

Foreword

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The *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* marks its twentieth anniversary this year. In order to reaffirm the value of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and promote its safeguarding, inspired by the spirit of the 'Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage' adopted by the 32nd UNESCO General Conference in 2003, the journal was conceived at the 2004 ICOM Seoul General Conference, held under the theme 'Museums and Intangible Heritage', and was established in 2006 after two years of preparation. Since its inception, it has served as an international platform for sharing knowledge and expanding scholarly discourse on intangible heritage.

Through the broad participation and dedication of scholars around the world, the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* has grown into a respected academic journal indexed in six major citation databases, including the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI). In 2023, it achieved a Q1 ranking in the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR), placing it among the top 25 percent of journals in its field. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed to the publication and development of the journal over the past twenty years.

To mark the twentieth anniversary of the journal, Volume 21 includes a special contribution by former Editor-in-Chief Alissandra Cummins. Her article reflects on the process through which intangible heritage emerged as a central concern within museum discourse in the early 2000s, particularly through the efforts of UNESCO and ICOM. It also considers how the 2004 ICOM Seoul General Conference and its achievements led to the establishment of the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*, marking a turning point in the global expansion of new relationships among museums, communities, and tangible and intangible heritage.

In addition, following extensive deliberations by nine Editorial Committee members and fifty-six peer reviewers, fourteen articles were selected for publication from a total of 190 submissions. The articles in this volume explore the contemporary significance of intangible heritage as it continues to endure and transform through diverse cultural practices associated with community memory, place, ritual, craft, and other aspects of cultural life. The volume also includes a book review on the oral literature and history of an ethnic minority community in China. It is hoped that this volume will contribute to renewed reflection on the meanings and practices of intangible heritage in a changing contemporary world and help inform future directions in intangible heritage discourse.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to former Editor-in-Chief Alissandra Cummins for her valuable contribution, as well as to the Editorial Committee members and reviewers whose dedication made this volume possible. In particular, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Editor-in-Chief Roslyn Russell and copyeditor Robyn Flemming for their unwavering commitment and meticulous efforts in ensuring the quality of the journal through to its completion. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and ICOM-Korea for their continued cooperation and support in the publication and operation of the journal. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences on the passing in March of Ralf Čeplak Mencin, who served as a member of the Governing Board and former Chair of ICME.

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