their own personal, intangible heritage of their visit, their own 'imagined' world. Other interactive elements such as the medicinal herb workshop and the tourism kitsch display were designed to make the younger generations engage with intangible 'natural' heritage and image/memory in critically conscious ways.

The idea was to create a kind of mnemonic within the museum which could later be hung on the web as a virtual exhibition, thereby functioning as a permanent activator of memory for the visiting community, thus precluding the temporal disadvantages of a one-off exhibition. Since music is seen as being central to the Mediterranean way of life, together with contact with and respect for nature, this harmony was reflected in the central patio with musicians in the evenings and arrangements of aromatic herbs and plants.

The schools that visited the exhibition engaged in activities which were scaled by ages. All the students were monitored for their perception of stereotypes about Mediterranean countries (e.g. the younger children from 6-9 were asked to draw their perceived image of Bethlehem, the 9-12 year olds studied Alexandria, the 12-15 year olds discussed what they knew about the problem of North and South Cyprus, and the 15-18 year olds, again, talked about Bethlehem), in different ways depending upon their degree of skills. The teachers were asked to monitor one month after the visit to see if there had been any perceptible change in image reception or stereotype. Again, these outreach and feedback exercises were graded by age (the younger children produced another drawing, the 9-12 year olds talked about Egypt in the modern world, the 15-18 year olds were asked to imagine their city divided in two and the problems that

would result from that, and the older teenagers were asked to debate the subject of Bethlehem and the wall)

Likewise, the students were involved in-house, in the Museum, in different activities relating to the use of limited resources, respect for Nature, recycling, respect for others, and tolerance, by age group. Provision was also made for the younger students to interview their grandparents in situ with the results in video soon to be featured on the database. The database, as such, was not present in the exhibition (only one computer screen allowed access to www.med-voices.org) but is a constant point of reference throughout the exhibition, with the display designed to be used and re-cycled in combination and combinations with the database framework.

For the community at large, there were three seminars relating to (1) education and how to use the database (2) intangible heritage, cultural tourism and community participation (based on the heritage 'auction' programme, with people defending tangible properties for intangible reasons) and (3) intangible heritage and image projection (new ways of promoting a mature tourist resort and re-positioning it). The seminars were designed as semi-think-tanks and to make people aware that they are responsible for what happens in their area, and not the politicians alone. The idea was to convert the Casa de Colón, the most visited museum of the Canary Archipelago, into a centre of community participation, and the model for other island museums to follow.

The restaurants in the area were encouraged to put on special museum evenings, to allow for the after dinner

debates so typical of Mediterranean countries and of island life in particular, and thus improve their turnover and reinvigorate the area. The scarce provision for foreigners (the catalogue in English and personal guides from the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of the ULPGC) were designed, nevertheless, to make them stay longer in the area and investigate it in greater depth, to the benefit of the local commerce in the area.

Paradoxically, this exhibition was designed to use new technologies which reduce privacy, provide immediate access to information and thus reduce the need to remember things, to generate respect for everyday life and the individual, and to create lasting triggers for memories. In these times of digital photography, we run the risk of losing tangible vestiges of our past and of constantly re-inventing the wheel, history and geography. *Voices and Echoes* is a tangible attempt to prevent changes in the 'intangible' script. *Mediterranean Voices* is about making people sit up and take stock, re-appraise, re-evaluate and re-create, before it is too late and globalisation of the worst kind, the bland standardisation of 'no face, no place,' sets in. *Voices and Echoes* was an attempt to make people communicate again, inter-generationally, something which our mobile phones, digital cameras, PlayStations, Game Boys, and computer chat sessions has almost put an end to. If we do not communicate, we undermine our most prized possession, the intangible thing which makes sense of our tangible past and guides us into the tangible future: our memory, the most intangible of our heritages. 🇵🇸

REFERENCES

- Bocock, R., 1993. *Consumption* (London: Routledge)
- Castells, M., 1997. *The Power of Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell)
- Carey, J., 1989. *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Boston, MA.: Unwin Hyman,)
- Clifford, J., 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press)
- Hooper-Greenhill, E., 2000. *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London: Routledge)
- Thompson, P., 1978. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- Turner, B., 1993. *Citizenship and Social Theory* (London: Sage)
- Urry, J., 2000. *Sociology beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*, (London: Routledge)
- Williams, R., 1981. *Culture* (Glasgow: Fontana Paperbacks)

03 The Role of Museums in the Preservation of Living Heritage: Experiences of the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology

Nguyen Van Huy

Director, Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, Vietnam

The Role of Museums in the Preservation of Living Heritage: Experiences of the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology

● **Nguyen Van Huy**

Director, Vietnam Museum of Ethnology,
Vietnam

ABSTRACT

The author stresses the high respect that the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology (VME) has for cultural diversity, as seen in its approaches to the following three areas: people, space, and time. The VME has given priority first and foremost to the representation of everyday life – problems, stories, and concerns of peoples and of ethnic communities. The Museum's role as a research and educational institution, as well as a body that appreciates and supports the intangible value of crafts are shown in two research case studies: learning to make pottery in the classroom for children, and giving voices to craft artisans in a photovoice project. The author also addresses current challenges of the VME, especially as it expands its research and display policies to include the cultures and daily life of ethnic peoples in other Southeast Asian Countries.

The Vietnam Museum of Ethnology and its role in Vietnam and the Mekong region

The concept of the ethnographic museum, which introduces the lives of ethnic groups and cultures of different countries and regions, has only recently begun to be formulated and developed in Vietnam.

In the late 1990s, the formation of the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology has allowed the idea of the ethnographic museum to gradually conceptualise and have a greater opportunity to develop. The successful ethnographic exhibitions and cultural events at the Museum of Culture of Vietnamese Ethnic Groups (since 1992) and at the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology (since 1997) demonstrate the value of renewing the status of

ethnographic collections and presentations in museums, especially in provincial and local museums throughout the country.

The mission of the Ethnology Museum is to research, collect, and preserve ethnographic artefacts that reflect the culture and life of Vietnam's 54 ethnic groups, and then to present these artefacts to the public. This paper discusses the role these activities play in Vietnam and the region.

The museum's priorities

Respect for cultural diversity underlies all of the museum's exhibitions and activities. This respect for the

diversity of the peoples of Vietnam is the most important message that the museum seeks to pass on to its visitors. The Vietnam Museum of Ethnology works to cultivate respect for cultural diversity through its approaches to the following three areas: people, space, and time.

With regards to people, the museum's first priority is to emphasize the equality of all cultures and peoples. This means that the museum is equally concerned with presenting the cultures of groups with large populations and of groups with small populations, and is equally interested in groups residing in urban areas as well as those found in remote areas. In particular, groups with long histories in Vietnam and those who have emigrated from neighbouring countries for various historical reasons, are introduced on an equal level at the museum. This information helps museum-goers become aware of the historical and cultural relationships of ethnic groups in Vietnam with their neighbours in the larger Mekong region rather than presenting a picture of isolated and fixed cultural boundaries or of greater or lesser stages of development.

With regards to space, the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology has established a new strategic priority to extend the museum's scope of exhibitions, research and programming from Vietnam alone to Southeast Asia and the region as a whole, in order to help museum visitors more fully understand the cultural relationships between Vietnam and other countries. The Museum of Ethnology is in the process of carrying out a very important and difficult task: to prepare for a permanent exhibition hall at the Museum that will introduce the cultures of ethnic groups in the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) nations and the region, starting with the cultures of other countries

in the Mekong region. It is anticipated that this project will take 15 to 20 years to realize as it is starting almost from scratch. In spite of the challenges that this will inevitably pose, the Museum also foresees the bright possibilities. These exhibitions will play an important role because cultural understanding is necessary to fully achieve international political and economic integration and exchange in the face of globalization. Cultural background information about the political, cultural and environmental conditions of today, and in the past, provide a basis for stability and development in the region. It is hoped that museum colleagues and international organizations in South East Asia will collaborate enthusiastically, developing a South East Asian Museum, because, as a group, we all share the same goal of enhancing unity and understanding in the region. This is particularly important because cultural exchange remains limited between countries in South East Asia, particularly in the Mekong region. Discussion and research dealing with cultural issues among South East Asian nations has largely been limited to the national sphere; audiences and museum staff have not yet had extensive opportunities to explore these issues across national boundaries within the museum setting.

The Vietnam Museum of Ethnology places a priority on the present, with particular attention to the contemporary, daily life of ethnic groups. One aim is to present audiences with lively portraits and stories about the destiny of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups. Through varied anthropological approaches, the Museum of Ethnology reflects on, and explains the concerns of cultural subjects for the survival of their cultural heritage. In this way, the museum gains a new vitality. Having been aware that the museum should focus on contemporary life, the Museum of Ethnology

has efficiently organized activities to preserve living and intangible heritage.

The role of the museum as an educational and research institution

The Vietnam Museum of Ethnology is deeply aware that if it wishes to attract more visitors and enhance its role in society, it must develop its educational programs. The museum must provide visitors with accurate and timely information about the objects in sensitive, lively, and attractive ways. Moreover, the museum should regularly organize temporary exhibitions and innovate design activities in order to provide new information to the public and acquaint visitors with the issues with which the museum is most concerned. In addition, research is an extremely important component to ensure the continual renovation of the museum. The museum embraces all of these aspects to ensure that each time a visitor comes to the museum they discover new things, thus encouraging them to return again and again.

The Vietnam Museum of Ethnology's efforts to preserve and develop traditional handicrafts are an example of an educational approach to the preservation of living heritage. Recently, a range of activities was organized in the museum to preserve and develop traditional handicrafts.

Understanding the traditional value of crafts

- The traditional value of a craft is what the craftspeople and the community have been accumulating from generation to generation.
- All those values are useful for contemporary people and society.

How do people use those values to reproduce culture?

- by passing on skills, knowledge and trading experiences
- by reproducing products
- by maintaining social networks and relationships in order to preserve and promote crafts.
- The traditional values of crafts are stable but not unchanging. Thus, they are dynamic and adaptable to circumstances and thus they create new values.
- Traditional values should go through the process of selection in specific circumstances. Their importance lies in the questions of who selects and who benefits?

First and foremost, the selection of cultural subjects is made by craftspeople and their community. The community decides what needs to be changed and how to change in order to adapt to new circumstance.

How do the traditional values manifest themselves?

They manifest themselves in two forms:

- Tangible material objects which involve:
 - production tools
 - different materials
 - craft products
 - styles and designs
- Intangible ways:
 - techniques in all processes
 - skills and expertise
 - traditional knowledge and experience
 - social networks, social relations and community relations

The role of the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology in preserving handicrafts

1. Display. The museum displays handicraft products that are used in daily life so that visitors can understand more about the value and uses of traditional handicrafts as well as about the lives of their producers.
2. Creating a new approach. The museum participates in various stages of craft development, playing a unique and important role in the economic development of ethnic minority groups.
3. In addition to exhibiting finished craft products, the museum has also initiated a new programme of arts and crafts demonstrations at the museum. Through these programmes the public can understand the value of traditional crafts.
4. The museum is committed to promoting traditional crafts to the next generation through programmes for schoolchildren so that they can learn and practice these crafts at the museum.
5. The museum is experimenting with the exciting new approach of giving cameras to craftspeople, be they men or women, young or old, and letting them determine how they would like their traditions to be represented at the museum. In this way, the Vietnam Museum of

Ethnology allows local people to introduce their own cultures and livelihoods and to present their thoughts, concern, and plans about the present and future development of their culture.

Case study 1. Traditional crafts in the classroom

Traditional Crafts in the Classroom is a project supported by UNESCO and implemented through the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology. The project aims at making traditional crafts known to and appreciated by young people (10-14 years old), especially disadvantaged youths, through research and practice. This project was implemented at the museum in the summers of 2003 and 2004.

In the summer of 2004, two Pottery Classes were organized for children: a basic and an advanced class. The advanced class was attended by the pupils who had attended the basic class in the year 2003. Four artisans from Phu Lang pottery village, professional potters and a master, were invited to teach the children. Phu Lang has centuries of history of pottery making, however, the trade is under threat of falling into oblivion. Many young skilled artisans have left the village to earn a living by another trade.

The pupils who take part in these classes are given basic skills in pottery making. They can make their own products and learn to design panels and brochures for the exhibition of their products. Through the workshop classes, the children not only mastered traditional techniques and skills in pottery making, they also learnt a

great deal more about their culture and heritage. The artisans, through these demonstrations and exchanges with the children and with professional potters, also learnt about the values of traditional pottery and gained knowledge about new decorative motifs and about making colours from natural materials. They also gained a further understanding of the demands of contemporary life. This is an important aspect, as the artisans endeavor to create designs to adapt to the demands of present day society, resulting in more production sales and thus an increase in their income.

Case study 2. The preservation of the traditional value of artisan crafts

Project background

There is a lack of efficient cooperation and exchange of information on traditional crafts among institutes, museums, universities and other relevant agencies.

Policy makers are not able to obtain sufficient information on craft potential and their situation at a grass-roots level. Craftsmen who have knowledge and technical skills need to be more informed about, and better equipped, to take part in the market economy.

All of the above activities that preserve and develop traditional crafts also succeed in connecting the museum to contemporary life, by responding to the concerns of artisans and increasing their standard of living by increasing employment. These activities connect diverse communities, and help people understand cultural values more clearly by reaching beyond their own cultural understandings to discover a wider horizon.

Objectives

- To identify the traditional value of crafts in Na Sang 2 village (Nua Ngam commune, Dien Bien district, Lai Chau province) and in Dai Bai village (Dai Bai commune, Gia Binh district, Bac Ninh).
- To document traditional crafts by photographing and interviewing craftspeople, reflecting the strong or weak points of each craft as well as the concerns of individuals and of the community.
- To encourage exchanges and the enhancement of knowledge on individual and community issues through group discussions on photographs.
- To provide recommendations to policy makers.
- To collect and preserve photographs, interview and field notes.
- To exhibit research results through interviews and photographs taken by craftspeople; to write a report on the 'Photo-voice' method, and compile village profiles.

Outputs and results

The collection and preservation of photographs and interviews

Within six months (from December 2002 to June 2003), craftspeople created approximately 3,000 photographs and participated in many interviews. These documents are preserved to serve today's researchers and people interested in crafts, and for all those of future generations.

Organization of exhibitions

From the photographs taken by the craftspeople, the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, in collaboration with local people, organized three photographic exhibitions. The first two exhibitions were organized in the localities where its 'research subjects' live, making them all the more significant. Mr. Nguyen Xuan Sam from Dai Bai village said, 'We didn't expect that we could take such beautiful photographs that convey many things about our craft village. Through this exhibition, Dai Bai villagers, especially the young generation, have more understanding about the preservation of traditional value of our craft village.'

The improvement of people's own understanding of traditional crafts

Young people have had the opportunity to learn from the

content of the photographs and from the comments of senior craftspeople. At the same time, older people have had a chance to share their knowledge and experience with the young. The project revealed an effective way of transferring knowledge from one generation to the next. Through the photos and interviews, local awareness and understanding of the preservation and development of crafts was also enhanced. The project encouraged participating craftspeople to be active in informing others about the need to preserve their traditional crafts, thus contributing to the preservation of their own cultures.

The project also collected and preserved visual material and interviews on crafts in order to make a research database for Vietnam's present and future cultural managers and policy makers. The aim of this was to provide personnel with the resources needed to create policies that promote the preservation and development of traditional crafts, in ways that are suitable for local communities.

The success of the above projects relied on a proper understanding of the need to preserve and develop traditional craft skills, and an awareness of the importance of the museum in contemporary life. The Vietnam Ethnology Museum should be involved in resolving the difficulties facing craftspeople, by providing assistance in improving their quality of life and increasing their employment opportunities. The museum should link communities, raising people's awareness of cultural values, not only in their own locality but beyond their borders. This is a crucial educational role that the museum should play.

Challenges facing the museum

The Ethnology Museum faces many challenges and hurdles in order to continue to develop, improve and evolve.

The first challenge is updating the knowledge of important concepts, theories, and approaches in the design of exhibitions and public programmes. Most of the specialists and researchers working at the museum have university degrees in either ethnology or museum studies. In Vietnam, training in these two fields is still developing to compete with the more advanced theories and approaches from around the world. We are now actively considering many questions concerning the role of the museum in presenting the cultures of different groups living in Vietnam. How can we express the idea of

cultural diversity? What is the role of the museum as a link between the government, political institutions, cultural communities, and the general public? To what extent should the museum participate in socio-economic development and heritage preservation in Vietnam? Aside from its educational role for the general public, can the museum also be involved in training in museum studies and anthropology at undergraduate and postgraduate university level? What, beyond traditional anthropological subjects, might the museum focus on to effectively carry out activities to preserve intangible cultural values? What should the relationship be, in the museum, between contemporary culture and cultures of the past? How can the museum establish exhibitions to show the relationships between the social and cultural world and the natural environment?

In order to take steps to answer some of these questions, the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology has a short-term and medium-term need for upgrading the level of the professional staff on site, and a long-term need for making sure there is systematic training available for potential future staff members. The museum actively seeks sponsors who will work in collaboration with museum staff to help meet their training and re-training needs. Training for staff and future staff of the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology must encompass not only the fields of ethnology, anthropology, museology, conservation and restoration, but also video, audio and editing techniques for producing ethnographic films, exhibition design, product development market research, museum education and public outreach activities.

The second challenge is to diversify the types of exhibitions organized, and the cooperative network. If

exhibitions are only organized in Hanoi, the educational message will not reach remote communities. Therefore, a network must be established with local museums throughout the country to share access to objects, exhibition ideas and actual exhibitions. The Ethnology Museum embarked on this task in several ways. The project entitled *Building Capacity in Research, Collecting, and Exhibition* implemented by the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institute and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, developed training programmes and established a network of 12 museums in the lower Mekong Delta region of Vietnam. Participants in the project, which extended from 2001 to 2003, worked to conduct research on the preservation and presentation of the cultures and lives of the people who live in this region.

The Ethnology Museum has also sent highlights of the its collections and exhibitions to other regions of the country in travelling exhibitions. These travelling exhibitions extended to audiences far from Hanoi, thus enhancing understanding among all of the people living in Vietnam. In addition, the museum has ambitions to develop this further and participate in museum networks in the region and around the world. These links could take place at many levels, from the lending and borrowing of collections and the hosting of travelling exhibitions, to co-curating exhibitions and establishing joint virtual exhibitions on the internet.

The Vietnam Museum of Ethnology aims to be a destination not only for Vietnamese people and foreign tourists, but also for scholars from the region and all over the world, continuing its role as an important bridge linking cultures, people, and nations, particularly in the Mekong region. 

REFERENCES

- Bloom, J. N., Powell, E.A., Cochran Hicks, E. and Munley, M.E., 1984. *Museums for a New Century* (Washington D.C.:American Association of Museums)
- Cassels, R., 1992. Mind heart and soul: towards better learning in heritage parks, *New Zealand Museums Journal*. 22 (2), pp. 12-17.
- Falk, J. H. and Dierking, L. D., 2000. *Learning from Museums – Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning* (Walnut Creek, California: Altamira Press)
- Galla, A., Pham Xuan Nam, Logan, W. S. and Lask, T. (ed.), 2003, *UN Discussion Paper no. 4: Culture and Development in Viet Nam* (Ha Noi, Vietnam: United Nations)

04 Linking the Present with the Past through Intangible Heritage in History Museums

Sally Yerkovich

President, Fund for Arts and Culture in Central and Eastern Europe, New York, USA

Linking the Present with the Past through Intangible Heritage in History Museums

● Sally Yerkovich

President, Fund for Arts and Culture in Central and Eastern Europe, New York, USA

ABSTRACT

This paper will discuss how the New Jersey Historical Society has used the strategy of documenting intangible heritage in its exhibitions to engage both audiences who understand the mission of an historical museum and those who have not grown up with history and historical institutions as part of their lives. Intangible culture also personalizes popular and mass cultural items, animates exhibitions, and creates links between contemporary life and the state's past for diverse urban audiences. From *Teenage New Jersey, 1942-1975* to *Dining In, Dining Out, What Exit? New Jersey and Its Turnpike* to *New Jersey Remembers September 11, 2001*, exhibitions have presented dance, specialized language/jargon, jokes, eating practices, local traditions and lore, stories, songs, and memories along with material culture. This paper examines how this has altered our presentation of history and helped diversify our audiences as well as having had implications for staffing, collecting and collections maintenance. Finally, this device has allowed us to form what might be viewed as an 'identity repository' – a repository of documents that speak not only to the values, practices and identity of distinct ethnic groups but also to what it is that constitutes a New Jerseyan.

Believing that the lives of contemporary peoples and their cultures provide a window on to the past and an effective vehicle by which to reach non-traditional audiences for history, over the past ten years the New Jersey Historical Society has been documenting and presenting aspects of intangible cultural heritage through our exhibitions and programmes. With UNESCO's adoption of the Convention

for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Culture Heritage, it seems an appropriate time to take a step back, examine this practice, look at what its results have been, and see what implications it has for our institution and others like it.

Since the mid-1990s, we have been making our resources accessible to local and state-wide communities through exhibitions, programmes, and

collections access projects. Our approach has been an active one – we created both exhibitions and programmes that tackle topics selected because they engage a broad public's imagination and emotions. They address present-day issues, expressions, and ideas and link them to history. In particular, we have tied the present to the past through intangible heritage and found that the documentation and presentation of traditions, memories and stories enhances our presentation of history and allows us to engage a diversity of people from disparate backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.

The New Jersey Historical Society, a museum, library, and archives with the mission of preserving and documenting the history of the mid-Atlantic state of New Jersey, is the oldest cultural institution in the state. We are comparable to a regional museum in other countries, with the region, in our case, defined politically by the state's boundaries.

New Jersey is located between two of the Eastern seaboard's largest metropolitan centres, New York and Philadelphia. Many of its residents rely upon one of those two cities for their livelihood. Much of the state is made up of small towns and suburban communities, many of which are tied more to the larger urban centres in contiguous states, such as New York and Philadelphia, than to cities in New Jersey.

New Jersey's cities declined dramatically in the twentieth century. Once major industrial centres, the cities lost much of their industrial base as industries modernized, consolidated, and moved to other parts of the country. Left with largely low-income populations, these cities continue to struggle to regain their earlier economic strength without the advantages of a strong industrial/revenue base.

The Historical Society, since its founding in 1845, has been located in Newark, the state's largest city. Newark

is located in northeastern New Jersey, eight miles from New York City. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Newark was the third largest city in the United States and one of its foremost industrial centers. Over the course of the century, as industries relocated and populations shifted, Newark was left without adequate sources of employment for its diverse population.

Newark is ethnically and racially diverse, with 56.3% of its 270,000 population African American (non-Hispanic), 25.2% Hispanic, and 18.5% that identify with other groups. Although Newark is undergoing revitalization, a survey by Zero Population Growth issued in 1999 ranked the city as the worst United States city in which to raise children. More than 37% of its children and 26.3% of its entire population live below the federal poverty level. Of the city's adult population, 27.5% have high school diplomas and 8.5% college degrees. In dramatic contrast, New Jersey, with 8.4 million people, is the most densely populated and wealthiest state in the nation: 74.6% of its population is white, 13.1% African American, 9.2% Hispanic, and 3.1% Asian.

Our challenge, then, was and is, to present history both to audiences who understand our mission and to those who have not grown up knowing historical societies and museums; to relate to both urban and suburban groups; and to reflect the city and the state's increasing ethnic and cultural diversity without losing our appeal to our existing visitors. To meet these challenges we draw upon stories and expressive culture from New Jerseyans. This strategy allows us to create a bridge between the past and the present, thereby developing the contextual framework for understanding both certain aspects of New Jersey history as well as traditional historical objects and documents.

Our documentation of intangible culture is focused, like our collecting of objects, largely through the

exhibitions we develop. The kinds of intangible material we collect vary from exhibition to exhibition and are driven, in large part, by our choice of exhibition topics. The topics are determined in a long range planning process. Our goal in developing exhibitions is to treat areas of American history that are especially relevant to the state of New Jersey and it's residents, topics for which New Jerseyans have particularly compelling stories to tell. We also use exhibitions to build both our museum and archival collections, especially twentieth, and now twenty-first, century materials.

Some exhibitions create an opportunity to present and document folk and ethnic traditions and to examine how they have changed in an American context. *Moving through Memory: Caribbean Folk Arts in New Jersey* documented the folk arts of Puerto Rican, Dominican, Cuban, Jamaican and Haitian cultures and examined ways in which their traditions have been changed and enriched as the groups adapt to their New Jersey home. Tangible culture – musical instrument-making, decorative leatherwork, piñatas with popular cultural characters, costumes for Dominican Independence Day

celebrations, and painting – as well as less tangible culture (the music itself, arts of home decoration, parades, hair styles, murals and decorated store fronts) demonstrated the changes in tradition that occur when groups move from one place to another and adapt to their new circumstances and environment.

While *Moving through Memory* documented folk arts within a context of migration and change, another exhibition, *Dining In, Dining Out*, looked at traditions from a broader range of cultural groups, examining how traditions involving food and dining sustain family and community life. We collected information and artifacts relating to family dinners, community suppers, and eating in diners, and, as a result, were able to present a diversity of contemporary traditions in the exhibition.

Family dinners were discussed first in a contemporary context – a partially recreated kitchen where drawers in a sideboard represented different family traditions and displayed the foodstuffs, spices, and utensils used in the preparation or consumption of each, as well as family photographs. The evolution of ethnic food traditions in America was demonstrated, for

Figure 1: An image of the sideboard whose drawers represented different family traditions and displayed foodstuffs, spices, and utensils used in the preparation or consumption of each.



Figure 2-1: The section of the exhibition that juxtaposed a TV tray and frozen dinner with a TV showing movie and television excerpts of family dinners and raised issues relating to the viability of the family dinner in contemporary society.

Figure 2-2: The section of the exhibition that displayed photos and told stories relating to the chow mein noodles sold to benefit the Japanese community's Buddhist temple in Seabrook, New Jersey.



Figure 3: This one depicts the introductory area of our "Teenage New Jersey" exhibition .



example, with spaghetti 'stuffing,' a pasta side dish that one Italian-American family developed to accompany the traditional American Thanksgiving turkey, and the persistence of tradition could be seen in the Puerto Rican pasteles-making that is very much a part of Christmas celebrations in both Puerto Rico and New Jersey. Stories and recipes accompanied each display and visitors were encouraged to add stories of their own family traditions in a 'story bowl' on a nearby kitchen table.

The history of the American family dinner, which followed in the exhibition, gave a longer-range perspective to the contemporary display as it portrayed how the traditions of family dining have changed as waves of immigration increasingly diversified New Jersey and America's population and life styles changed. Movie and television excerpts depicting family dinners (both contemporary and historical) exposed the diversity of interactions that occur when families gather around food. Juxtaposed with a TV tray and frozen dinner, these clips also helped raise questions about the viability of the family dinner in contemporary society.

Exhibition sections on community suppers and eating in the neighbourhood diner (a type of restaurant that New Jerseyans feel is typical of their state) offered opportunities for exploring other kinds of communal traditions. For example, after World War II a number of Japanese former internment camp inmates settled in Seabrook, New Jersey, and founded a Buddhist temple. In the early 1950s, in order to raise money to support the temple, they decided to sell food. As John Fuyuuume, a Seabrook community member remembers, they came to be 'chow mein' dinners –

.... because in the early days, there was no such thing as a Japanese restaurant...nobody knew about

sushi....In those days, if you talked about sashimi – raw fish – they'd go 'ugh' you know. So, they went to the Chinese end of it. But I understand that chow mein isn't Chinese, either – it's an American invention!

This variant on the American church supper is still a distinctive component of the Seabrook community and stories and recipes from community members expose the complexity of ethnicity in a global society. In this case as in many others in the exhibition, the personal stories and traditions allowed us to penetrate both the social and the cultural significance of the everyday events.

Other exhibitions have used intangible heritage to personalize mass-produced artefacts and give them a local relevance. The exhibition *Teenage New Jersey* traced the history of growing up in the state from 1942 to 1975, roughly between the times when New Jersey entertainer Frank Sinatra was all the rage to the emergence of Bruce Springsteen as a popular music star. While some of the material collected was hand-made (e.g. tokens of devotion that teenage girls made out of chewing gum wrappers for their boy friends), much of what we collected and displayed was commercially produced.

For example, in the 1950s after New York's Madison Avenue marketing specialists identified teenagers as potential sales targets, objects and clothing were created for this age group, and magazines and stores began to cater for it. Our exhibition featured such items as a mini-dress that had been shown on the cover of *Seventeen* magazine – still a proud possession of the woman who lent it to us. Although mass-produced and most likely distributed throughout the United States if not also in Europe, items like the *Seventeen* magazine dress took on special meaning and local significance through the

stories that their owners told us and that accompanied the objects in the exhibitions. In fact, it was the intangible culture – the stories, traditions, music, slang, and dance – that made this exhibition distinctively 'New Jersey' by demonstrating how such items of popular culture can become localized through being used and associated with a particular place or social group.

Teenage New Jersey also collected many traditions and stories focused upon teen culture as it developed in America. Traditions of dress, rituals, rites of passage, and customs related to grooming and dating – all of these intangible elements were key to the exhibition's exploration of teen culture.

For American girls in the 1950s, for example, bedrooms were their private refuges, for studying, doing their hair, or slumber or 'pyjama parties,' get-togethers where groups of girls spent the night at one young woman's house. The words of people who were teenagers at the time helped explain the latter custom: Yvonne Berce Jones from Orange, New Jersey recalled, that in the late 1940s '...it was the beginning of the pyjama parties. My father said, "what do you want to go to a pyjama party for, you have a perfectly good bed here!" So that was the end of that.' Marlene Greco from Rutherford, New Jersey, was allowed to attend these parties and remembered that in the 1950s –

We would wear our baby dolls ['baby doll' pyjamas were hip-length smocked tops worn with matching

frilly panties] and have a pyjama party. It was always supposed to be a secret from the boys, but of course, [they] always found out about it. They'd come knocking at our window, and all of the girls would run around screaming.

While bringing to life apparently silly or superficial teenage customs, these comments also raise issues related to parental supervision and gender and communicate broadly while documenting easily ignored aspects of teenage life.

In the exhibition's section on high school, we not only treated practices that developed around different realms of activity in school, we also discussed dress and slang, in particular the words and phrases that each generation of students develops to characterise their peers. As New Jerseyan Jeff Wolber remembered, in the 1950s –

There were large groups of people who were clique-ish. We had the preppies and the greasers. The preppies wore ties and madras shirts; the greasers wore the wing-tip shoes and slicked back hair.

In the exhibition, a blackboard grid with a horizontal listing of the decades from the 1940s to the 1990s and a vertical listing of 'types' helped us collect some of the names that teenagers used for studious people, for students who were good at sports, for counter-culture

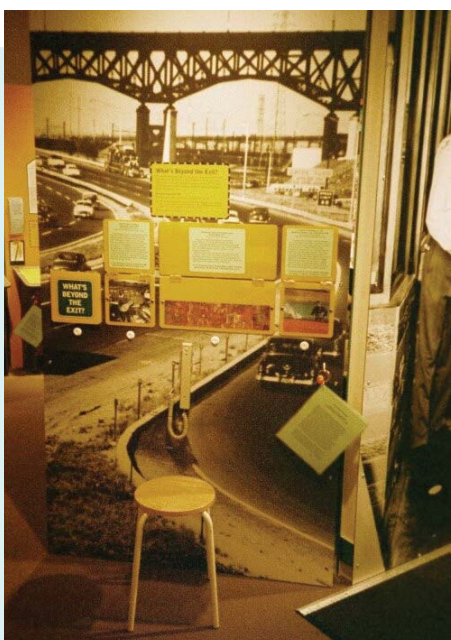


Figure 4-1(Right): A general illustration for the exhibition.

Figure 4-2(Left): The section of the exhibition that featured stories about the traditions observed by communities that border the turnpike.



types, for outsiders and insiders, for clean-cut students and for students who were tough. We found it also promoted conversation between the generations of exhibition visitors.

The New Jersey Turnpike – the super highway and toll road that runs almost from one end of the state to the other – is arguably the state's largest artifact. Our exhibition *What Exit? New Jersey and Its Turnpike* examined the history of that road on its fiftieth anniversary. This enormous post World War II construction project not only changed the face of New Jersey permanently, but also spawned its own folklore – a changing body of stories and traditions that are used to characterise the roadway by people who work on and around it, individuals who drive it, and people who have never seen it. The Turnpike has become, for many, symbolic of the state in both positive and negative ways. The title of the exhibition itself, *What Exit?* is from a joke that implies that the state of New Jersey is no more than a series of exit ramps off of the Turnpike.

We wanted our exhibition to explore not only how roads have changed American life and the history of New Jersey's most famous roadway, but also the meaning that the roadway has for the state's residents and the image that the state projects to the rest of the country and the world. Again, we turned to the documentation of intangible heritage to accomplish these goals and thus to distinguish New Jersey's highway from the countless others in the nation and around the world.

With the help of the organisation that manages the roadway, we first contacted all current and former employees of the turnpike – the people who built the road, those who repair it, the men and women who operate its toll booths, the technicians who monitor its traffic, the police who patrol it, and the people who serve food and pump gas in its service areas. We then surveyed this group, asking them to share their stories with us, and, after sifting through the hundreds of responses, we interviewed a representative group of employees. Their stories, incorporated in the exhibition, documented the work culture and the meaning of the road to those who helped create it and who continue to maintain it.

Many people travel the length of New Jersey on the Turnpike and seldom see more of the state than the concession stands and gas stations in the road's service areas. Yet many of these individuals give meaning to the roadway. Cynthia Jones, a Bronx, New York, resident recalled summer trips during her youth –

... travelling to South Carolina in August. Many blacks who traveled in August were going back to their roots, back to the South, to South Carolina, for 'Big Meeting,' which is a reunion of sorts. Usually you'd meet on Sunday at church, so you'd often have these caravans of cars travelling south...basically the use of the Turnpike was to gas up, to begin the trip, or to meet others who were going to be traveling on the road down. So it was a meeting place.

Truckers who travel the route as part of their job have a different perspective as Dave Borngesser of APA Transport testifies:

As soon as you get between [Exits] 13A and 13B...it's got to be the busiest section...you have everything between Newark and Elizabeth: industry; you have the ports; you have the food distributors, Shop-Rite is there – and Shop-Rite puts out probably 4,000 trailers a day, and so you can imagine what's coming in from the rest of the states, to bring the meat in, bring the products in – Shop-Rite doesn't make this food, it's brought to them and they distribute it, so there's a bunch of trucks going out of there on a daily basis.

We also wanted to address the impression common to many of these travelers that the state is not much more than the asphalt roadway, so we researched the cultures and traditions of communities along the road. Many of these were highlighted in a special section of the exhibition – muskrat hunting and cranberry harvesting in the southern part of the state, competitive car driving in a local 'Road-eo' mid-state and a multi-national African supper in a Newark church.

Finally, to learn about general public attitudes to the Turnpike, we not only interviewed both residents and travellers who use the road but also sent post cards to people across the country. We found married couples who had met and eventually married as a result of the roadway, children who were conceived and born on it and families who fondly remembered many a Sunday afternoon drive exploring the road.

The practice of drawing upon stories and traditions for our exhibition material has allowed us to tackle subjects for which we lacked actual objects and, in some cases, for which objects are difficult, if not impossible to acquire. Another exhibition, *Pride of Newark* traced the story of two baseball teams – the Negro League Eagles and the

Bears, a farm team of the New York Yankees – that played in Newark in the 1930s and 1940s. It examined how the racial segregation that separated the two teams – they shared the same playing field yet never played on the same day, or to the same crowds, or challenged one another – also shaped many other aspects of life at the time. Segregation determined where people could live as well as where they could shop, seek entertainment, and associate. Stories about sports teams, shopping and jazz clubs brought to life a time when lives were separated by race in a way that is unimaginable for many Americans today. These stories often evoked the texture of social life that is missing from other kinds of documentation of the period.

One former Newarker, for example, told us that although he grew up in the city in the 1930s and 1940s, was an avid baseball fan, read the newspaper regularly, and was an outspoken opponent of segregation, he was not aware that a renowned negro league team played in the city. Reports of the teams were recorded daily in the newspaper but the structure of life and the impact of segregation was such that the team was invisible to the non-black population. Statements of this kind, which evoke a radically different time and mindset and are so often absent from the formal historical record, can be captured through careful research and documentation of intangible heritage.

Our institutional commitment to recording intangible culture increased after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The proximity of northern, and even central, New Jersey to New York City meant that it was impossible for the state to emerge from the disaster unscathed – in fact, approximately one-fourth of those who lost their lives when the World Trade Center towers collapsed were New Jersey residents. Within days of the catastrophe, we opened our repository to donations of objects and documents that, in the future, could be used to explore the impact of the September 11th events upon New Jersey and New Jerseyans.

We collected many tangible objects – makeshift posters created by families and friends searching for their loved ones, photographs from memorials that were created spontaneously in commuter train stations as well as in places with views of lower Manhattan, paintings and other works of art commemorating the attacks. But it will be the many stories that we collected and the oral history interviews that we recorded shortly after the events themselves that will provide the richest pool of materials for interpretation by historians in the future.

The oral history collection records the stories of ordinary New Jerseyans, including volunteers who worked at a centre that assisted families of victims from New Jersey, volunteer recovery workers, employees



Figure 5-1: A photograph of a group of the first responders from New Jersey, volunteers who answered the call for help at the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11th.

Figure 5-2: A photograph of "the pile" as the debris at the World Trade Center site was called by the rescue workers as well as a hard hat and boots given to the Historical Society's historian during the oral history interview she did with one of the workers.



working in the vast organization of the Port of New York and New Jersey and air traffic controllers, as well as members of several ethnic groups (especially Arab and Arab-Americans), and immigration attorneys.

The interviews will go a long way toward answering some of the questions about what happened on September 11th after the towers collapsed, but they also do much more than that. They record a depth of experience, beliefs, and narratives usually absent from historical documentation, do not fit conventional historical interpretations, and will unquestionably have an impact upon how historians recount and interpret the impact of the events in the distant future.

We began the practice of collecting intangible culture as a way of making our exhibitions, collections and institution relevant to our contemporary, urban audiences. Now, ten years later, as we ask what impact this has had, we can see that in adopting this practice we have also made a number of subsequent decisions that have changed our institution – its collections and collections policies, its staffing needs and staff and its users.

First and foremost, the practice of recording intangible culture has been an integral part of the process of broadening and diversifying our audiences and has helped us make the Historical Society more responsive to our communities' needs. For example, as

we began to publicise our collecting activities after September 11th, we became aware that amassing this archive of material would not only be important to the Historical Society and historians of the future, but also was already of great significance to those present-day New Jerseyans today who gave us their objects and recounted their stories. And we realized that we had a responsibility to present this material to the public sooner rather than later. Thus, in spite of curatorial qualms, we mounted an exhibition of these materials on the first anniversary of September 11th.

Understanding that the events were too recent for us to understand and interpret historically, we chose to employ the perspectives of the people who had participated in our project as a framework for the exhibition. Drawing largely upon the intangible culture that we collected, we thus constructed an exhibition that drew few conclusions and asked simply for visitors to remember and reflect, and, if they chose, contribute their thoughts.

In addition to creating stronger ties to our constituents, the process of collecting stories, songs, traditions, and lore has brought to the Historical Society an archive of material that is different from what we had collected in the past. The differences are, first of all, physical. Most of the accounts were recorded on audiotape or, more recently, are digitally recorded, and

they have different preservation needs from the material objects in our collections. We have made a commitment to maintaining and preserving the original records as well as, whenever possible, to creating transcripts and indexes of the materials so that the public can access them in different ways. And we have also had to think carefully about how to make these materials accessible to all who wish to use them.

The collecting projects themselves have required not only the skills of a curator of history/material culture but also the skills of folklorists, ethnographers, and oral historians; therefore, the range of skills that we need to carry on our work has expanded. This is reflected both in the qualifications we look for in staff we hire, and in the scholarly disciplines from which we draw consultants to advise us on the development of our exhibitions.

But most significantly, we have hours of audio recordings that provide a glimpse into the lives and customs of contemporary New Jerseyans – the things they remember and deem important. Some of these narratives relate to objects now in our collections, but most are items in and of themselves – stories of life in the state as well as the customs, traditions, slang, dances, and songs. The archive speaks to different cultural and ethnic groups, for New Jersey is close to many major points of entry to the United States for immigrants and often ends up being their home. Thus, the material we have collected can be used as a resource to understand cultural change and assimilation, documenting the modifications and adaptations that people make in their traditional practices as they move from one place to another. It can also be used to build bridges between cultural groups, helping people understand their differences and discover what they hold in common.

The archive also reveals the distinct cultural and social forms that have developed in the region. This is important to us, as the major historical repository for the state of New Jersey, for it can help provide an understanding of how the state fits into the larger American whole, or more grandly, how a local place defines itself within the context of global mass-production. Sandwiched between the large metropolitan areas of New York and Philadelphia, New Jersey, to many Americans, is no more than the butt of jokes on late-night TV or endless miles of boring highway. Yet through an examination of New Jersey's intangible heritage, one can begin to discover its distinctness. Whether we are looking at the tradition of ending the celebration of a high school senior prom 'down the shore' [at the beach], or of creating memorials at train stations – key places for commuters who work in New York City and for those who lost their lives on September 11th – or at the lives of people who spent Sunday afternoons driving the New Jersey Turnpike or enjoyed dancing Joey Dee's version of the twist, intangible culture reveals how New Jersey differs from other places – what elements of contemporary culture give us a distinct sense of place not only within the United States but also on the globe. Thus a technique for linking the present to the past to bring history to life and to relate it to diverse contemporary audiences has yielded a significant collection for the future. While objects remain our primary collections and the power and information that they carry will unquestionably remain important to future generations, it is increasingly evident that documenting intangible heritage is key to presenting local stories in an increasingly mass-produced, global world. 🇺🇸

05 The Intangible Heritage: a Challenge and an Opportunity for Museums and Museum Professional Training

Patrick J. Boylan

Professor Emeritus, Department of Cultural Policy and Management, City University London, UK



The Intangible Heritage: a Challenge and an Opportunity for Museums and Museum Professional Training

● **Patrick J. Boylan**

Professor Emeritus, Department of Cultural Policy and
Management, City University London, UK

ABSTRACT

The main emphasis of most museums over the centuries has been on the material or tangible cultural or natural heritage. However, from very early times some museums have also been closely involved in preserving and presenting the immaterial or intangible culture as well. On 20th April 2006 the new UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 came into force, so it is timely to consider the implications of this major new development for museums. Will new organisations and services, a new profession even, be created to give effect to the new treaty that will challenge, threaten even, the traditional roles of museums and museum professionals in relation to the heritage? Or can museums, the museum profession, and not least museum professional training, respond positively to these serious potential challenges and take a major role in ensuring that the admirable aims of the Intangible Heritage Convention are achieved in relation to all, or most, of its five key areas: oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship?

Introduction

Concern with the tangible heritage (otherwise referred to as the material or physical heritage) has been the subject of many hundreds, indeed probably many thousands, of national laws and policies for many centuries, and of important international treaties and agreements for more than a century. The obligation to respect and protect historic, religious and educational monuments, sites and institutions was included in the 1899 Hague Convention on

the conduct of war at sea, and then in the subsequent 1907 Hague Convention on the Laws and Customs of War on Land. Subsequently the protection of the cultural heritage during armed conflict was made the subject of a special international treaty in its own right with the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and with its 1954 and 1999 Protocols, and was written into the 1977 Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions of 1949¹.

The 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Cultural Property aims to protect movable cultural property, while the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (universally known as the World Heritage Convention) seeks to help in the protection of the immovable cultural property, such as buildings, sites, monuments, historic cultural landscapes and towns, as well as the natural environment².

It is fair to say that the main emphasis of most museums over the centuries has been on the tangible or material heritage, primarily through collecting, recording, researching, interpreting and displaying physical evidence of the past, and of the contemporary culture and environment. However, this arguably artificial distinction is by no means universal among different peoples and traditions. For example, in New Zealand the important Maori word 'taonga' – often translated as 'cultural heritage' but meaning literally 'treasure,' is used to cover all aspects of the heritage, both tangible and intangible, apparently without any significant distinction.

More widely, from very early times some museums have also been closely involved in preserving and presenting not just the physical relics of the past, but also evidence of the immaterial or intangible culture, history or values as well. This is very obviously the case with biographical and other memorial museums, where the main purpose and the programme of the museum is usually to use the physical collections to illustrate the cultural values and the historic or literary heritage of the person memorialised. But a much wider range of museums, archives, libraries and related institutions have also been very concerned with recording, preserving

and communicating many other aspects of the intangible heritage as well for very many years.

On 17th October 2003, the UNESCO General Conference in Paris adopted by consensus the new Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This had already been ratified by 47 States by 20th April 2006, when it formally came into force between the States Parties three months after the deposit of the 30th Instrument of Ratification or Accession³. Bearing in mind the often slow and complicated legal procedures that have to be followed by most countries under national law in order to adopt new treaties, the speed with which the new Convention has been officially adopted by the required minimum number of States is quite remarkable, and shows the interest and enthusiasm that exists in many countries in all regions of the world for action to preserve and promote the intangible heritage.

It is therefore timely to consider the implications of this major new development for museums. Will new organisations and services, a new profession even, be created to give effect to the new treaty and if so will these challenge, threaten even, the traditional roles of museums and museum professionals in relation to the heritage? Or can museums and the museum profession respond positively to these serious potential challenges and take a major role in ensuring that the admirable aims of the Intangible Heritage Convention are achieved?

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The purposes of the new Convention are set out in Article 1 as:

- (a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;
- (c) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;
- (d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance.

In order to achieve these objectives the Intangible Heritage Convention provides for, among other things:

- (a) the preparation by the Member States of national inventories of the intangible cultural heritage
- (b) the establishment of an Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- (c) the drawing-up of two lists by this Committee:
 - (1) the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and
 - (2) the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

Key aspects of the new Convention, particularly those relating to the practical implementation at both national and world-wide levels, generally parallel those already well understood in relation to the tangible or material cultural heritage, being largely based on the concepts and terms already well-established under 1954 Hague and 1972 World Heritage Conventions. The same is true of the defined duties of States Parties to the new Convention

(listed in Article 2.3 in particular) and other matters relating to its practical implementation.

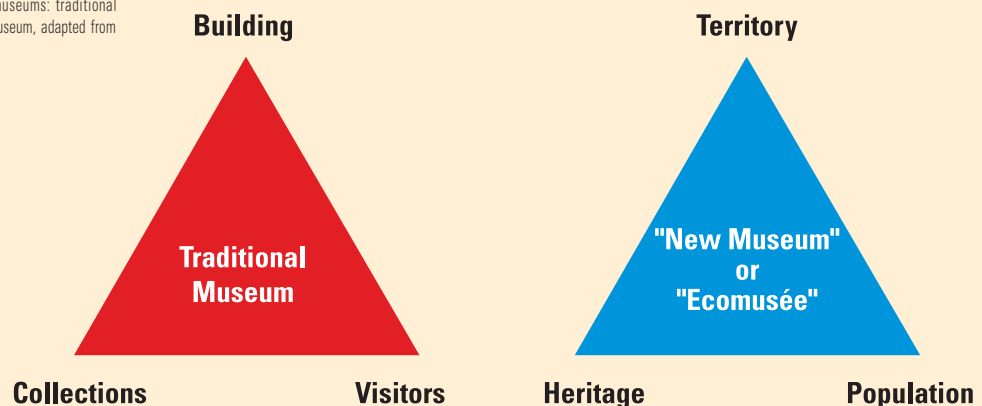
At the national level States adopting the Convention agree:

- to take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory (Article 11);
- to ensure identification with a view to safeguarding, each State Party shall draw up, in a manner geared to its own situation, one or more inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory. These inventories are to be regularly updated. (Article 12), and
- to designate or establish one or more competent bodies for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory (Article 13).

Contributing to the safeguarding and promotion of the intangible heritage

In considering whether or not the new Intangible Heritage Convention is really relevant or not to museums and to the wider physical heritage sector, it is important to first recognise that today there are at least two very different visions of the purpose and role of the museum current: what might be termed the traditional museum and museology, with a major emphasis on collections and objects in the museum, and the écomusée (ecomuseum or 'new' museum) and 'nouvelle muséologie' (new museology), with their emphasis on the overall evidence, both tangible and intangible, of the cultural or natural

Figure 1: The contrasting view of the role of museums: traditional museum versus 'new' museum or ecomuseum, adapted from the work of Hugues de Varine and others



environment of the location or territory served by the museum, whether or not this is represented by objects within the museum.

These contrasting perspectives have been summarised by a number of researchers and museologists over the past thirty years or more, most notably by Hugues de Varine, a former Director-General of ICOM (who among many other things coined the word 'ecomusée' (ecomuseum) in 1971 to describe a new kind of museum focused on the community and its environment rather than on traditional collections), and his mentor, the pioneering Director of the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires (ATP), Paris, Georges-Henri Rivière.

Though it is perhaps an over-simplification to do so, these two very different perspectives can be represented in graphic terms in the two triangles shown in Fig. 1 which contrast what might be termed the traditional museum versus new museum or ecomuseum. This international *nouvelle muséologie* ('new' museology) debate focused to a considerable extent on one underlying question: should a museum be viewed as an admittedly complex interaction between a building, collections and visitors as in the traditional view of museums, or should far wider perspectives be adopted, as argued by de Varine and other proponents of *nouvelle muséologie*? They argue that narrow physical and, perhaps even more important, psychological limits of the museum's building or boundary fence should be replaced by a commitment to serve a defined territory, that the physical collections within the museum should be seen as just a small part of the total human and natural ecology and heritage, fixed, mobile and intangible, of the 'new' museum's agreed territory, while the museum must seek to serve not just its actual visitors, but the total resident and visitor population of the territory⁴.

Clearly, if a museum adopts the new museum or ecomuseum model and vision, then the intangible heritage of its territory and its population becomes an important part of its total mission. To take just one example, from the mid-1930s Georges-Henri Rivière was building the foundations of the future national Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires just as much on the sociological surveys and research on the cultural traditions of the people of rural France as on the collecting of the physical collections. By the time the museum opened its own purpose-designed building in the Bois de Boulogne more than three decades later, the

curators caring for the collections and exhibitions were greatly outnumbered by the staff researching the intangible heritage and historic landscapes and sites across the country, most of them funded by the national scientific research services, (CNRS).

The new Intangible Heritage Convention identifies five key domains in which the intangible cultural heritage is manifested, and all of these can potentially be of relevance to some or all museums, as follows.

Article 2.2 (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage

Far more of the total heritage of a people, whether in a developing country or a so-called developed country, is recorded and preserved in verbal terms rather than in physical objects. However, traditionally the world has placed far more emphasis on written records than oral ones, and thus elevated the history and culture of countries and peoples with a written history as against those with a predominately oral tradition and culture. The new Convention aims to at least reduce, if not eliminate, this imbalance. However, at the same time the great majority of local, regional and even national languages are themselves under threat. In the face of globalisation, and the promotion through education and audio-visual media policies of a designated national language within countries, out of the perhaps more than 6,000 languages that have survived to our times, probably less than a hundred are really secure in the longer term, with many becoming extinct every year.

For very many years, many very successful museums, especially those working in the field of ethnography, folk life and traditional culture, have been working with communities and recording and diffusing their oral traditions and languages alongside the collecting of their material culture. Some have played an important role in maintaining and promoting traditional languages. For example, this was seen as a central role of the Museum of Welsh Life at St Fagans, near Cardiff, established in 1948 just 36 years after the death of the country's last monoglot speakers of Welsh, and there is no doubt that the Museum has played a vital role in the revival of the Welsh language - once the first language of large areas of England and southern Scotland, and quite recently finally recognised as one of the two official languages of Wales.

Similarly, in some countries, for example Spain and, increasingly, France, ancient regional languages that had been forcefully suppressed by the state for many decades (nearly two centuries in the case of France) knowledge of traditional languages is now being very actively promoted, for example by the use of bilingual or multilingual labelling of exhibitions and through audio-visual presentations. For example, two of the important new regional museums developed in France with guidance from Georges-Henri Rivière, the Musée Bretagne in Rennes, on which he worked in the 1940s and 1950s, and the Musée Camarguais in the Camargue, near Arles, his final major project, opened in the early 1980s, soon before his death, both emphasised and celebrated the importance of France's traditional regional languages (Breton and Provençal respectively) even though their use was still officially suppressed under the 1795 law establishing French as the only permitted language of the country and suppressing all traditional minority languages.

However, far more can be done by museums of all types to respond to the call for the active support of traditional culture and languages (and indeed those of important recent immigrant groups) within their territories, and the adoption of the Intangible Heritage Convention could give a new impetus to this, demonstrating the relevance of museums to the whole of their society and their cultures, not just to the culture of a national elite.

Article 2.2 (b) performing arts

Both historic and traditional performing arts have in fact been well represented in the collections and activities of many museums concerned with national and local history and culture, as well as in specialist museums of theatre and music, and biographical museums of important composers and playwrights. Also, many museums already serve as important cultural centres for their own communities, very actively presenting to both visitors and special audiences performances of both traditional performances as well as medieval, classical and modern drama, music, dance and opera within the museum setting. Some have special auditoria or outdoor performance spaces for such programmes, and also either employ directly, or actively encourage, performing arts groups and individual musicians, storytellers, actors, dancers etc. as an integral part of the museum's



Figure 2: Studying, teaching and presenting traditional north Indian dance in the National Museum, New Delhi

programme. For example, the National Museum and the associated National Museum Institute in New Delhi, India, have an active programme of training and promotion for Indian traditional 'Kathak' and other forms of classical dance, (see Fig. 2).

Again, there are many more opportunities for museums in this sort of area of activity, which would offer a twofold benefit: actively supporting and promoting the intangible heritage, and at the same time demonstrating the value and importance of the museum to their wider community.

Article 2.2 (c) social practices, rituals and festive events

As with (a) above, many ethnographic, social history and local history museums are already very actively engaged in recording and promoting such practices and events, and are often the official custodians of important physical artefacts of central importance to such rituals and events. For example, one of the most important national rituals in Thailand follows the death of a King or Queen, and extends over a period of a year. In the usually very long periods between such events, all the elaborate special artefacts relating to the funeral processions, rites and final cremation are cared for, and on display, in the National Museum in Bangkok, accompanied by detailed displays explaining the rituals.

Similarly, one of the most important annual ceremonial rituals in England, dating back to the 14th century, is the journey that each newly elected Lord Mayor of London makes on the first Saturday of

November each year to the Royal Courts of Justice, accompanied by the rest of the Corporation of London, in order to swear allegiance to the Sovereign. Since the early 18th century the Lord Mayor has made this short journey in the same large, and very elaborate, horse-drawn State Coach specially designed and built for the purpose. For 50 weeks of the year the coach is one of the most popular exhibits on display in the Museum of London. However, in late October each year this is taken out of the museum to be serviced and prepared for the Lord Mayor's Show (see Fig. 3), and it is then returned to the museum for another year soon after the ceremony. There are very many examples of much smaller museums similarly supporting and promoting local traditional 'calendar customs' and similar events. For example, the municipal museum of the small historic town of Ptuj in the Panonian region of north-west Slovenia, displays and interprets the remarkable animal mask costumes typical of the region which are worn in the town's traditional intangible heritage events such as the region's annual carnivals (Fig. 4).

Almost every museum could, if it wished, respond to such traditional rituals or annual 'calendar customs' that are important to some of their local populations with special exhibitions, events or performances, whether religious (e.g. Christmas, Easter, Diwali, Eid, Yom Kippur

etc.) or secular (e.g. national days or other important national, regional or local anniversaries etc.).

Article 2.2 (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe

This is an area that is already of great interest to many science museums as well as to ethnographic and historical museums. For example, over the past 20 years or more many member institutions of India's National Council of Science Museums have researched, and presented both exhibitions and special activity programmes on traditional views of the world and the universe, and on the contributions of Indian science to these, from the central importance of the introduction of the concept of zero to mathematics, through to Indian astronomy and astrology. In the same way natural history and ethnography museums in many parts of the developing world are now very actively researching traditional herbal medicines. Quinine and aspirin are two long-established examples of modern medicines which were first recognised in traditional medicines, and there are now many others, with large numbers of very promising prospects under development through such cooperation, while traditional approaches to fields such as agriculture and water conservation may offer many

Figure 3: Lord Mayor of London's 18th century State Coach

Figure 4: Animal mask costumes worn in traditional intangible heritage events displayed and interpreted in the Ptuj Museum, Slovenia



benefits for the future in an increasingly crowded, not to forget rapidly warming, planet.

Article 2.2 (e) traditional craftsmanship

Across the world there must be many millions of examples of traditional craftsmanship preserved and displayed in museums. However, overwhelmingly these artefacts are presented as static, completed, objects, which in many cases are indistinguishable from accurate replicas. Arguably, the two most important aspects of an object of traditional craftsmanship are the way in which it has been made, and the way in which it was used - the intangible expressions of the physical object. Not only should museums be investigating and recording manufacturing techniques and methods of use, but they can play an important role in ensuring that these techniques and skills are maintained. For example, since 1947 the museums and cultural centre of the Arab Womens' Union Bethlehem has been both training local women in traditional Palestinian embroidery skills and marketing the craft products on their behalf. They now run two museums: the Museum of Traditional and Popular Art opened in 1972, and the Museum of the

History of Bethlehem of which the first part opened in 2000. The museum programmes and collections, the training and promotion of traditional crafts and the marketing operations including microfinance help to the craftswomen are all closely integrated⁵.

In a very different field, when I became Director of Museums in Leicester, England, in 1972, my predecessor, Trevor Walden, warned me that while I was inheriting from him the world's largest collection of historic knitting machines, the last generation of workers who had operated the traditional hand knitting frames first developed in the late 16th century had almost completely died out. Even though the country had had hundreds of thousands of highly skilled hand-frame knitters less than 120 years earlier, there were by then probably less than a dozen people, all above retirement age, who fully understood the maintenance and operation of the museum's highly complex 18th and 19th century machines. Without urgent action, very soon these crucial parts of our local industrial history would become little more than curious pieces of inanimate sculpture, rather like those enigmatic human figures on Easter Island.

We therefore immediately decided that a top priority for the museum service should be to train up a new



Figure 5: A retired hand-frame knitter demonstrating the almost extinct traditional skills involved in maintaining and using these complex 17th to 19th century machines

generation of staff and other volunteers in the use and maintenance of hand-frames (and to locate sources of supply or manufacture of key maintenance items, such as needles). With the generous help of a retired Polytechnic lecturer, one of the very few really competent hand-frame knitters still living locally, and one or two other very elderly knitters (see Fig. 5), we quickly built up a substantial number of expert hand-frame knitters, mostly young - aged in their 20s or 30s. Happily, today there seems to be no danger that this important skill will die out in the foreseeable future. One unexpected result of the informal training programme is that commercial manufacturing of hand knitting using such machines restarted when a young, well-qualified engineer gave up his secure job, bought several derelict hand-frames, restored them and set up his own business making and selling very attractive knitted scarves.

The museums profession and the Intangible Heritage Convention

In the same way that there are two different visions of museums - the traditional collection-centred one, and that of the 'new museology', there are today also at least two very different visions of the museum profession. The more traditional view, still predominant in some countries, sees the museum staff as being built largely around a corps of what I have termed the 'Scholar-Curator', whose central focus is the physical collection of objects cared for by the museum. In marked contrast with this, through the past 20 or 30 years the museum profession has been increasingly defined as a team of multi-tasking professionals covering a very wide range of specialisms and skills beyond curatorship in that traditional sense⁶.

This trend is seen very clearly within the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which today recognises over 30 specialist International Committees and Affiliated Organisations. About half the international committees are focused on specialist curators of particular types of collection. In contrast the rest reflect the wide diversity of professional specialisms found in a growing number of museums, for example:

- conservator-restorers and other specialised technical personnel, [Conservation]
- registrars and other documentation specialists [Documentation]
- museum teachers and other education, communication and community liaison staff

[Education, Audio-visual and New Techniques]

- museum-based researchers [Museology]
- museum architects, designers and interpreters [Architecture & Museum Techniques]
- exhibition personnel [Exhibition Exchange, Modern Art, Fine Art]
- directors, and general, personnel and financial managers [Management]
- security and services professionals [Museum Security]
- marketing and public relations staff [Marketing and Public Relations]
- training officers and the staff of museum training organisations [Training of Personnel]
- university museums and collections [University Museums]

In 1947 ICOM established an international specialist Committee for Personnel & Administration, the work of which included advising on museum training. Between then and 1967 ICOM adopted many recommendations on training issues, and particularly the need for professional recognition and specialist training for a range of museum professional workers, including curators (in the traditional sense), conservator-restorers and museum teachers and other educational staff.

In 1968 ICOM's International Committee for the Training of Personnel (ICTOP) was established on the initiative of the ICOM Executive Council: chaired by Raymond Singleton of Leicester University, England, with Jan Jelinek of the Moravian Museum & University of Brno, Czechoslovakia as Secretary. As with all ICOM committees of that time the membership was by invitation or election and was limited to 25 members, not more than two from any country. ICTOP began its programme of annual meetings (held every year since 1968 except in 1975), and its programme of research and development of models and techniques for training of museum professionals, especially curators, but also actively promoting the need for professional training for museum work of all kinds and at all levels.

In 1970 ICOM published a substantial book based on this research by ICTOP and the ICOM Training Unit⁷. As well as papers by several experts, this included about 30 examples of curricula in use by museum training programmes - mainly university postgraduate professional diplomas or Master's degrees. In 1971 ICOM received a contract from UNESCO to review programmes of the international bilingual museum training centre at

Jos, Nigeria. This resulted in the publication of the first recommended UNESCO-ICOM detailed curriculum for museum professional training, based on the ICTOP surveys and analysis of 'best practice'⁸. The original language was French and entitled a 'programme-type', probably best translated into English as 'model programme', but this title was soon being mistranslated as 'Basic Syllabus' and the title *UNESCO-ICOM Basic Syllabus* (*Syllabus du Base* in French) for Professional Museum Training was quickly adopted.

The original text mainly consisted of a very detailed and complex list of themes and topics that should be included in a museum training programme, with little indication of the relative weight or importance of each. Nevertheless the 'Syllabus' was very widely used by training programmes of all kinds, especially postgraduate university courses in museology or museum studies for future curators. The *UNESCO-ICOM Syllabus* was formally recognised, adopted and recommended by ICOM, and was revised at intervals by ICTOP in the light of changes in the museum world; updates being formally approved and adopted by either an ICOM General Conference or by the Executive Council.

However, as this was becoming out of date in concept, ICTOP began a complete revision in 1996 led by Nancy Fuller of the Smithsonian Institution, working with a small number but wide range of ICTOP members and other experts. It was soon agreed that though the 1971 structure had served the profession and ICOM very well for a quarter of a century a basic change of concept was now required, a completely new approach. Nancy Fuller and her group soon agreed that:

- a new document should not be aimed solely or mainly at the initial professional education and training of future curators and other professionals
- instead it should also be a guide for the very necessary continuing professional development and updating throughout the working life, that ICOM sees as essential in both practical and ethical terms
- the replacement for the 'Basic Syllabus' should focus much less on detailed lists of factual information that should be taught and learned, but on the learning outcomes of professional training and continuing professional development.

The recommendation was that the underlying question in the assessment or examination at the end

of any training, whether initial or updating, should not be 'what has this student learned and remembered?' (though factual knowledge is of course necessary on some points), but 'what is this future or actual museum professional competent to do?'

Consequently, the final outcome of the revision is based on the two key concepts of:

- continuing professional development through lifelong learning.
- the acquiring (and the assessment where required) of competences relating to both the specifics of museum work and the professional's own specialisations and to general skills.

This completely new approach required a new title: The *ICOM Curricula Guidelines for Museum Professional Development*⁹. In this form the *Guidelines* were adopted by ICTOP in 1998 and after further consultation by the ICOM Executive Council in 2000.

The Curricula Guidelines for Professional Museum Development and the intangible heritage

The team who developed the current *Curricula Guidelines* was already aware of the rapidly growing importance for museums of the living intangible heritage. The Guidelines therefore already included under *Museology Competences* a section on 'Community Museology' and a relevant reference under 'Types of Collections', for example emphasising the need for training programmes to develop an awareness of the need to understand the interactions between communities, their heritage and economic development and the processes which originate from community efforts. It was also recognised that certain kinds of collections are likely to be of special significance, including associated information of special relevance to the intangible heritage within cultural heritage collecting and recording, for example in relation to oral history, folklife and language, and also among ancillary collections including audiovisuals, slides, negatives, documents, manuscripts, archives. It was also recognised that museum and heritage services frequently have responsibility for buildings, other structures, sites and cultural landscapes which may have a special association with, and significance for, the

intangible heritage, for example as locations where traditional ceremonies and rituals are practiced.

ICOM and the intangible heritage

The October 2004 General Conference of ICOM, held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, had as its main theme *Museums and the Intangible Heritage*, and on the final day the General Assembly adopted as Resolution 1 the 'Declaration of Seoul' as follows:

Considering the undeniable importance of intangible heritage and its role in the preservation of cultural diversity, the 21st General Assembly of ICOM, held in Seoul on 8 October 2004:

1. Endorses the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage;
2. Urges all governments to ratify this convention;
3. Encourages all countries, and especially developing countries where there is a strong oral tradition, to establish an Intangible Heritage Promotion Fund;
4. Invites all relevant museums involved in the collection, preservation and promotion of the intangible heritage to give particular attention to the conservation of all perishable records, notably electronic and documentary heritage resources;
5. Urges national and local authorities to adopt and effectively implement appropriate local laws and regulations for the protection of intangible heritage;
6. Recommends that museums give particular attention and resist any attempt to misuse intangible heritage resources and particularly their commercialisation without benefits to the primary custodians;
7. Urges regional Organisations, National Committees and other ICOM bodies to work closely with local agencies in the development and the implementation of such legal instruments and in the necessary training of staff responsible for effective implementation;
8. Recommends that all training programmes for museum professionals stress the importance of intangible heritage and include the understanding of intangible heritage as a requirement for qualification;
9. Recommends that the Executive Council, working with the International Committee for the Training of Personnel (ICTOP), introduce the necessary

adjustments as soon as possible into the *ICOM Curricula Guidelines for Museum Professional Development* (1971, latest revision 1999);

10. Decides that this Resolution shall henceforth be known as the 'Seoul Declaration of ICOM on the Intangible Heritage'¹⁰.

In response to the paragraph 9 of the *Seoul Declaration*, as noted above, the current version of the *ICOM Curricula Guidelines for Professional Museum Development* already includes a considerable number of topics which are arguably of as much relevance to the intangible heritage as to the traditional role of museums in relation to the tangible heritage. However, after consultations, ICOM's International Committee for the Training of Personnel (ICTOP) is proposing that at least thirteen topics within the *Curricula Guidelines* should in future be highlighted as requiring special attention from the intangible heritage viewpoint within museum training and career development programmes in future, and also proposed that the explanation of these changes should be added to the preamble to the official *Curricula Guidelines*:

The new ICOM initiative encouraging museums to become places responsible for safeguarding and transmitting intangible heritage has set in motion changes that will significantly affect traditional institutional roles and procedures. The initiative will require museum personnel to possess new and different knowledge, skills and attitudes, just as its corollary, staff training and professional development offerings and programs, will be obliged to revise their content and methodology.

Intangible heritage is by definition people-oriented rather than object-centred. At its core, implementation of the new initiative will transform the relationships between museums and their audiences and stakeholders. Among the results will be requests by people from diverse backgrounds to participate in substantive dialogues about their intangible heritage, and to share authority in defining and curating a museum's interpretation of their heritage. The outcome of these efforts will be a paradigm shift of exceptional magnitude. During the transition, museums will be in a state of flux. But as professionals in the field, it is a task we must

undertake. Understanding and respecting both tangible and intangible heritage and their relationships is critical if we are to make closer connections with our visitors and our communities.

In keeping with the aim of the *ICOM Curriculum Guidelines for Professional Development* 'to respond to the continuous learning needs of the profession', ICTOP has considered the implications of the new initiative from a training perspective and suggests additional competencies for inclusion in the document. Many of the competencies museum personnel need for presenting and documenting intangible heritage are already included in the ICOM Curriculum Guidelines. However, because our understanding and emphases are often culturally specific, the scope of intangible heritage may not be fully understood or incorporated into practice. For that reason we have starred specific topics where extensive reference to intangible heritage is warranted and where, in some instances, closer connections with our visitors and communities could forward our aims of becoming a more valuable resource.

If an item is not starred, it does not mean that reference to intangible heritage should not be included, but rather that its application will depend on the goals of a specific syllabus developed by an institution or practitioner. Perhaps while using these guidelines, it is most important to also ask yourself:

How can reference to intangible heritage improve learning about this topic¹¹?

Conclusion

The growing recognition of the great importance of the intangible heritage to the total patrimony and culture of peoples, and particularly the adoption through UNESCO of the 2003 Intangible Heritage Convention, have very important implications for museums and related bodies. It is important that all museums (and indeed library, archive and monuments services) review their current and potential future support for traditional cultures and the wider intangible heritage in relation to all their programmes and activities. They need to ensure that they seek actively and publicly to take a leading role in national and local measures adopted in the implementation of the new Convention, otherwise they may well find that governments will establish and fund new bodies for the support of the intangible heritage in accordance with the obligations they accept when they adopt the Convention.

Similarly the members of the museum profession needs to adopt an open, outward-looking, view of their own role and that of their institutions within society, and in particular in relation to the protection and promotion of the intangible heritage, which can be at least as important as the traditional collections of physical objects that have been the main, or in many cases only, concern of museums over the past centuries. 

NOTES

1. Boylan, P.J., 2001. The concept of cultural protection in times of armed conflict: from the Crusades to the New Millennium. pp. 43 - 108 in Tubb, K.W., & Brodie, N. (editors), 2001. *Illicit Antiquities* (London: Routledge)
2. See for example Clément, E., 1995. The aims of the 1970 UNESCO Convention ... and action being taken by UNESCO to assist its implementation. pp. 38 - 56 and Prott, L.V. 1995. National and international laws on the protection of the cultural heritage. pp. 57 - 72, both in Tubb, K.W. (editor), 1995. *Antiquities: Trade or Betrayed* (London: Archetype Publications)
3. The UNESCO web portal for culture now has an extensive presentation on the intangible heritage generally, and the new Convention in particular. The index page for this is at: http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2225&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html and there are links to the full text and to the list of countries that have adopted it. The States Parties to Intangible Heritage Convention at date of coming

into force (20 April 2006) are as follows (with date of ratification or deposit of other instrument of adoption): 1. Algeria (15/03/2004), 2. Mauritius (04/06/2004), 3. Japan (15/06/2004), 4. Gabon (18/06/2004), 5. Panama (20/08/2004), 6. China (02/12/2004), 7. Central African Republic (07/12/2004), 8. Latvia (14/01/2005), 9. Lithuania (21/01/2005), 10. Belarus (03/02/2005), 11. Republic of Korea (09/02/2005), 12. Seychelles (15/02/2005), 13. Syrian Arab Republic (11/03/2005), 14. United Arab Emirates (02/05/2005), 15. Mali (03/06/2005), 16. Mongolia (29/06/2005), 17. Croatia (28/07/2005), 18. Egypt (03/08/2005), 19. Oman (04/08/2005), 20. Dominica (05/09/2005), 21. India (09/09/2005), 22. Viet Nam (20/09/2005), 23. Peru (23/09/2005), 24. Pakistan (07/10/2005), 25. Bhutan (12/10/2005), 26. Nigeria (21/10/2005), 27. Iceland (23/11/2005), 28. Mexico (14/12/2005), 29. Senegal (05/01/2006), 30. Romania (20/01/2006), 31. Estonia (27/01/2006), 32. Luxembourg (31/01/2006), 33. Nicaragua (14/02/2006), 34. Cyprus (24/02/2006), 35. Ethiopia (24/02/2006), 36. Bolivia (28/02/2006), 37. Brazil (01/03/2006), 38. Bulgaria (10/03/2006), 39. Hungary (17/03/2006), 40. Iran (Islamic Republic of) (23/03/2006), 41. Belgium (24/03/2006), 42. Jordan (24/03/2006), 43. Slovakia (24/03/2006), 44. Republic of Moldova (24/03/2006), 45. Turkey (27/03/2006), 46. Madagascar (31/03/2006) and 47. Albania (04/04/2006). UNESCO has also now launched a free newsletter with brief news items about intangible heritage developments and activities in three languages: English (*The Intangible Heritage Messenger*), French (*Le messenger du patrimoine immatériel*), and Spanish (*El mensajero de patrimonio inmaterial*). All three language editions are also available as PDF downloads from the UNESCO Intangible Heritage website (see above).

4. See in particular: de Varine, H. 1978. L'Ecomusée. *La Gazette (Association des Musées Canadiens)* no. 11, pp. 28 – 40 and 1979. *Le musée peut tuer ...faire vivre. Techniques et Architecture* no. 326 (Sept. 1979), pp. 82 – 83; also Rivière, G-H., 1992. L'Ecomusée, un modèle évolutif (1971 – 1980). pp. 440 – 445 in Desvallées, A., 1992. *Vagues: une anthologie de la nouvelle muséologie I*. (Mâcon: éditions W); Boylan, P.J., 1992. Ecomuseums and the New Museology: Key works on ecomuseums, p. 16 and Definitions. *Museums Journal*, April 1992, pp. 29 – 30.
5. The Bethlehem-based Arab Womens' Union has a very informative website at:
<http://www.arabwomenunion.org/index.htm>
6. I have recently reviewed and discussed these issues: Boylan, P.J., 2006. The Museum Profession. Chapter 25, pp. 415 – 430 in Macdonald, S., 2006. *A Companion to Museum Studies* (Malden MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing)
7. International Council of Museums, 1970. *The Training of Museum Personnel* (London: Hugh Evelyn for ICOM)
8. International Council of Museums, 1972. *Professional Training for Museum Personnel in the World: Actual State of the Problem* (Paris: ICOM)
9. ICOM Curricula Guidelines for Museum Professional Development: the text is hosted and maintained online by the Smithsonian Institution at: <http://museumstudies.si.edu/ICOM-ICTOP/index.htm>
10. Resolutions adopted by the 21st General Assembly of ICOM, Seoul, Korea. Friday 8 October 2004:
<http://icom.museum/resolutions/eres04.html>
11. Recommendations from the ICOM International Committee for the Training of Personnel (ICTOP) to the Executive Council, 2005. (ICOM Executive Council Working Papers, Paris, June 2006 meeting – in press)

06 Preserving the Ephemeral: the International Museum Day 2004 in Mexico

Silvia Singer

President, ICOM Mexico, Museo del Banco de México, México D.F., México

Preserving the Ephemeral: the International Museum Day 2004 in Mexico

● Silvia Singer

President, ICOM Mexico, Museo del Banco de México,
México D.F., México

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the process by which intangible heritage has gradually been integrated into the conservationists' awareness. Intangible heritage, whose creative products are expressed in skills, knowledge, and representations, constitutes a challenge for museums, which were conceived, from their start, around the value of objects. Even when these spaces have previously acknowledged the importance of intangible cultural expressions, they have rarely performed the tasks of collecting, conserving, or displaying this kind of heritage. The prevailing perspective in Mexican museums is, to this day, to present them only as part of a 'glorious past' –before the Spaniards' arrival to the continent–so that only recently have museum professionals become interested in the vast amount of traditional knowledge, skills, and activities that indigenous peoples still keep alive, more than 500 years after the Conquest. The conservation of cultural diversity implies not only the sampling of a few customs or artistic expressions that dominant groups consider valuable, but rather the formulation of government and social programs which ensure the continuity of ways of life, customs, and a sustainable relationship with the environment which created a given culture.

*What our eyes see is only the final expression,
What is visible of all that we want to tell each other by
means of a shared belief.*

*What we want to tell each other is what matters, that
which gives life to flowers, objects,
And words.*

It is the intangible that makes us live in community,

*the core challenge of our humanity:
Death, when shared, is life.*

(Lourdes Arizpe)

Tangible heritage is expressed in objects, concrete matter, enduring years and sometimes centuries, carrying with it some of the substance of human life,

feeling, and thought. In contrast, that which cannot be touched only takes momentary shape in the mind, the speech and the motion of a human being. The carriers of intangible heritage are mortal, and therefore intangible heritage dies with each person and is reborn with each new member of a community. Hence its multiplicity and vitality, but also its fragility.

The conservation of intangible heritage is a matter which requires consideration, discussion, but most of all, urgent action. Its complexity includes the preservation of the natural and cultural environments of producer groups, and the continuity of spontaneous creation. The efforts which have been undertaken to protect and promote this living legacy have not always been successful, but it is imperative that we exchange our ideas and experiences.

Intangible heritage, whose creative products are expressed in skills, knowledge, and activities, constitutes a challenge for museums which developed to preserve and display tangible objects. While it is true that they have previously acknowledged the importance of such cultural expressions as narratives, music, languages and traditional knowledge, they have rarely performed the tasks of collecting, conserving, or displaying this kind of heritage. Besides, due to the fact that the fate of intangible heritage is intertwined with that of its producers, museums today, in collaboration with the communities who create it and transform it, face the question of how to preserve and display this heritage.

As part of ICOM's effort to enhance international awareness of the importance of intangible heritage, ICOM Mexico organized a colloquium on *Intangible Heritage and Mexican Museums* on the occasion of International Museum Day, 2004. The meeting assembled distinguished anthropologists, historians, philosophers, bio-ethnologists, urbanists, art historians,

museographers, cultural managers and private and public sector officers, as well as 354 museum professionals, who attended the academic sessions. The issues discussed in this forum illustrate the Mexican perspective on the main concerns regarding intangible heritage. How can we avoid separating practices from their social and political contexts? How can we highlight their value and protect them from destruction and discrimination? What strategies do we need to preserve a kind of heritage which, by nature, is ephemeral and always changing? Is it possible (or logical) to protect culture without taking into account environmental and socio-economic problems?

Every day, more and more communities in Mexico experience the effects of projects promoting eco-tourism. Tourists come to sacred places and to archaeological and historical sites; they are interested in ethnic groups and cultural traditions (crafts, history, languages, traditional medicine, traditional technology, ceremonials, music and dance), they watch audio-visual presentations and visit community museums. Tourism is highly profitable and is becoming one of the world's greatest industries, and cultural heritage contributes greatly to it, thus creating a veritable heritage industry. Paradoxically, with its growth, the tourist industry threatens to destroy what it promotes. Eco-tourism destinations tend to lose their special characteristics after only a few years of exploitation.

It is not only our cultural and ecological heritage that is endangered. In countries like Mexico, which suffer from acute social inequality, tourism has tended to increase existing problems such as the inefficient distribution of wealth, the degradation of natural resources and the inadequate, elitist use of our natural and cultural heritage. This is counter-productive and, in the long run, unsustainable.

At the colloquium we learnt several relevant facts about our country. Mexico today is home to one of the largest populations of indigenous peoples in America, who, with their respective dialects, speak about 62 separate languages. Another significant fact is that the land surface under indigenous custody is estimated as at least, 30 million hectares - therefore the indigenous people are the owners of roughly 80% of the country's forests. The majority of the hydrological basins in the central and southern regions of the country are in regions populated by indigenous peoples, so our water supply depends, in great measure, on their use of these precious resources (see Toledo, 2004).

All these facts gain special significance when we consider that our indigenous peoples are amongst those most seriously affected by poverty, discrimination and lack of opportunities. This shows that the conservation of cultural diversity is not just about the preservation of a few customs or craft traditions that mainstream society considers valuable. It actually requires the government to formulate social programmes for the indigenous peoples which will ensure the continuity of their customs and way of life, and will allow them to have a sustainable relationship with the environment in which they live.

Very often, government programmes, NGO initiatives, and efforts by cultural institutions ignore or underestimate the way indigenous cultures have, for centuries, lived in harmony with nature. They therefore try to impose development programmes on them which neither suit these groups' needs, nor value the positive aspects of their relationships with their environments.

In Mexico, among the indigenous peoples, over time, almost every plant species, animal group, kind of soil or landscape, has come to have a cultural meaning - a

linguistic expression, an epistemological category, a story or legend, a mythical or religious meaning, a practical use, or some meaning in the life of an individual or group. The Mesoamerican pharmacopoeia, for example, is as rich as those of the Hindu or Chinese peoples - there are at least 3000 plant species with some recorded medicinal use.

There are traditional knowledge systems among indigenous communities - for instance, with regard to the kind of soil and quality of the terrain - which are almost unknown to us. They are comparable to our scientific soil diagnosis studies, and could constitute perfectly viable alternatives to them when it comes to preserving the productivity of our land and reservoirs. Nevertheless, the prevailing perspective in Mexican museums is, to this day, to present the indigenous population only as part of a 'glorious past' - before the Spaniards' arrived on the continent. It is only recently that museum professionals have become interested in the vast amount of traditional knowledge, skills, and pursuits that indigenous peoples still keep alive, more than 500 years after the Spanish Conquest.

One exception has been the National Museum of Popular Cultures which began its work in 1982 with a project that criticized the dominant museum theoretical framework of those years in our country. Since then, it has gone through different stages, but it has consistently asked for the participation of indigenous communities in the preparation of exhibits about their culture. This institution has shown Mexican audiences how museums can record, preserve, and make widespread a wealth of knowledge, meaning, and creativity that no previous institution had taken into account. The museum describes its field as 'popular culture' and while that is

not a synonym for intangible heritage, its projects have paid considerable attention to the intangible aspects of culture. There have been numerous exhibitions illustrating the methodology of the National Museum of Popular Cultures.

However, the National Museum of Popular Cultures is not the only institution in Mexico to have represented the intangible heritage of various groups alongside their tangible heritage. The National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) launched its project *Community Museums* in the 1970s, and traditionally community museums have invited local communities, in collaboration with museum professionals, to decide what they want to display in their local museums to represent their societies.

Even small cultural groups are complex, and not all of them are sympathetic to seeing themselves displayed as museum exhibits. However, the aim has always been to acknowledge their complex histories and conflicts, as well as the transformations of their cultural traditions in the face of the turbulent currents of technological progress and globalization, rather than to present an idealized or 'folkloric' image of them. To reinforce this, a colleague at the colloquium urged museum professionals to show multiple perspectives in their work, and to attempt to make sense of contradictions and fragments by showing indigenous communities within their complete context.

As intangible heritage is constantly changing and ephemeral by nature, museums should be the first to develop suitable documentation methods and tools in order to keep a proper record of this increasingly endangered heritage. In the case of our indigenous peoples, who preserve and create all kinds of traditions, it should be clear to us by now that they are not minorities who remind us of our past, but essential components of our society. At the same time, we ought to avoid the opposite extreme in our representation of them, namely idealisation. Only if we truly endeavour to know and understand the past, and present, of these communities, will we be able to achieve real integration with them. Government and non-government agencies must try to do this by means of coherent social, educational and health plans, which respect the communities' differences and learn from their strengths.

In the case of Mexico, museums should change the paternalistic attitude that they have generally adopted towards indigenous groups as a consequence of

governments' policies, and establish a dialogue with them as equals. Museums all over the world have started considering their audiences as their peers and taking them into account in the design of their exhibitions and programmes. These institutions should set an example as to how to initiate a genuine exchange of ideas between diverse sectors of our societies.

With regard to the discussion about intangible heritage in the Mexican colloquium of May 18th, 2004, there was a lecture which reminded us that the words we use to name a concept actually determine the way we think about it. It summarized the process by which UNESCO reached the definition of intangible heritage, and the effort this process required to ensure that nothing important was left out. An insight derived from this presentation was that a definition must always be open to revision: it is a working tool and a framework, but it should never turn into a corset, limiting or narrowing our vision of what is valuable and deserving of our attention.

During the colloquium, government officers highlighted the problematic aspects of the current definition of intangible heritage. If this includes traditional performing arts, why do not government plans consider contemporary dance and theatre as part of our current intangible heritage, and support these activities in official programmes? This raises the question of what makes us decide what is to be considered intangible heritage. Is it only activities whose quality has been tested by time, or can we include present manifestations in our museums?

Other significant contributions to our exchange were lectures pointing out the political aspects of heritage preservation, and the dangers we ought to keep in mind when taking action in favour of a group or activity. Who decides what is considered heritage nowadays? Capital? Political power? What is the future of traditions in a globalized world, in which everything (including ideas and knowledge) is bought and sold?

The issue of funding for preservation tasks is never a simple one as it has to do with power, ideology, and selection criteria. Who decides what is worth funding and protecting? Does choosing to protect a particular tradition act against the preservation of many others which are not as visible? Is it valid that cultural and political elites determine what the majority should value? How can we achieve the integration of communities in decision-making and in formulating programmes to preserve our varied and vast traditional legacies? These

are just a few of the questions which arose during the ICOM Mexico Colloquium on *Museums and Intangible Heritage*. Meetings, exhibits in different museums of the Republic, and the publication of the colloquium's proceedings have been some of the forum's outcomes.

In addition, the most pressing matters to solve have been identified: it is urgent that we modify our laws regarding heritage preservation. Currently, these restrict such activities to government agencies and prevent the non-governmental sector from participating in it. It is time to intervene in order to involve different agencies in the financing and support of both our tangible and intangible heritage. If museums in Mexico barely have enough resources to survive and maintain their collections, they must procure funding from other sources in order to be able to plan activities concerning intangible heritage.

With regard to the documentation and exhibition of aspects of intangible heritage, these are not enough to ensure the continuity of the various communities' creative activities. It is essential to foster awareness in people from these different groups of the value of their singularity. They should be the first to enjoy their own traditions, knowledge, and art, otherwise we would be in danger of transforming these into the heritage of outside groups.

The intangible heritage offers museums a perfect way to broaden their scope. By bringing into the museums the incredibly vital presentations by groups of youngsters and individuals seen every day in our cities, we will be participating in one of the most progressive parts of our contemporary urban culture. This, of course, needs to be managed carefully as the expression of radical new ideas may challenge our conceptions of art.

Assuming responsibility for cultural heritage requires us to rethink museums. First of all, it is essential that we work closely with those communities that create intangible heritage, so that they may participate in the interpretation and presentation of the issues and traditions they consider relevant. When talking about

communities, I do not only mean ethnic groups with their own distinct culture, language, set of customs, and habitat, but also groups in urban areas, groups that are marginalised and others who are more integrated, people with distinct cultural identities but who frequently escape the attention of our institutions.

Equally important for museums is the establishment of close contact with those researchers from universities and institutes (who have already produced remarkable studies in the field), in order to formulate joint projects, not only for research, but also for the systematic documentation of intangible heritage. Thus, museums may become an effective link between specialists, under-represented communities and wider audiences.

At the same time, museums must involve their visitors in the 'meaning-making' processes which are the source of intangible heritage. Be it by means of a collection of objects or using interactive exhibits, we should encourage thought, creativity, and the awareness that each individual is capable of, and responsible for, the generation and transmission of intangible heritage. This means that every visitor should realize that he or she can contribute to the wealth of their culture and society.

Intangible heritage is not only relevant to ethnographic museums. It concerns all of us, as museums are creators of collective memory. Therefore, we should be aware that one of our main objectives is to bring to the present the meaning of any object or topic we are dealing with, be it art, history, ethnography, or science. The museological object should be brought to the visitor's current reality. This way it makes sense in his or her world view, and is integrated into a coherent network in his or her conceptual framework.

Finally, understanding of those who are different from us can be fostered by 'arranging a rendezvous' between groups in museums' galleries and outreach programmes. As a consequence, they will be more likely to acknowledge their differences, but most importantly, they will see their similarities, the cultural overlaps that exist between all human communities. 🇪🇺

REFERENCES

- The following papers all appeared in *Memorias, patrimonio intangible: resonancia de nuestras tradiciones*, 2004 [México, ICOM México]:
 - Arizpe, L. El patrimonio cultural intangible en un mundo interactivo.
 - Arroyo, S. R. Los museos del INAH y el patrimonio intangible.
 - Garcia Canclini, N. Propuestas para rediscutir el patrimonio intangible.
 - Jiménez, López, L. Patrimonio, artes escénicas y políticas públicas. La puesta en escena de vínculos no reconocidos.
 - Leon-Portilla, M. Museos y bienes culturales intangibles.
 - Lopez, G.E. Perspectivas del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes ante la preservación del patrimonio intangible.
 - Lopez, Morales F. J. Retos para México de la Convención para la Salvaguardia del Patrimonio cultural Inmaterial de la UNESCO.
 - Mantecon, A. R. Introducción. El patrimonio intangible y los museos en México.
 - Perez Montfort, R. Breve acercamiento al patrimonio musical mexicano. Reflexiones y una propuesta.
 - Perez Ruiz, M. L. El Museo Nacional de Culturas Populares y sus aportaciones a la protección del patrimonio cultural intangible.
 - Schmilchuk, G. Quién decide qué es patrimonio cultural? Estudio de su valoración en la ciudad de Chihuahua.
 - Sevilla, A. Las culturas regionales, en exposición?
 - Toledo, V. M. La apropiación de la naturaleza en Mesoamérica: de lo tangible a lo intangible.
- Bergeron, Y. 2003, Intangible Heritage at the Musée de la Civilization of Quebec, *ICOM News* (2003, 4) p.8
- Galla, A. 2003. Frequently Asked Questions about Intangible Heritage, *ICOM News* (2003, 4) p.4
- Pinna, G. 2003. Los museos y el patrimonio intangible, *ICOM News* (2003, 4)
- Van Huy, N. 2003. Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, *ICOM News* (2003, 4) p.5

07 Transforming Representations of Intangible Heritage at Iziko (National) Museums, South Africa

Henry C. Jatti Bredekamp
CEO, Iziko Museums of Cape Town, South Africa

Transforming Representations of Intangible Heritage at Iziko (National) Museums, South Africa

● **Henry C. Jatti Bredekamp**
CEO, Iziko Museums of Cape Town,
South Africa

ABSTRACT

The article is about the dilemma of transforming five former national museums in South Africa into one amalgamated heritage institution subscribing to a post-apartheid national agenda and UNESCO's broad definition of intangible heritage. By way of introduction it situates the intangible heritage discourse in the country against the backdrop of a transformation process initiated after 1994, which led, inter alia, to the formation of Iziko Museums by an Act of Parliament. The larger part of the paper is devoted to the question of the extent to which Iziko Museums can regard its inherited collections (from 1825) in the Social History, Natural History and Art Collections functional units - representing the various domains of expressions of living cultural heritage - as genuine representations of intangible heritage from the Cape to Cairo and beyond.

The Minister stressed that issues related to heritage, culture and identity were 'deeply emotional' – after all these are issues that are at the very core of the transformation agenda in South Africa. (Harriet Deacon et al, 2003:7)

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa more than twelve years ago, there has been significant transformation in the heritage policies of government which have themselves impacted on the heritage institutions of the country and the manner in which their mandates are expressed.

This article provides a brief overview of the policy processes which gave rise to the Iziko Museums as a

national heritage institution and elaborates on the manner in which the new policy on intangible heritage infuses the execution of the work of this institution.

The creation of post-apartheid national heritage institutions in South Africa

As was to be expected, the discourse on transformation in the heritage sector in South Africa was driven by the new democratic government together with practitioners within the heritage fraternity.

Seminal in these policy debates was the official government White Paper, tabled by the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) in 1996 which

preceded the passing of a series of heritage related Acts of Parliament towards the end of the 1990s. This White Paper acknowledged, inter alia, that

[a]ttention to living heritage is of paramount importance for the reconstruction and development process in South Africa and that [m]eans must be found to enable song, dance, story-telling and oral history to be permanently recorded and conserved in the formal heritage structure¹.

This document further set in motion a process which re-defined the notion of national cultural institutions (and monuments) and ultimately resulted in the total transformation of the state heritage institutions through a systematic process of re-structuring and rationalization.

The White Paper envisioned an overarching statutory body with a range of tasks to advance, effectively and efficiently, the transformation of the heritage landscape in South Africa. This White Paper eventually saw effect in the National Heritage Council Act passed three years later (in 1999), and saw its provisions begin to be implemented in 2003. At the time of writing (2006) its provisions are not all functioning effectively.

However, the heritage sector was already undergoing considerable change at symbolic text level. Already in 2003 the DACST called for public nominations for appointments of new Councils (by the national Minister) in terms of the Cultural Institutions Act of 1998². This act also brought into existence the two national heritage institutions, namely the Southern Flagship Institution (now called Iziko Museums) and the, soon to be re-named, Northern Flagship Institution. The National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 made provision for the establishment of the South African Heritage Resources

Agency [SAHRA] (which replaced the National Monuments Council) and Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities [PHRAs].

The status of intangible heritage on the South African transformation agenda after 2004

The legislative framework of the aforementioned heritage institutions makes provision for the promotion of living heritage in their respective domains within the context of a transformation agenda. In South Africa, living heritage is defined in terms of the intangible or symbolic aspects of inherited culture and may include cultural tradition, oral traditions and history, popular memory, performance (music and dance), rituals, skills and techniques, indigenous knowledge systems and a holistic approach to nature and social relationships. For the International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP-RIPC),

[i]t includes meanings associated with places and objects, making it an essential component of all heritage³.

Living and/or intangible heritage is understood both as related to the tangible, such as cultural landscapes which may have spiritual significance, but also as totally independent of tangible heritage, such as in oral history or song. This is alluded to in a paper commissioned by the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa, which was presented to the INCP-RIPC in Croatia in 2003. It came to the conclusion that -

Intangible heritage consists of the oral traditions, memories, languages, traditional performing arts or rituals, knowledge systems, values and know-how

that we want to safeguard and pass on to future generations. It is essential not to lose our ancient knowledge, especially the traditional and indigenous knowledge that has been marginalized for so long, but we need to remember and value more recent heritage too, such as the oral histories of people who lived under Apartheid⁴.

At the same time, at the meeting in Croatia in October 2003, UNESCO adopted a similar definition in its *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage⁵*.

In its own right, in 2000, DACST initiated, in collaboration with the National Archives of South Africa and other organisations, a National Indigenous Music and Oral History Programme that made the promotion of living heritage a prime objective⁶. Within the same context of a transformation agenda, by virtue of its enabling legislation, the SAHRA has become a leading heritage institution in the promotion of living and intangible heritage in the past three years⁷. In the symbolic texts of the Robben Island Museum the intangible aspects of memory and commemoration feature prominently because of its message concerning *the indestructibility of the spirit of resistance against colonialism, injustice and oppression⁸*. In the same spirit, though managed differently because of its context, the Nelson Mandela Museum, spread across three historical sites (Mveso, Mandela's birthplace, Qunu, where he grew up, and the Bunga Building in Mtata, capital of the former Transkei) since its opening in February 2002 has tried hard to promote living or intangible heritage. The National Archives of South Africa, the Robben Island Museum and the Nelson Mandela Museum are all national heritage institutions.

The making of Iziko, 1999-2004

Iziko is significantly different from the other national heritage institutions mentioned above. Its genesis however was, as with the Northern Flagship Institution, an initiative taken by the DACST in 1995 to create new policies and institutional structures for post-apartheid South Africa. DACST entered into a consultative process with stake-holders in the fields for arts, culture and heritage. Museums, viewed by the state as primarily heritage institutions, were included in this process. One of the outcomes of the consultation on the future of museums was the promulgation in 1998 of the Cultural

Institutions Act which, inter alia, made provision for the amalgamation of state-aided museum institutions in Gauteng and in the Western Cape into separate northern and southern flagship institutions. The Western Cape flagship included the oldest museum in Africa, the South African Museum of 1825, and other long established institutions with large and internationally acclaimed collections. As alluded to above, the museums were a cluster of state-aided, cultural institutions of colonial and apartheid times located in the Cape Town area. By ministerial regulation the Act was amended in July 2001 to allow the southern flagship to be branded as the Iziko Museums of Cape Town.

The state-aided institutions that became part of Iziko were the South African Museum and the South African National Art Gallery in the Parliamentary precincts' Old Company Gardens, the Michaelis Collection in the Old Town Hall on Green Market Square, the South African Cultural History Museum next to Parliament outside the Company's Garden and the William Fehr Collection at the Castle of Good Hope. Before 1999 the five institutions, with their satellite sites, functioned as independent entities each with their own council, director and staff. The councils were dissolved and a new council was appointed in April 1999 to oversee the amalgamation and transformation of the institutions inherited from the old order.

By 2001 the current structure of eight functional divisions, Human Resources, Central Services, Property Services, Education and Public Programmes, Marketing and Fundraising, Art Collections, Natural History Collections, and Social History Collections, was put in place. For curatorial purposes, management of the fifteen museums is grouped into three collections-based divisional clusters: Art Collections (Iziko: SA National Gallery, Michaelis Collection and Natale Labia Museum), Natural History Collections (Iziko: SA Museum, Planetarium and West Coast Fossil Park) and Social History Collections (Iziko: Slave Lodge; Koopmans-de Wet House, Bertram House, SA Maritime Museum, SAS Somerset, Groot Constantia Estate's historical precinct, Bo-Kaap Museum, Rust en Vreugd and William Fehr Collection).

Transforming and restructuring Iziko is a process that is continuing under the present Council inaugurated in May 2003, and the incumbent CEO appointed in November 2002. Also, at curatorial level, the amalgamated institutions have begun a process of

Figure 1: The Linton Panel of San rock paintings, 18th or 19th century, Iziko South African Museum, Cape Town. The complex paintings of the Linton panel reflect the intangible beliefs and cosmology of the San people, the earliest inhabitants of the African subcontinent.



Figure 2: Detail from the San rock paintings in the Linton Panel. This figure provided the basis for the central motif in the South African Coat of Arms, acknowledging the cultural heritage of San hunter-gatherers and their descendants.



transforming exhibitions and the interpretation of the meanings of heritage objects within the context of Iziko's vision to be *African museums of excellence that empower and inspire all people to celebrate and respect our diverse heritage*. With a view to functioning more effectively and efficiently, the Collections divisions and Education & Public Programmes were grouped together in the latter part of 2005 as functional units of a Business Unit called the Core Functions Business Unit.

Collection and recollection: the intangible heritage dimension of Iziko's collections and education policies

Iziko Museums, like many museums that have their roots in the colonial period, tended in the past to interpret the objects in its collections through a limited range of perspectives in keeping with the curatorial interests of the time. The South African Museum, which was founded in 1825 and which from the mid-1860s shared a building with what is now the National Library of South Africa in the Old Company's Garden, has accession records dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, placing Iziko's social history collections among the earliest heritage collections in South Africa⁹.

The collections embrace the fields of pre-colonial and historical archaeology, anthropology, colonial and post-colonial history, and contemporary cultural studies. In the past the focus was on bringing order to the collections through systems of classification. In the case of African material culture, these systems were based on ethnic

groupings or, more correctly, on definitions devised by outsiders of what constituted ethnic or cultural groups. In the process of classification many intangible aspects of meaning, and the fluidity of meaning, were eclipsed by imposed boundaries or categories. An object stood for the culture of a defined ethnic group – for example, a Zulu spear in the old South African Museum represented Zulu culture. History was perceived in Euro-centric terms and related to imperial and colonial history. African history tended to be reduced to timeless tradition.

Research and field collecting were aimed at building up systematic collections of artefacts, documented with information from selected informants. In museum exhibitions, material culture was treated as an end in itself, with representative artefacts displayed according to the categories in the accepted classification systems, and organized by geographic distribution, with little or no historical context. African material culture implicitly conveyed intangible elements but this was not emphasised. As alluded to above, with the amalgamation of Iziko the name 'Social History Collections' was chosen for the integrated material culture collections rather than 'Cultural History', in order to emphasize that museum objects are not ends in themselves. Even though they may have intrinsic value, they are manifestations of intangible relationships between people and things. They are tangible embodiments of intangible ideas and practices.

In current practice at Iziko there is a focus on cultural diversity and indigenous knowledge, and on the relationship of collections to broader processes in South

African history. There is an emphasis on both tangible and intangible relationships between the people and the natural environment, and the complex uses of cultural and natural resources by people of different communities over time. The previously ignored voices of the San people were given space in new exhibitions, such as */Qe. The Power of Rock Art*, which, in December 2003, replaced the dated, permanent *Bushmen* rock paintings exhibition that had remained unchanged for over 80 years. This new display of authentic, original, San rock art containing, among other things, the image that appears in the centre of South Africa's new national Coat of Arms, represents a unique opportunity for understanding intangible heritage. The new exhibition focuses on the belief systems of the San people as expressed through their paintings and engravings that are found throughout southern Africa. This tangible heritage of San rock art is a silent testimony to the once widespread presence of hunter-gatherers in the African sub-continent. The silence, however, is broken in the exhibition by the voices of contemporary San people, who are reclaiming the heritage of their ancestors¹⁰. An original work of San rock art now appears in the centre of South Africa's new national Coat of Arms (Fig. 1).

Ethnographic classifications have been critically reviewed and historicised, representing a paradigm shift that was demonstrated in *Democracy X*, which opened in April 2004 at the Iziko site at the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town. This exhibition, rated in the autumn 2004 issue of the *Royal Academy Magazine* among the top 15

exhibitions around the world, did not concentrate on classifications. Instead, our curators allowed the objects on show to evoke multiple meanings, while the intangible dimensions of language, poetry and song were incorporated into the narrative.

In accordance with the Iziko vision and mission, which is to manage and promote Iziko's unique combination of South Africa's heritage collections, sites and services for the benefit of present and future generations, the Social History Collections Division sees the development of representations of intangible heritage at Iziko in years to come as follows:

- Indigenous knowledge systems and intangible heritage will play a growing part in museum interpretations.
- The intangible dimensions of existing and new collections will be explored and recognized more fully.
- Using new technology, collections that give tangible form to the intangible aspects of culture, such as oral history and music, will be developed.
- With Iziko museums as meeting-places of cultures, living heritage will be embraced and our sites will provide forums for engagement across cultural boundaries.
- As noted above, descendant communities were participants in the development of the rock art exhibition at Iziko SA Museum. This approach is also being pursued at Iziko's Bo-Kaap Museum, where

Figure 3: Women of the Bo-Kaap community in conversation with anthropologist, Gerald Klinghardt, at an event focused on using historical photographs in Iziko collections to elicit memories of the Bo-kaap.



new exhibitions are being developed in partnership with members of the Muslim community who are keepers of their own cultural knowledge and intangible heritage (Fig. 2).

- Iziko will play an advocacy role in emphasizing the importance of preserving intangible heritage for future generations.

Like Iziko's other divisions, its Art Collections Division also believes in the power of the visual to make the intangible tangible. With reference to the relationship of the controversial exhibition of 1996, *Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture*, at what is now the Iziko South African National Gallery, its director prior to amalgamation emphasised 'that the exhibition and the book were not about 'Bushman', but a critical and visual exploration of the term and the various relationships that gave rise to it¹¹. In line with its new policy of re-imagining arts and culture in the new South Africa, the gallery stimulated and challenged visitors through the Miscast displays and public programmes to rethink the state of Khoi-San studies locally and abroad. It raised critical questions. Who was writing their history? Who was telling their tales? Who spoke on their behalf and claimed the right to represent them? For Marilyn Martin, Director of the SA National Gallery at the time,

.... the exhibition served as a reminder to acknowledge and preserve San rock art as part of our South African heritage. Furthermore, the exhibition allowed the tensions that existed in museums – between what was displayed, how it was displayed, what was in storage and what was available for study purposes – to come to the fore... intended as a visual confrontation of the 'Bushman diorama' at the South African Museum¹².

Concomitantly, though the catalogue published at the time did not use the term 'intangible heritage,' it alerted its readers to the fact that the Bleek and Lloyd archive of 13,000 pages of records contained *the memories of cultures and traditions which were fatally threatened*¹³. Traces of the multiple meanings of recollection were uncovered in the introduction to the catalogue when Skotnes reminded the reader –

...that there is not just one narrative, nor one history, nor even one past, but that our knowledge of other

realities is most severely limited when we limit the formal framework that we choose to employ in understanding them¹⁴.

A more recent partnership art exhibition in 2003 at the Iziko SA National Art Gallery, *Coexistence: Contemporary cultural production in South Africa*, also had an intangible heritage dimension to it. This exhibition examined the state of coexistence as it pertained to the visual arts in general and the gallery's permanent collection in particular. The curator's premise was that the arts were making a significant contribution to social transformation in the country. A subtext of the exhibition was that whereas in the apartheid years many artists were working in the western high art tradition – the majority of them white – raising individual voices in protest through powerful 'resistance art,' some politically-concerned artists now work collectively to contribute to the alleviation of poverty and to promote awareness of HIV/Aids. In the process, artists-initiated projects are harnessing the untapped creative voices of some of the most disadvantaged of the country's citizens.

Sue Williamson's exhibition *Can't forget, Can't remember* involved the viewer in testimonies through the manipulation of imagery and soundtrack whereas William Kentridge's *Shadow Procession* continued to delve into history and memory, producing haunting drawings and videos against which human stories of growth, exploitation, and pain are told¹⁵.

Iziko's Division of Education and Public Programmes, in collaboration with the other three core functions divisions – Art, Natural and Social History Collections – is championing a mind shift from educating the public about research and museum objects as ends in themselves, to the use of research and objects as resources to facilitate learning¹⁶. Through facilitating an awareness of intangible heritage, the division has become increasingly conscious of its importance within a South African nation-building context. In this regard the education programmes at Iziko are informed by knowledge and experience of the struggle for political liberation.

Under apartheid, museums, theatres and galleries were considered to be alien, uninviting, privileged spaces which did little to cater for or attract black and poor audiences. Instead, communities representing these audiences often found themselves to be the subject of scientific and anthropological study. In post-apartheid South Africa, however, this view has been seriously

challenged. The recognition of museums as public spaces of engagement has opened up a range of opportunities for curators, collection managers and educators, amongst others, to confront these challenges afresh. More especially because the discourses around indigenous knowledge systems, and nation-building as the subtext to that, have collectively placed the challenge of engaging the public in a meaningful way at the forefront of debates around access, relevance and the representative nature of museum collections and acquisition practices. In this regard, Iziko, as an African museum of excellence, wishes to be among the leading agencies of change externally and internally in both post-colonial and post-apartheid contexts.

Conclusion

As South Africa enters its second decade of democracy,

awareness of intangible heritage has grown and become more widely acknowledged in museum discourse. A number of local and national museum conferences have addressed this theme, and the forthcoming AFRICOM meeting in Cape Town in October 2006 will again invite engagement on this topic. Acknowledging intangible heritage in South Africa is an integral part of changing perspectives on what constitutes the cultural heritage of the nation. In this context, museums have a vital role to play. Iziko is only in the initial stages of integrating intangible heritage into its exhibitions and public programmes, but a foundation has been laid. Over the next three years Iziko faces the challenge of giving tangible expression to the commitment to focus on intangible heritage throughout its fourteen museums. In this way Iziko will be true to its vision to respect the diverse heritage of all South Africans. 🇷🇺

NOTES

1. Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), Pretoria. *White Paper* (4 June 1996), p.29.
http://www.dac.gov.za/legislation_policies/white_paper_on_arts_culture_heritage.html
2. Cultural Institutions Act, 1998. *Republic of South Africa Government Gazette*,
www.dac.gov.za/legislation_policies/acts/Orb-Cultural_Institutions_Act.htm and Cultural Laws Second Amendment Act, 2001
http://www.dac.gov.za/legislation_policies/acts/Orb-Cultural_Laws_Second_Amendment_Act.htm
3. Deacon Harriet, et al, 2003. Legal and Financial Instruments for Safeguarding our Intangible Heritage, p.4.
HSRC paper presented to INCP-RIPC (Croatia, October 2003).
4. *ibid*, p.7
5. UNESCO, 17 October 2003. *Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/00132525/1325/13254e.pdf>
6. see Bredekamp, Henry C Jatti, 2004. The South African National Oral History and Indigenous Music Programmes in a Decade of Democracy, 1994-2004, *International Congress on Archives, 23 – 29 August 2004* (Vienna, Austria)
7. SAHRA, *Annual Report 2003/2004*, pp.18-23
8. *see Robben Island Annual Report 2003/2004*
9. The greater part of this section contains information generously provided by Dr Patricia Davison, since July 2005, Iziko's Executive Director: Core Functions
10. Personal communication from Patricia Davison,
11. Personal communication from Marilyn Martin, Director: Iziko Art Collections Division
12. *ibid*.
13. Skotnes Pippa (Ed.) 1996. *Miscast: Negotiating the presence of the Bushmen*, (Cape Town: UCT Press) p.23
14. *ibid*
15. Martin, Marilyn 2003. Under the Cultural Microscope: Redefining the National Art Museum in a changing South Africa in Allara, Pamela et al, 2003. *Coexistence: Contemporary cultural production in South Africa*, (Brandeis University) p.19
16. Personal communication from Vivienne Carelse, Director: Iziko Education and Public Programmes Division

08 *Inspiration Africa!* Using Tangible and Intangible Heritage to Promote Social Inclusion Amongst Young People with Disabilities

Viv Golding

Lecturer, Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, UK

Inspiration Africa! Using Tangible and Intangible Heritage to Promote Social Inclusion Amongst Young People with Disabilities

● Viv Golding

Lecturer, Department of Museum Studies,
University of Leicester, UK

ABSTRACT

How can we make meaningful connections between diverse museum audiences, tangible artifacts and the intangible historico-cultural traditions from which they sprang? Does the anthropology collection have a productive role in the UK government agenda on social inclusion for children with disabilities? What is the value of employing new theoretical perspectives and partnerships at the frontiers between the museum and the school? This paper explores these questions and the deeper issues surrounding them through *Inspiration Africa!* a project to benefit learning-disabled children, involving the Horniman Museum and twelve schools in South East London.

Introduction: aims and structure

In the socio-cultural landscape of the twenty-first century the museum has power. The museum has the power of sanctuary, shrine, place of knowledge, forum and a vital role in democracy. This paper will focus on the power of the anthropology museum, the tangible and intangible collections, as a forum for democratic exchange to promote social inclusion and community cohesion amongst young people with disabilities. The museum, as it will show, has the potential to function as a zone where learning is created, new identities are forged and new connections are made between disparate groups and their own histories. In some cases, tangible and intangible collections will be shown to have a new and more positive power - to help disadvantaged groups of young people with disabilities to raise their self-esteem.

This paper is divided into two main sections. First, there is a definition of key terminology and a description of the theoretical underpinnings of the *Inspiration Africa!* project on which this paper is based. This was a two-year, £72,000 project funded by the Department for Education and Employment. It involved twelve schools and the *African Worlds* gallery of the Horniman Museum in South East London, an area of rich cultural diversity but one suffering from extreme levels of economic deprivation. In the second part of the paper the creative work of the young people from two of the twelve schools is used to illustrate the value of constructivism in informing museum/school partnerships. Finally there are some concluding remarks and recommendations for future project work at other locations.

Terminology

a) Intangible heritage and tangible heritage

In October 2003, at its 32nd General Conference, UNESCO produced a working definition of intangible cultural heritage, which highlighted:

... the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and it provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. (UNESCO, 2003: 4) [my underlinings for emphasis]

I emphasise three main points from this definition. Firstly, the importance of tangible objects *as well as* the practices associated with their production and use. An idea, which seems to mark a *both and* feminist approach, as distinct from the *either or* of dualist thought (Golding 2000). Secondly, the notion of *constantly recreating* is vital, as creativity and creating something new is central to this paper. The paper does not speak of the sterile processes involved in any simple reproduction of cultural objects and echoes Fanon's warning against the desire of colonized societies to preserve *mummified fragments* of culture (Fanon 1993: 41). Finally, it is argued that embedding both tangible and intangible aspects in a complex peopled domain strengthens an individual and community *identity*, while

pointing to a wider shared humanity, which promotes *respect for cultural diversity* or intercultural understanding at a global level.

My thesis here also leans on Giovanni Pinna's paper for ICOM News (Pinna 2004). Pinna notes the *indefinite boundaries between* - expressive objects, the language and the oral tradition from which they emerge, as well as the symbolic and metaphorical meanings attached to objects that derive from their histories and the interpretations to which the museum contributes through the exhibition process prompting the visitor's individual interpretation. Pinna's comments helpfully raise the perspective of the museum visitor and their personal 'meaning-making' alongside curatorial intentions. While the visitors' initial interpretations, according to constructivism, are based on prior knowledge, personal background and the socio-cultural group they belong to, Pinna reminds us that the museums' strategies of display and operational practices are also inevitably influenced by wider socio-philosophical factors. (Hein 1999; Macdonald 1996). Since the 1970s, motivated in part by the post-colonial demands of previously subjugated people, museums in the West seem to be moving from their traditional position as temples of cultural authority to a more dynamic forum of exchange and debate. In this new location museums are increasingly engaged in self-reflexivity and raising *questions about knowledge and power, about identity and difference, and about permanence and transience* (Macdonald 1996: 1-2).

In the light of Macdonald's questions this paper will explore a creative zone between tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Specifically, it will examine the personal responses of learning-disabled pupils to a new framing of knowledge on African objects from the Horniman's *African Worlds* exhibition.

b) Special educational needs: medical and social models

Four of the twelve schools involved in the *Inspiration Africa!* project were exclusively for pupils with learning disabilities and two of the mainstream secondary schools were located in Educational Action Zones (EAZs) where almost one third of the pupils had learning disabilities. *Inspiration Africa!* pupils had a range of learning disabilities and throughout the project's team leaders worked in *effective partnership* to facilitate activities disabled pupils might *do with support*, rather than focus on *what they can't do* (Valuing People 2004: 14). As team leaders we developed educational programmes for disabled pupils that were characterised by high expectations for all. We recognised that pupils with disabilities may take longer to learn new skills and grasp complex information but were determined to give them as much choice and control over their project work as possible.

The Horniman partnership worked with the social model of disability, which points to the social construction of disability and false ideas of normality within the creation of capitalism (Barnes 2002). The social model highlights social barriers and environmental issues, and

locates problems and prejudices within the minds of able-bodied people, individually or collectively (Oliver 1996). This model is distinct from the medical or individual model, which is influenced by biological determinism and focuses on medically orientated control, 'care and cure' agendas (Oliver 1996).

Employing an appropriate model and terminology was regarded as crucial to the success of the project. Since language work was central to many project activities, disabling labels were interrogated and terms such as 'handicap' were avoided as denoting passivity. The language activities were enjoyed by the pupils who simply wanted to be included in ordinary activities and not always seen as 'special' (Valuing People 2001: 11).

In the UK 1 in 4 families have a disabled member and 8.7 million disabled people, or 15% of the population, are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The DDA was passed in 1995 to enshrine the rights of disabled people to social inclusion and highlight the responsibilities of employers as service providers. By October 2004 the DDA requires *reasonable access* to buildings, and institutions such as museums will need to ensure their policies, procedures and practices enable



Figure 1: Benin bronze plaque from Nigeria: African Worlds Exhibition,

access for all members of society. Throughout the ten years that I worked at the Horniman – from 1992 – the museum offered a range of auxiliary aids and services for disabled visitors, including ramps, loops and Braille labels. They were therefore reasonably well prepared to address the new Labour government agenda based on *social inclusion, civil rights, choice and independence* (Valuing People 2001: 14).

c) Social inclusion, social exclusion and community cohesion

In 1997 the Social Exclusion Unit established by the 'New' Labour government defined social exclusion in holistic terms. The term 'Social Exclusion' was intended to replace the concept of 'poverty' to encompass holistically *what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown* (www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/ (17, September 2003). At the time of writing this paper, the latest government report Tackling Social Exclusion importantly returns the discussion to the earlier emphasis on the economic basis of social exclusion, as passed through families from one low income generation to the next and effects certain high risk groups, including people from 'ethnic minorities' and people with 'disabilities', which the *Inspiration Africa!* project targeted www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/tackling, 10, October 2004: 4)

While *Inspiration Africa!* cannot claim to have alleviated the wider problems of economic deprivation the participants certainly developed a range of skills, which is one key factor highlighted by the government documents. The Horniman Museum also became the sort of location that David Fleming helpfully attached to the government definition of social inclusion in the museum context, *one that inspires and uplifts people, that confronts them with ideas, that helps them understand a little more about themselves and their surroundings* (Fleming 2002: 224).

I further argue that *Inspiration Africa!* enabled the Horniman to utilise cultural objects, *things of quality*, to progress social cohesion (Smith 1998: 37). Social cohesion, according to Chris Smith, the Labour Minister for Culture's recommendation, is dependent upon two factors. Firstly making available ... *cultural experience and activity ... to the many not just the few* (ibid). Secondly, linking these cultural experiences to an understanding that certain aspects, which determine identity

construction, are shared in common across cultural divides. As Smith noted –

... developing our own individual sense of identity through cultural experience, and touching a sense of shared identity through shared cultural emotion, must be achievable by everyone, no matter what their circumstances or class background or location may be. (Smith 1998: 37) [my emphasis]

Smith later contends that it is exclusion from *a sense of shared identity* that weakens communal bonds and leads to a fragmentation of society. During *Inspiration Africa!* the Horniman was able to illustrate British society as a *community of communities* through creatively connecting its African cultural artifacts and the intangible oral traditions with the lived experience of UK pupils (Parekh Report 2000: 3). *Inspiration Africa!* was a pro-active project that emphasised the responsibility and role of the museum as agency on the Government's inclusion and cohesion agenda.

d) Learning-disabled pupils access the National Curriculum

In reaching out to excluded audiences and developing innovative ways of encouraging intercultural understanding, it was crucial to work within the access guidelines of the National Curriculum for England. The guidelines state three principles that are essential to developing an inclusive curriculum. These are *Setting suitable learning challenges, responding to pupils' diverse learning needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils*. Adhering imaginatively to these guidelines enabled the key aim of the National Curriculum, to *provide opportunities for all children to learn and to achieve a high degree of success*, by offering *varied teaching approaches that build on diverse interests and experiences, matching challenges of work to the pupils' skills* and ensuring a degree of *success* (National Curriculum 2000).

Inspiration Africa! project work aimed to promote four key skills. Firstly, *communication: speaking and listening, reading and writing a range texts*. Secondly, *working with others, contributing to discussion, valuing different perspectives, cooperating and meeting challenges together*. Thirdly, *creative thinking, extending ideas and using imagination*. Finally, *evaluation, valuing, have confidence in judgments*. The project work outlined in the

next section will clarify the relationship of communication in the English curriculum to the museum context.

Stories, histories and a Benin plaque

The *Inspiration Africa!* team-leaders at Marjorie McClure School (Special Educational Needs) included Sola Oyelele (writer/storyteller), Tony Minion (artist), Jacqui Callis (ICT specialist), and myself (museum educator). I had deliberately selected a multi-racial team, who all felt a strong resonance or personal affinity with the museum objects as well as a determination to employ them as part of an educational agenda to challenge racism in contemporary multi-cultural Britain. The composition of my team follows research findings which demonstrate that if the curriculum and the people who deliver it positively reflect multi-racial society, this has a positive effect even on the most disaffected audiences - who are too often African-Caribbean boys (Golding 2000).

Marjorie McClure School is situated in the London Borough of Bromley and the school population is predominantly white working class. Research shows there is an even more urgent need for anti-racist, multi-cultural education in areas such as this, where media stereotypes and misunderstandings persist partly because diverse communities never actually meet. Working in partnership, we selected a Benin plaque from Nigeria as the key object for creative work with Marjorie McClure pupils in Year 7, who are aged between 11 and 12 years old, and the word 'Stories' was chosen as their key theme.

Throughout the *African Worlds* exhibition at the Horniman, and on a website link, there is an excellent text accompanying the objects and providing valuable new research information. This was written by the 4-person Anthropology Advisory Panel (AAP). The AAP comprised African, Caribbean and UK scholars - Emanuel Arinze, Joseph Eboime, Catherine Chan and Anthony Shelton. In their Benin text the AAP highlight positive features of the socio-cultural background in which the object was made. For example Benin is described as a *powerful and sophisticated West African Kingdom, founded in the 11th century by the Edo people, which commanded great respect from the early Portuguese visitors in the late 15th and early 16th centuries*. The text also traces the purchase of the plaque to events *in the late 19th century when British soldiers destroyed its capital and looted the city of its rich art*

traditions which, tragically and ironically, first alerted Europe to the level and range of achievement of Benin artists. This text, written for a reading age of 16+ years was not immediately accessible to our pupils with learning disabilities and so the Inspiration Africa! team leaders developed achievable language activities to build on the pupils' *diverse interests and experiences* (National Curriculum 2000).

At Marjorie McClure *Inspiration Africa!* team leaders introduced the project on day one through the concept of naming. At the outset, just under the header, the museum text explains the plaque was made by an, *unknown craftsman*, but later in the third paragraph of the text panel a Chief is mentioned by name, Uwangué. Using this information the pupils began to learn about the importance of naming for all cultural groups, including the Edo speaking people of Benin City in Nigeria who made the plaques. They were able to draw similarities between the histories of the UK and Nigeria, which record the most powerful people and the events of their lives. Then Sola spoke about her recent visit to Benin City where the oral tradition of storytelling with musical performance is still strong and she led a name game where name sounds were invented.

Sola started the game by using her own name 'Sola' and asked the group to imagine wind whistling through the trees calling her name, shhhhhoooooolllllaaaa. Everyone enjoyed practicing 'wind talk' around Sola's name and soon felt confident to try experimenting with their own names, which included Chris - the sound of someone biting an apple, Sarah - ssssnake, Thomas - steam train and Viv - vruuuuuu vacuuuum cleaner! This initial work established a fun framework for the project and set all the participants at their ease, since enjoyment and feeling comfortable are vital factors necessary to promote learning (Hein 1999).

Next the group mind-mapped the name of the project *Inspiration Africa!* and decided inspiration means excitement or being interested in something. Then individuals and small groups of pupils played musical instruments, part of the *African Worlds* gallery 'hands on' collection, which always arouses 'minds on' interest (Hein 1999).

'Minds on' activities with museum objects are designed to extend quality looking and promote critical thinking about the contextual information attached to the object and the wider socio-political world of past and present times from which the object emerged. For all

pupils, including those with learning disabilities, understanding of the past is never complete but always partial and never instantaneous but takes time. During *Inspiration Africa!* work at Marjorie McClure the team-leaders developed creative tasks that would enable pupils to extend the period of looking and thinking, and ways of connecting their increasing understanding of objects originating from the ancient Benin Kingdom, Nigeria, with their everyday life experiences in London, UK. Creative writing consistently proved a fruitful means of achieving this.

For example, working from musical instruments Sola encouraged the pupils to think of words that expressed music and they wrote acrostic poems. To write an acrostic poem, a word is written lengthways down a page and each letter is used to start the first line of the poem. This simple structure is a helpful way of working on language activities with all pupils in the museum context and is especially productive with learning disabled groups. The pupils wrote a joint acrostic poem on the whiteboard before writing their own poems. They used their names to describe favourite things in their own lives, to begin making personal present day connections with objects, which aids understanding of the past. Two examples of Majorie McClure's 'name' and 'things I like' poems illustrate this work.

Charli likes football
Harry Potter is my favourite book
Arsenal is my team
Riding my bike is fun
Lots of toys are great to play with
I like my friends in G3B and G3A

Nigel
Is twelve, he
Goes to school, he
Eats fish and chips and ketchup at
Lunchtime

In the afternoon of day one the pupils used the school's excellent internet facilities to look at their 'key object,' the Benin plaque, which they would be seeing at the museum on day two of the project. According to the museum text the plaque shows Chief Uwangué *wearing ceremonial dress of coral headdress and necklace, pea bell anklets and highly decorated skirt*. At this time the pupils also explored a modern museum plaque made

especially for the handling collection, which represented Oba Ohen with similar ceremonial dress and mudfish legs. Mudfish are commonly used to denote the supreme power of the Oba over the land as well as over the watery sea realms of the God Olokun. This plaque enabled everyone to feel the textures of the sculpture and was vital in allowing one blind pupil to access the curriculum (Picton 1995: 399). Discussion of the mythical story prompted the pupils' own imaginative writing.

The museum object and the text prompted the team leaders to provide original African garments, specially purchased from Markets in Brixton London, Lagos, Nigeria and Kumasi Ghana, which permitted the pupils to literally 'try on' aspects of another culture. Whilst the children were dressed up Sola gave them parts and told the story of *How music came to the world*. This story, from the Yoruba people of Nigeria, is about a talented young man who was the drummer for his village and whose family name is prefixed by Ayan, which Sola explained meant he came from a drumming family. The story ended with the whole class playing music together again.

After break Year 7 looked at the materials and technologies of Benin plaque production, using the complicated 'lost-wax' process which the pupils saw illustrated in a video. The children drew the musical instruments and representations of the sounds that they made. They waved their hands to form the shapes made by the instruments before drawing them. Then Tony demonstrated the screen-printing process and the pupils worked from their drawings, simplifying, enlarging, cutting out shapes and placing them on to fabric to create their own banner. Raffia and wool were also used to create patterns that represented the sounds made by the instruments. The screens were placed over the images and the pupils painted freely through the screen. The banner was printed twice with the first print using cold colours and the second print using warm colour, work which offered an opportunity to discuss the colour of the metal that the Benin plaques are made from - a warm 'red', the colour of life-blood, that the Edo people specially prize. This dialogue was prompted again by part of the museum text on the plaque material, *reserved for royalty ... enduring and permanent*, and its red and shiny qualities were believed to be *protective of the king and the kingdom*. At the end of the session the class posed in front of their banner.



Figure 2: Children's art: Mrs Doubtfire (Watercolour)

Figure 3: Children's art: Mrs Doubtfire (Drawing)

When Jaqui documented this day she asked the class to suggest some captions for the photographic record that the team leaders were in the habit of making, since images of individuals and groups with the handling objects often prompt memories and further creative activity. The pupils made some lively comments that Jaqui recorded on tape. The following are taken as illustrating the variety of feelings.

In this picture I am playing the drum - it is called a talking drum. On my head I am wearing a brightly coloured hat. Sola put the cloth on my head. It felt BAD! playing the drum.

It sounds like music boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Nice. Noise. The stick moves bam! The strings moving boonder! boonder! boonder! la, la, la, la, la, la. I WAS EXCITED, LOOK AT ME!!!!

I like the African hat from the Horniman museum. In this picture I look pretty and I'm enjoying myself. I think I will enjoy the project.

My friend dressed up as a Queen and wore some very colourful clothes. Then we played the instruments after, I played the shaker.

Tony is holding the screen-printing. We printed a shaker - blue, red, orange, yellow. I like Tony - because I JUST DO.

There was a strong sense of irritation in this last remark, which shows a pupil, at the end of a long tiring

day, exasperated by the effort of extended dialogue and the work of evaluation demanded by the National Curriculum. This provided a salutary lesson for team leaders, who reminded themselves that, just as museum text can be too long and prevent successful communication, so can museum activities!

On day two of the project the school visited the Horniman Museum and the pupils talked about the 'stories' on the Benin plaques as illustrations of important events from the history of the Benin people. 'Stories' was their key word and Sola talked about where you can find them. She also asked about their favourite stories and things to draw and write about, reinforcing the work on favourite things they had started on the introduction day. Taking every opportunity to reinforce learning has proved especially important for pupils with learning disabilities, and the desire to repeat the pleasurable experiences triggered by the object handling made this a simple task.

At the museum Sola told two stories from memories of her family life in Nigeria, called *Pepper Soup* and *The Bike Ride*, which led the class to discuss where stories can come from - Africa, around the world, Bromley, home, brain or imagination and memories; where you can find stories - in books, comics, magazines, from parents, grandparents and other family members, artists and teachers; favourite stories - Cinderella, Goldilocks, Pokemon, Matilda, the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe; favourite things - buildings, pets, cats, dogs, dalmation, beagle and people. At the end of the session the pupils were asked to bring in a funny story from home to work on in the project.

These stories were developed throughout the week

and read out at the beginning of day four. Some were written and some recorded onto audio tape. The stories were later illustrated and transferred onto screens to be printed and also scanned into computers to be worked on digitally. Two stories are provided below as representative of this work.

Mrs. Doubtfire

One day it was my brother's anniversary and my nan had some curlers in her hair and I said 'I got a nickname for you nan, Mrs. Doubtfire!' My brother had a camera and he sneaked round the door and he took a picture of her and her face dropped down to the floooooooooooooo.....

The Flower

About four years ago I was a bridesmaid for Mrs. Cox. I had to wear a nice dress that was cream and light green. I also wore cream shoes. I got dressed and ready at my home, and then I went to Mrs. Cox's home to meet her and the other bridesmaid. I had really long shiny curly hair, they put a big fresh flower in my hair. When we were all ready we got into the very posh car and drove to the church. On our way there Mrs. Cox had to keep placing my flower back into my hair, because it kept slipping down as my hair was so shiny. In the end as it did not want to stay in my hair, Mrs. Cox tucked it into my waistband.

On day four of the project Sola also did a 'too big for' frame poem. A frame poem provides a structure for pupils to complete their ideas, in this case 'I'm too big for ...' First Sola asked: 'What are we too big for?' The class

answered – we are too big for chocolate, too big for sitting on the potty, too big for sucking dummies. Then the team leaders pointed out that we are never too big for museums, just to amuse the group, and everyone made up a line for Sola. Finally Sola talked about language and how we say things like 'you know what I mean' at the end of sentences. From this Sola made up a poem song/game and all of the class did a round.

Person 1 says 'I'm too big for sucking my thumb.'

Person 2 says 'I'm too big for Bob the Builder.'

Person 3 says 'I'm too big for lower school.'

Then, all together, they say:

'You know yeah, you know yeah,

I'm too big for that yeah.

I'm too big for that you know, I'm too big for that yeah.'

All the pupils involved in *Inspiration Africa!* had the opportunity to evaluate each day of their project work through interviews or specially designed forms provided on the internet. Some work sheet forms gave pupils the opportunity to choose a photograph, write a caption for it and send it to our Cloth of Gold website. The following comments describe their favourite parts of the project and things they would like to have been different.

The screen-printing was good and the writing was good. It was hard writing the poem because I had to do something personal and I only tell people that I trust.

My favourite part was doing the drawings and screen-printing with Tony. I have really enjoyed this project, I wish it didn't have to end but mum says all good things come to an end.



Figure 4: Children's art: The Flower (Drawing)



Figure 5: Children's art: The Flower (Watercolour)

This pupil's family, along with the families of her classmates in Year 7, became regular visitors to the Horniman, despite living at a considerable distance away in Bromley. It could therefore be argued that while one project ended for one school group, the positive project experiences were a motivating factor in cultural inclusion for their wider family groups.

Conclusion

In this paper I have aimed to make a strong case for the museum to facilitate the use of tangible museum objects and intangible oral tradition as triggers to creative dialogue for pupils with learning disabilities, who are among the most socially excluded groups in the UK (Valuing People 2001). This 'both/and' approach to the curriculum was viewed as an appropriate learning pathway for everyone, regardless of age or ability levels, to access culture and promote inter-cultural understanding, although the paper demonstrated that object-centred discussions were particularly motivating for pupils who were under-achieving academically or in danger of becoming disaffected' since it offered a high degree of academic success.

Success was achieved during *Inspiration Africa!* through the social experience of opening pupils' minds to critical thinking based on an idea of learning that included close multi-sensory work with African objects and discussing ideas alongside feelings to interrogate what is considered 'fact' about Africa in the contemporary museum and the media, and, most importantly, making creative connections between the communities the objects emerged from and the daily lives of the pupils. Overall *Inspiration Africa!* work at the museum and school frontiers provided a symbolic forum space to affirm positive new identities for individuals, as well as a notion that aspects of cultural identity and values are shared in common amongst people of the world.

In practical terms, other museum sites concerned with extending socially excluded pupils' communication

skills and literacy levels, are recommended to use the key word, acrostic poem and sentence frame techniques outlined in this paper. These simple, low cost and effective techniques have been developed in a creative partnership, which opened the museum to a range of alternative voices and positively affected cultural inclusion in South London. Other museums at other locations are advised to engage in museum/school partnerships, to develop other ideas and to disseminate them via their museum websites, their local universities or the professional journals. We all benefit by pooling good resources.

Finally, this short paper was only able to outline some main points but further information can be found in three sources. Firstly the independent qualitative evaluation, which confirmed the success of the project work in terms of raising the students self esteem and achievement (Clarke et al 2001). Secondly at the website <http://www.clothofgold.org.uk/archive> where a wealth of images and details of all 12 projects can be found. Thirdly, I would be very pleased to share ideas and enthusiasms by email at vmg4@le.ac.uk, since I believe the museums of the world have a role in increasing democracy and progressing social equality amongst global citizens. Let the pupil's comment 'all good things come to an end' actually mark a series of fertile new beginnings.

Acknowledgements: I am extremely grateful to the British Academy for awarding me a travel grant to attend the ICOM General Conference in Seoul, 2004. I also extend my most sincere thanks to the members of ICOM International Committee for Museum and Collections of Ethnography (ICME) in Seoul for thoughtful comments on my presentation of these ideas there, to Anthony Shelton and Janet Vitmayer at the Horniman for their scholarship and support, and finally to all the Inspiration Africa! team-leaders and participants for such generous sharing during the two years of this project. 🇬🇧

REFERENCES

- Barnes, C., Mercer G., & Shakespeare, T., 2002. *Exploring Disability: A Sociological Introduction* (London: Polity Press)
- Clarke, A. et al (editors), 2001. *Inspiring Learning* (Leicester University: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries)
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. and Hermanson, K., 2000, 'Intrinsic motivation in museums: why does one want to learn', pp. 146 – 160 in Hooper-Greenhill, E., 2000. (editor) *The Educational Role of the Museum*, (London: Routledge).
- Department of Health, 2001. *Valuing People: A new Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century, A White Paper* (London: The Stationary Office)
- Fanon, F., 1993. *Black Skin, White Masks*, (London: Pluto Press)
- Fleming, D., 2001, 'Positioning the Museum for Social Inclusion', in Sandell, R., (editor), 2001. *Museums, Society, Inequality* (London: Routledge)
- Golding, V., 2000. *New Voices and Visibilities at the Museum Frontiers*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester
- Hein, G., 1999, *Learning in Museums* (London: Routledge)
- Macdonald, S., 1996, Introduction in Macdonald, S., and Fyfe, G., *Theorising Museums* (Oxford: Blackwell)
- Oliver, M. 1996, *Understanding Disability: From Theory to Practice* (Basingstoke: Macmillan)
- Parekh, B., 2002, *The Future of a Multi-Ethnic Britain, The Parekh Report*, Profile Books, London
- Pinna. G., 'Intangible Heritage and Museums' ICOM News 2004, No 4
- Picton, J., 1995, 'West Africa and the Guinea Coast' in Philips, T., (editor) *Africa Art of a Continent*, Prestel, Munich and New York
- RCMG, 2000, *Learning Through Culture*, University of Leicester
- Rogoff, B., 1990, *Apprenticeship in Thinking: Cognitive development in social context*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Smith, C., 1998, Creative Britain, Faber and Faber, London

WEBSITE REFERENCES

- <http://www.clothofgold.org.uk/archive>
- <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports>
- <http://www.re:source.gov.uk> (now <http://www.mla.gov.uk>)
- <http://www.socialexclusionu.gov.uk/>
- *Tackling Social Exclusion: Taking stock and looking to the future*, 2004, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
- <http://www.valuingpeople.gov.uk/>
- *Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st century, A White Paper*, 2001, Department of Health

Brief Biographies of the Authors

Patrick Boylan (BSc Hull and PhD Leicester) was Professor of Arts Policy and Management at City University London from 1990 to 2004, and on retirement became Professor Emeritus of Heritage Policy and Management. From 1964 to 1990 he held senior positions in English museums and arts organisations, including 18 years as Director of Museums and Arts in Leicestershire. He was the Centenary President of the UK's Museums Association in 1988-1990, and three decades of office with ICOM has included periods as ICOM Vice-President, President of the ICOM Training Committee, Chairman of ICOM UK; he is currently Chairperson of ICOM's Legal Affairs and Properties Committee. His extensive research and publications have ranged over geology, history of science, museums, heritage, music, cultural policy and management, and his MA and PhD supervision has included research on the performing arts and intangible heritage.

Henry Charles 'Jatti' Bredekamp (BA (Hons.) and MA University of the Western Cape (UWC), MA Wesleyan University, Connecticut, USA) started his career as a teacher. He then joined the Institute of Historical Research at UWC as a researcher and in 1990 became its director. Since 2002 he has been CEO of Iziko Museums of Cape Town (to be officially renamed in 2006 as Iziko National Museums of South Africa) He has published extensively on oral history projects and projects related to the documentation of intangible history.

Viv Golding has been Lecturer in Museum Studies and Education at Leicester University since 2001. She has a BA (Hons.) in Art and Design, an Art Teachers Certificate with Art Therapy (Goldsmith's), MAs in Modern Philosophy (Greenwich) and Women's Studies (Westminster) and a PhD in Museum Studies (Leicester). Previously she spent ten years developing educational opportunities at the Horniman Museum, London, and a further twelve years working on arts education programmes in London. International guest lecture, workshop and conference contributions have involved visits to Egypt, Korea, Japan, Portugal, Sweden and Holland. Her recent publications include *Cultural Journeys. Traditions from Africa* (1998), and 'The Museum Clearing: A Metaphor for New Museum Practice' in Atkinson D., and Dash, P. (editors) *Critical and Social Practice in Art Education* (2005).

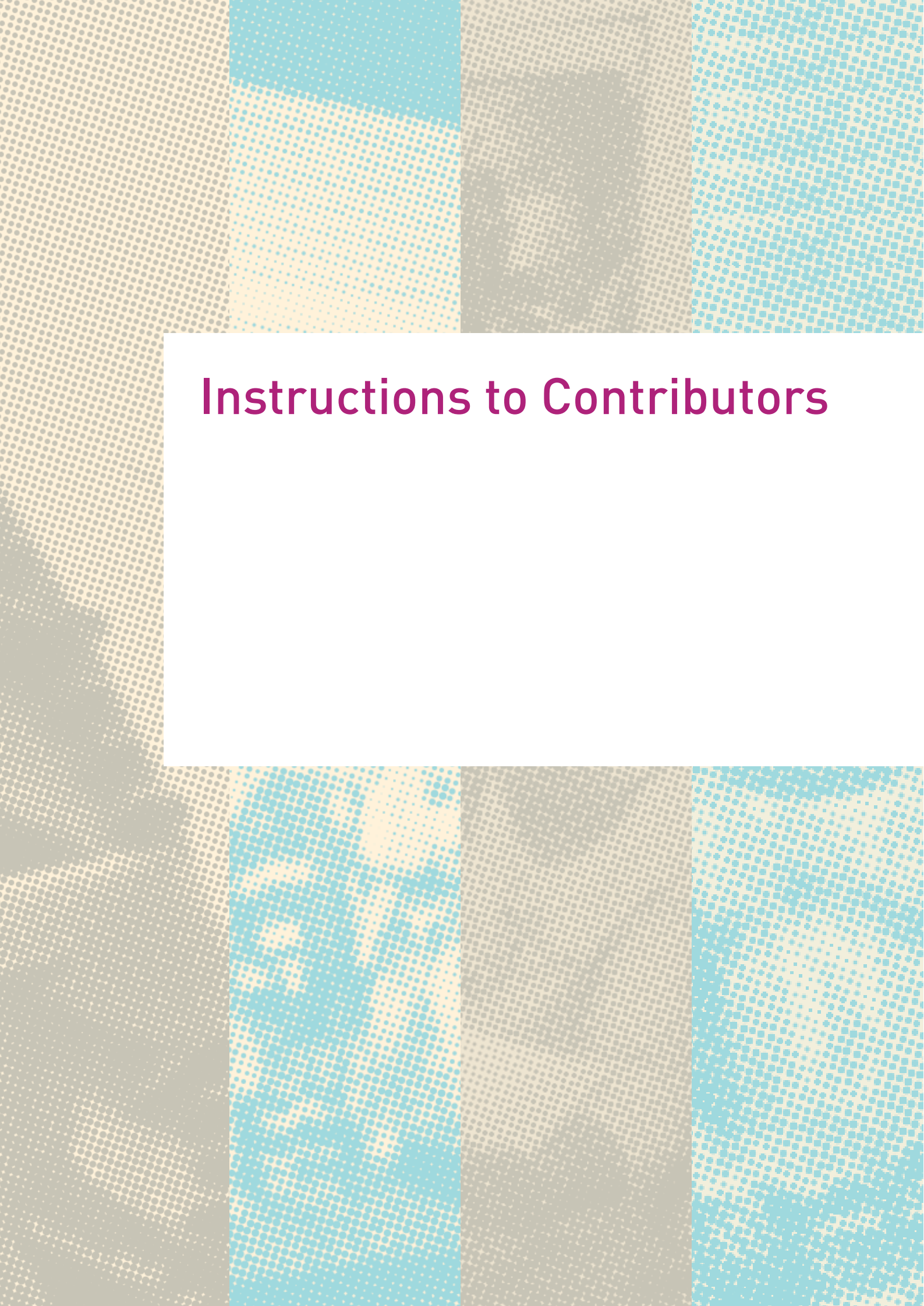
Ngyun Van Huy (BA and PhD Hanoi University) has spent most of his career at the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology and is now its director. He has taken part in numerous research projects both in Vietnam and at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC and has published extensively on ethnological subjects and on his museum.

Uafā Māhina-Tuai (BA in Art History and Anthropology, University of Auckland and MA in Museum and Heritage Studies Victoria University of Wellington) has been Curator of Pacific Cultures at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa since 2004. Her area of research interest is the tangible and intangible heritage of the Pacific with a specific focus on Tonga. One of the areas that she is currently exploring is to investigate how Te Papa can better represent intangible elements of Pacific cultures in its Pacific collections.

Margaret Hart Robertson was born in Scotland and educated at the universities of Glasgow (Scotland), Granada (Spain), Rennes (France) and Lisbon (Portugal). She is now a Senior Lecturer at the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Director of the PhD programme in Integral Tourism Solutions, Intercultural Studies and Sustainable Development. Her main research interests are interpreting communities and consumer psychology with a heavy bias toward neuro-linguistics, image forming, perception and cognitive science, together with intangible heritage. Her latest projects, which included the *Mediterranean Voices* exhibition at the Casa de Colon in Las Palmas in 2004, organised as part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership's Heritage II initiative, are involved with the new role of the museum in society and 'governance.'

Silvia Singer Sochet is a biologist with a doctorate in ecology. She has worked in museums for over 23 years, firstly as a science communicator and later as a conceptual designer. She was one of the team which created *Papalote*, the children's museum in Mexico City, and she has done design work for other museums in Mexico and abroad. Her *Espiral de la Vida* ('Spiral of life') exhibition for the natural history museum in Puerto Rico, now under construction, was awarded a design prize. She was director of the science museums at the National Autonomous University in Mexico (UNAM) and of the Universum Museum and Museo de la Luz (Light Museum). At present she is CEO of mide (the interactive museum of economics of the Fideicomiso del Espacio Cultural y Educativo Betlemitas) located in Mexico City. mide is sponsored by Mexico's Central Bank and will open to the public this year. She is currently Secretary of CECA (the ICOM Committee for Education and Cultural Action) and President of ICOM Mexico a member of the Advisory Committee of ICOM internationally.

Sally Yerkovich has a PhD in cultural anthropology (ethnography and folklore) from the University of Pennsylvania. With over twenty-five years of leadership experience in high profile not-for-profit institutions, she is currently President and Vice Chairman for the Fund for Arts and Culture in Central and Eastern Europe, an organisation that assists cultural organisations by sharing best practices. From 1997 until 2005, she was the President and CEO of the New Jersey Historical Society. Her recent publications include 'Engaging with the Contemporary', *Museum Ireland*, (2005); 'What Exit? New Jersey and its Turnpike', *BIG 42* (2002) and New Jersey and 'Destination: Mypmachk' in *Museum News*, July/August 2002.



Instructions to Contributors

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

Aims and Scope of the Journal:

The *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* aims to play a role as a comprehensive academic journal on the intangible heritage, as defined in Article 2 of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 (see Appendix below). It seeks to promote international communication about research, investigation, conservation, transmission, performance and communication, and the exchange of ideas among scholars, researchers, professionals, educationalist and other practitioners and bodies involved in the intangible heritage sector.

Refereeing (Reviewing):

The *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* is an English language refereed annual journal, which follows standard academic and professional refereeing ('reviewing' in USA terms) practice. All manuscripts that appear to fall within the *Journal's* scope and aims are reported on in detail by at least two members of the Editorial Board, the Editorial Advisory Committee or by other independent experts, as selected by the Editor-in-Chief in consultation with the Board or Advisory Committee as appropriate.

The anonymous referees' reports and recommendations are forwarded to the author (or the corresponding author who originally submitted it, in the case of joint or multiple authorship). The revised manuscript taking into account, or otherwise responding to, the referees' comments and recommendations, should be returned as soon as possible. After this, a final decision on publication will be made by the Editorial Board.

Submission of manuscripts:

Manuscripts submitted should not be under consideration by any other journal or publisher, nor should they have been previously published elsewhere. If a manuscript is based on a lecture, conference paper or talk, specific details of this should accompany the submission. Wherever possible manuscripts should be submitted via e-mail to: the Journal Secretariat <secretariat@ijih.org>. The submitted text may be sent as an attachment to your e-mail message, though the Secretariat has other arrangements that can be used for transferring very large files such as photographs. Please provide mailing addresses (including street address, telephone, fax, and e-mail) as well as the job title and institutional affiliation (where applicable) for each author.

Whatever word processing system is used to produce the manuscript, the final file should then be saved and submitted in unjustified text alignment as a Rich Text Format (RTF) file, with all additional document formatting (such as that of MS Word) removed. The special formatting commands provided in most word processing software, such as MS Word, (e.g. automatic numbering or hyphenation, bullet indents and side-headers, and footnotes or endnotes) are mostly lost or changed when the files is converted to printer's typesetting format. The Editor-in-Chief <editor@ijih.org> will be happy to advise prospective authors on any other details or queries.

Journal design and text:

The primary version is the printed edition, which is on International A4 paper (297 x 210 mm). The web edition consists of downloadable PDF copy of the printed pages. The main body text is typeset in 9.6 point DIN-Light typeface in two equal columns 83.5 mm wide with 8 mm column separation. The page margins are 15 mm top and 23 mm bottom and 15 mm outside and 23

mm inside each page. On each right hand page in addition to the page number the top margin will include a 15 mm deep strip with a running short title header for the current paper (max. 50 characters including spaces). The *Journal* will have a coloured front cover with title, illustration, volume number and date, the *Journal* and imprint details will be inside the front cover, with a brief summary of these Instructions to Authors inside back cover (from volume 2 onwards). Photographs, diagrams or other figures should normally be prepared to either the column width of 83.5 mm or a full printed area page width of 175 mm. The overall size of illustrations will be proportionate to their width.

Manuscript preparation:

The preferred length of main articles is between 4,000 and 6,000 words, excluding notes, bibliography and illustrations. A page of plain text averages around 800 words, and the printed paper will normally be allocated six, eight or ten journal pages according to length and illustrations. Prospective authors should consult the Editorial Board through the Editor-in-Chief (editor@ijih.org) if a longer contribution is proposed. Short communications of up to 2,000 words are also welcome, as are news and reviews items of up to 1,000 words on conferences, publications or projects.

Headers and footers in the manuscript file should be limited to page numbers only. Number every page sequentially from 1 through the last page. Use 1-inch margins on all sides. Do not use full justification: left justify only. Do not change font sizes or styles in various parts of the manuscript. Stick to one font throughout, preferably 12 pt Times New Roman or 11pt Arial. As explained above automatic utilities such as bullet lists, endnotes etc. may well be lost when the file is transferred to printer's typesetting, so please type these in by hand in the place required, and in the case of endnotes place the numbered text in a separate file or annex.

Illustrations:

Wherever possible photographs or other illustrations should be submitted in digital form in either JPEG, EPS or TIFF formats with a final image size to fit either a single column (83 mm wide) (or where appropriate the full printed page width -175 mm). The designer and printer prefer to work with original conventional photographs where possible: either 35mm or 5" x 4" transparencies or colour prints of a minimum of 6 inches x 4 inches (approx. 152 x 82 mm). However, electronic images can be accepted if these are of sufficiently high quality for reproduction to the required standard. Scanned images must be prepared at a resolution of not less than 300 dpi. Digital camera photographs should preferably be taken at a 2048 x 1536 pixels setting, using a 'Fine' setting where there is a choice, with 1600 x 1200 pixels size as a very minimum. While the typical 'normal' digital camera image size setting of 640 x 490 pixels is usually adequate for use in web pages or PowerPoint presentations this is not nearly good enough for high quality colour printing. (If you do not have a record of the actual camera setting used the computer file size will give a good indication of the suitability or otherwise of a particular digital picture for printing in the *Journal*: a satisfactory digital photograph is likely to be at least a 1Mb file. Each image should be saved and attached to the e-mail message submitted with the manuscript as a separate file. These should not be imbedded into the text of the manuscript. Captions etc. (each of which should include any copyright acknowledgement that may be required) should be grouped in a single file that should also be attached to the e-mail.

Copyright and referencing: It is the authors' responsibility to obtain necessary permission for use of copyrighted material, and all such material should be acknowledged in accordance with the terms of any copyright permission. All quotations and all

significant sources used must be properly acknowledged in accordance with normal academic, professional and other anti-plagiarism conventions.

Preliminaries to be included in manuscript:

Full title: should be specific and concise, indicating the subject and scope of the paper

Short title (for running page headers): maximum of 50 characters including spaces

Name of author or authors, with first names in full

Abstract (for publication): maximum of 200 words which is a self-contained summary of the main achievements or findings of the paper, not a mere statement of the scope and contents of the paper.

Address: of each author below the names. Indicate all affiliations with a lower-case superscript letter immediately after the author's name and in front of the appropriate address. Provide the full postal address of each affiliation, including the country name, and, if available, the e-mail address of each author.

Author's biography: Include with the manuscript a short biography (80 words) for each author. (These will be printed together at the end of each volume.)

Referencing: Either the endnotes and bibliography, or the 'scientific' author/date convention ('Harvard' system), may be used. Endnotes should be indicated in the text in normal type in the form (1) (2) (3) etc. (These numbers will be converted into the normal 'superscript' form during typesetting). Then list each note at the end of the article in normal type, followed by the bibliography (if this is required as well as the notes). Authors are reminded again not to use their word-processing system's Endnote/Footnote system as these are generally not compatible with printers' typesetting systems.

The Bibliography (Endnote system) or References (Harvard system):

should be at the very end of the paper after any acknowledgements etc. Please follow the standards in the Chicago Manual of Style, as in the following examples. (Treat unpublished theses as books):

Coté, M. & Ferrara, L. 1997. *Perspectives Nouvelles en Muséologie/New trends in Museum Practice*. (Quebec: Musée de la Civilisation)

Teruggi, M. E. 1973. The round table of Santiago (Chile). *Museum (UNESCO)* 25 (3): 129-33, plus Appendices 1 - 3: 198-200.

Boylan, P.J. 2000. Museums, the Community, and Development. pp. 8 - 27 in ICOM Korea, *International Symposium for the Establishment of Korean Industry and Technology Museum*. (Seoul: Korean National Committee of ICOM)

Suchy, S. 1998. *An international study on the director's role in art museum leadership*. Sydney, Australia: unpublished PhD thesis, University of Western Sydney Nepean.

Electronic sources (Web, CD etc.): Show the page or CD title (or the nearest equivalent) with the full web address (or CD publisher and catalogue number) and the date consulted, e.g.

UNESCO: *Third Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity 2005*
<http://www.unesco.org/culture/intangible-heritage/index.htm> (consulted 11th January 2006)

Other conventions:

This is an international journal which implies that English may not be the first language for all readers. Please therefore avoid, as far as possible, slang, jargon and invented words or phrases. As a general rule, if a word does not appear in a standard, single-volume English dictionary printed in the last five years – try not to use it.

Titles of books, journals, exhibitions and projects should appear in italics.

Foreign words, expressions that may not readily be understood and direct speech should appear in single inverted commas.

Quotations should appear in italics, without inverted commas, if they are in the text, or form short paragraphs of six lines or fewer. Quotations of more than two lines should be indented. Longer quotations should be indented but, for ease of reading, need not be italicised. (NB these line lengths are based on lines as they appear in 12 pt Times New Roman, single spaced, on your computer screen). Quotations from direct speech that run to more than two lines should also be indented and do not need inverted commas. (If you have problems with printing *italics* in your manuscript indicate what is to be converted to italics during typesetting by underlining the word or phrases that should be in italics.

APPENDIX: DEFINITION OF THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE:

UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003

Article 2 – Definitions

For the purposes of this Convention,

1. The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.
2. The “intangible cultural heritage” as defined in paragraph 1 above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains:
 - (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
 - (b) performing arts;
 - (c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
 - (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
 - (e) traditional craftsmanship.

In celebration of the

60th anniversary of ICOM 1946 - 2006

