

## Words from the President



Ten days in Namibia. What an experience on so many different levels. ICME/2012/Namibia provided a forum to discuss the on-going topic of cultures in museums from the point of view of commodification. About twenty-eight papers from professionals on most of the continents were presented and debated. It was the discussions, this year that were just extraordinary; they provided a spring board from which additional ideas and thoughts were launched. Ample time was available as well for all to have a chance to contribute.

Dr. Jeremy Silvester, Project Planning and training officer of the Museums Association of Namibia, invited ICME to Namibia two years ago. With his assistant, Naitzikile Izyenda, and the chair of the Museums Association of Namibia, Aaron Nambadi, a rewarding conference was organized, including daily excursions in and around Windhoek followed by a four-day post conference tour. Jeremy and I both experience the reality and responsibilities of a part-time week on the job in addition to the details of such organization, especially as the time of the conference neared. He skillfully and patiently handled such delicate issues a visa requests, inoculation questions,

and picky questions about the minutia of the conference, the latter from me.

This issue of the ICME News features a number of reports of the annual conference proceedings and the official post conference tour, from Lydia Icke-Schwalbe and Leif Pareli, respectively. A number of participants took advantage of being in Namibia to see more of that part of the world. Reports of visits to Swakopmund on the Atlantic coast and the Nakambale Museum by Lidija Nikocecic and Raili Huopainen follow in the newsletter.



*ICME Fellows Jesmael Mataga, Nelson Abiti, Mario Buletic, Esther Chipashu,*

Two youth Fellows from Europe joined the conference: Mario Buletic from Croatia and Silvia Wackernagel from Germany. In addition, five professionals from African nations joined our growing list of ICME Fellows. They were Daniel Inoque from Mozambique, Nelson Abiti from Uganda, Esther Chipashu of Zimbabwe, Martin Tindi of Kenya and Jasmael Mataga, now of Lesotho. You will be able to read their reports of ICME/2012/Namibia in this newsletter as well and the next. We are glad to be able to nurture growth among our younger colleagues and hope to see each of them at future ICME meetings and hear of

their advances in the profession. We were also thrilled that a number of museum studies students from the University of Windhoek were able to take part in the ICME/2012/Namibia conference.

Please keep an eye on the ICME website. The final conference program has been posted, as well as a number of photos of the conference, excursions and post-conference tour. We hope that by the start of the New Year, conference papers will also be posted. Like all conferences, not all ICME members were able to attend. Greetings and best wishes were sent by members unable to attend for a variety of reasons, including Henry Bredekamp, Capetown, Martin Earring, Washington, DC, Lothar Stein, Leipzig, Roya Tagiyeva, Azerbaijan, Konrad Vanja, Berlin, and Barbara Woroncow, Leeds. They and other ICME members were missed.



With the close of one annual meeting, we start anew planning for ICME/2013/Brazil, held as part of the triennial meeting of ICOM in Rio de Janeiro from August 10-17, 2013. At our Windhoek board meeting, the board proposed several themes which are coordinated with the overall triennial theme - *Legacy and Creativity, Museums for Social Development*. Early in the New Year a call for papers following specific themes will be distributed. Please consider contributing the next year's discussions. **Mark your calendars now** to join ICME in Rio. Watch the ICOM Brasil website for news and

And please, start making arrangements for your visa early.

The ICME nominating committee has been activated, as it is every three years. We hope that individuals who have been able to participate actively in ICME in the past will stand for the board in order to continue the momentum which has been gained over the past few years. As a former ICME board member, secretary and now completing the close of two terms as chair, it is a time-consuming responsibility, but one which is immensely rewarding. When the committee posts the call for nominations, please consider giving some time from your work schedule to provide professional service to this worthy group of museum ethnographers. Elections will be held as part of our members meeting in Rio.



*Viv Golding, Annette B. Fromm, Anette Rein, ICME board members, Namibia*

With best wishes for the New Year,

Annette B. Fromm, Ph.D.  
President International Committee of  
Museums of Ethnography

**Report on ICME-ICOM Annual meeting 2012: Commodifying Culture? Cultural Villages and Living Museums**

*Dr. Lydia Icke-Schwalbe, Leipzig*

An exciting conference, well attended by museum experts and ethnographers/cultural and social anthropologists from Finland to Australia, from USA to South Africa, was held in an exquisite location in southwestern Africa, this time. The topic of this year's meeting was followed by many participants with individual interests, so that vivid discussions even during the breaks, lunch times, and evening activities took place, well organised and guided by Dr. Jeremy Silvester, chairperson of ICOM Namibia and Project Planning and Training Officer of the Museums Association of Namibia, together with the President of the International Committee of Museums of Ethnography, Mrs. Annette B. Fromm, Ph.D. A well printed programme with abstracts of most of the announced papers was provided to each participant in the beginning of the meeting along with a commemorative ICME/Namibia cap in a lovely tote bag of traditional cloth.

The meeting started with the National Anthem of the young national state Namibia, which reached its independence only in 1990 from South Africa. The Deputy Mayor of the city of Windhoek, the Honorable Mr. Gerson Kamatuka, welcomed the conference members from all over the world to the city, he only one in Africa, where he pointed out that you may drink water from the tap, "it is clean and safe. "The economic and political capital

population of the 2.1 million Namibians. It is first time that such a conference was hosted by Namibia, he appreciated the effort made to get there.



*Conference opening*

Mr. Aaron Nambadi, chairperson, introduced the Museums Association of Namibia, including the Namibian community groups, which were represented in large numbers at the conference, whose life should be demonstrated and explained in museum's exhibitions as well in living traditional villages, later on. He raised the question: how far should traditions be revitalised in a nearly completely Christian country? And he emphasized the role of cultural houses and villages.



The following first session highlighted the basic challenge of a museum as a get-together-point. In her welcoming speech, Annette B. Fromm had remarked: collections make connections. Katrin Dürrschmidt, Living Culture Foundation Namibia, put the focus on people who work and practice in the museums, not on the object presentation, because language groups represent themselves not artificial items, which are shared nowadays with different groups, as one can easily see in all crafts markets. When an old man dies, a whole library dies, meaning the oral tradition is the treasure in all societies without written heritage. That's why her foundation, a non-profit German-Namibian organisation, concentrates on recording and presenting intangible heritage in "Living Museums." Only in this way, cultural knowledge can be preserved and passed on, according to Dürrschmidt. Colleagues from Zimbabwe and South Africa stressed the problem of representing living cultures in a museum or reinstalled lost cultures. "Culture is dynamic," Michael Uusiku Akuupa, South Africa and Namibia, said. The following discussion focused on the authenticity of "living museums." Is it legitimate to settle it in an archaeological site, too? Officially denied, what should a museum village represent in an archaeological site? Only one stereotype! Jesmael Mataga's, Lesotho and Zimbabwe, paper focused generally on the proliferation of cultural villages in southern Africa and discussed the challenges and dilemmas faced by heritage sites and museums in trying to create 'living heritage.'



Anette Rein, Germany, put the North Australian example on the floor and described it as tourist shows in accordance with travel agencies, where tangible and intangible heritage is presented to global tourists for money, a way to generate money for the aboriginals, who began to produce lost tradition for European taste. In her presentation, Rein stressed the question: "are living museums part of a global theatre?" It is necessary to find new ways to speak about museum's objects connecting them with specific lifestyles in the present, she pointed out.

Per Rekdal, Norway, put forward the question: When is something authentic, and to whom is it authentic? The evolution of crafts acts as witness in history, reinvention now has economic reasons, only. The following discussion stressed that tradition has meaning for self respect of the concerned people, even if tourists take it as modern art and craft, made as a piece for display, not for use. That is why Rekdal says: there are indeed historical circumstances, but now it is fake from all over Africa, what you get on crafts markets.

Lidija Nikocec, Croatia, explained an imagined rural past in an ideal Istrian village. A vivid discussion centred around

modern cultural houses with folklore and living customs instead of the historic museums concept basing on old collections, in order to represent identity. Fromm interjected: museums should show, what is right, not what the tourists like!



*Discussion*

Participants from Korea emphasized the role of museums for research in historical roots, to discover the value of intangible heritage and to create awareness to tangible and intangible heritage with experience in shamanism. Fifty-two weeks a year the National Folk Museum of Korea offers special events and festivals of the year to the visitors to keep national traditions alive and to teach young generations about their background in the rapidly changing modern society. Galia Gavish, Israel, with slides showed the 8,000 year tradition of modern pottery from Ethiopian potters. She was made aware of this tradition through archaeological collections in the museum; she gave a very fascinating demonstration of the Sheba connection.

Furthermore, an even modern aspect of museums, cultural villages and identity was set in session VI, namely museums as strategic venues of the national and

international policy. Sylvia Wackernagel, Leipzig, presented an example from the First Nations communities of Canada. Silvia Forni, Canada, gave a strong example from the Cameroonian Grasslands. Whereas the National Museum is now almost empty, items have been sold, many regional museums, kingdom centred came up since 2001, to show who holds the power. Under the guidance of the Fons, supported by French financial and spiritual advice, a new Palace Museum was established. The kingdom felt the need for a museum, in order to represent the kingdom, she explained, to make it visible. In the king's own museum powerful objects get transformed into precious things as agents of modernity!

Heidi McKinnon, USA, with her theoretical paper, contributed to the problem of responsibility and social relevance of museums. Museums should seek to improve the quality of peoples' life. She understands it as knowledge sharing in exhibits, archives, research. Her central quotation followed Eva Silven in *Difficult Matters*: "We believe that museums as public institutions have a moral obligation to act in relation to contemporary processes, as well as special opportunities."

Lydia Icke-Schwalbe, Germany, summarized the concept of museum from the historical point of view and emphasized the basic columns of a museum according to the ICOM Code of Ethics in relation to the recent conditions and aims of collections and cultural houses in African countries. The historical museum's concept is on the move, and the traditional tasks of collecting, preserving to teaching, exhibiting are hard to carry out by regional museums in African or Asian countries. The tasks making a museum in the contemporary global

situation and socio-cultural responsibility needs global cooperation and mutual acceptance.



*University of Namibia Museum Studies Students*

Nelson Abiti, Uganda, marked the museum as creating cultural landscapes for promoting peace and reconciliation, if it works with the communities. And Martin Tindi, Kenya, underlined the peacemaking symbols in objects set on display. Living tradition necessitates a recognition of the goodness of things; orderly and beautiful museums can be useful for nation building.

The discussion ended up into the question: what do we really understand by ethnographic museums? A basic academic discourse about the history of our science, ethnography, as part of the anthropology, history of mankind, aroused with teachers and museum studies students from the University of Windhoek. Lastly, it supported the many pragmatic activities in modern cultural research and presentation with and by the fundamental development of science and museology in Europe since the 19th century.

In her final summary, the ICME President, Annette Fromm, underlined the social responsibility of the cultural museums' work for for tourists as well as for the local communities. Crosscultural meetings and

discussions are highly useful and as well needed in future.

Each day, the conference sessions, richly illustrated with powerpoint presentations were replenished by visits to museums, cultural centres, townships and memorial places, which could demonstrate the manyfold programmes of Namibia to advance the young nationality. At the end of the paper sessions on the first day, the group was transported in a City of Windhoek bus to the Owela Display Centre of the National Museum of Namibia. Exhibits representing cultural diversity in the country were viewed. Afterwards, a relaxing welcome reception was held at the NICE (Namibian Institute of Culinary Excellence) Restaurant.

Following the sessions on the second day, the group toured Heroes Acre, an official war memorial which overlooks Windhoek. The final afternoon found the group touring Katutura Township, an area established in 1961 after the forced removal of Africans from Windhoek (*Otjiherero: The place where we do not want to live*). A stop at the market allowed the curious to taste fresh grilled beef dipped in piri-piri spice. Afterwards, the group went to visit Penduka, a women's craft cooperative where women work primarily in textile crafts and glass beads. The conference officially closed with a festive *braai* or barbeque at Xwama Cultural Village & Restaurant. Participants danced their way in and out of the restaurant with cheer and comradely.



*Waiting to leave on tour*

**ICME/2012/Namibia:  
 Post-Conference Tour Report**

*Leif Pareli, Oslo*

After three days of intense, fruitful and well-organized conference sessions in the capital city of Windhoek, including several interesting visits to local museums, monuments and other attractions, some thirty conference participants embarked on what would be the highlight of our visit to Namibia: a four-day Post-Conference Tour which would take us through large parts of this vast country and show us some of the most interesting features of the country's cultural and natural heritage. We were hardly out of the city when a flock of baboons by the road gave us a first taste of the country's impressive wildlife, while already the first stop for a quick rest and a coffee reminded us of the complex history of this country and how that history is reflected in the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the modern nation of Namibia.

The country, within its present borders, started out as a German colony in the late 1800s. There was a significant German

immigration taking place before the territory was occupied by South Africa during the

First World War and spent the next 75 years was more or less a part of the Apartheid state, until independence was achieved in 1990 and the modern state of Namibia was born. All these various layers of history, as well as the ethnic diversity which existed here before the coming of the Europeans, all contribute to the diversity of the country we meet today. Add to that a sprinkle of recent immigrants from various parts of the world, as well as former refugees and guest workers from neighbouring countries, and you have an idea of what constitutes the Namibian society we would meet during the stay in Windhoek and along our tour of the country.

The German elements of the population are still very much visible, not only in Windhoek with its street signs alternately in German, Afrikaans or English, but also along the road, as our bus moved north from the capital. Stopping for lunch in a Jugend-style house from 1908 in Omaruru where the upstairs rooms contained an exhibition depicting the history of the house and the family and the area, one might wonder if

is practice of creating such “mini-museums” is somehow connected to the German heritage of the country – especially as there seemed to be far more museums in this country than in the home countries of our tour participants from other South and East African countries.



*Omaruru*

Interesting as the colonial-era attractions might be, the main goals of our trip were the manifestations of the indigenous traditions in the area. Already on our second day, we came to a major attraction: Twyfelfontein with its impressive rock carvings, one of the most prominent such sites in Southern Africa and now inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage list. As with petroglyphs in other parts of the world, little is known of the age or the function of the many carvings we could see of humans, animals and various concrete or abstract figures. Obviously, much research is needed to find out more about the significance of these carvings.

Not far from the petroglyphs was another of the highlights of the tour: The Damara Living Museum, a sort of open-air museum where the staff greet visitors and show them around the museum compound, where



*Twyfelfontein*

traditional everyday activities are being demonstrated. A song and dance performance constituted an important part of the programme.

The people who work in the museum are all recruited from the local community, a nearby village with some 200 inhabitants. In the museum they were dressed in little more than loincloths made of goatskin, but those of us who drifted a bit outside the fence could get a glimpse of their “dressing area” where their regular clothes were stored, together with other objects such as wristwatches and mobile phones.



*The Damara Living Museum*



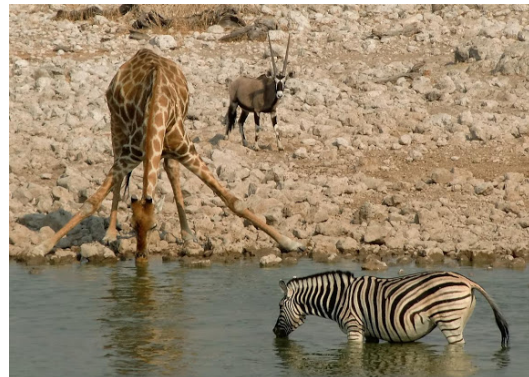
The visit caused a lot of discussion afterwards among the tour participants. Some felt the whole thing was much too fake, a sort of Disneyland dance show with stereotyped “Africans” dancing barebreasted in order to entertain visitors, and all this in an artificial setting of bare and uninhabited straw huts. Others were more positive and found the place an honest attempt to demonstrate some aspects of traditional life as it may have been before the influx of colonial power and western consumption goods.

As for myself, who works in an open-air museum in Norway, I found many similarities between the two places: People in traditional clothes walking in and out of traditional houses and trying to convey some aspects of life in an unspecified “traditional” time. Maybe because I am aware of all the shortcomings in our own museum, I also felt we should be overbearing with some of the obvious shortcomings of this “Living museum” here in a faraway corner of the Damara desert. I was impressed that they all spoke English so well; some were also very knowledgeable about the things they were demonstrating, or could even tell the Latin names of the medicinal plants in the pouch they passed around. The place is new and obviously the concept needs to be improved in many ways, but all in all I was impressed by the place and the people.

Only later did we realize that we might have been able to visit also the village where the museum people live their regular everyday life. This should definitely have been included in our tour programme, as it would have given us more insight into the way people in the area live today and a better

understanding of their relationship with the lifestyle demonstrated in the museum.

The next part of our tour was dedicated to the natural attractions of the country, as we headed into Etosha National Park, one of the richest wildlife reserves on the African continent. From the first excited cry of “Look – a giraffe!” to the astounding number of zebras, oryx, gazelles and other antelopes that crowded around a waterhole, to lions hiding in the high grass, to maybe the highlight: elephants grazing quietly in the brushes just a few metres from the road – the day was filled with impressions of all the wildlife that exists in this seemingly so barren landscape.



After Etosha, the tour headed east for a last meeting with local cultural expressions: In the town of Tsumeb we were treated to a welcome performance by a group of very charming schoolchildren, before being given a tour of the local cultural centre and a dinner hosted by Tsumeb Municipality. The next day we visited Tsumeb Museum – another encounter with Imperial German weapons from the First World War, retrieved from nearby Lake Oshikoto where they had been dumped by the surrendering German forces in 1915, the end of German colonial rule in this part of Africa.



The stay in Tsumeb concluded our tour, and after a detour to visit a cheetah research farm we headed back to Windhoek. The four days were filled with impressions, including many not mentioned in this brief report, such as the geological formations of the Organ Pipes, the Burned Mountain and the Petrified Forest, or local cultural expressions such as the wonderful garden filled with modern art which we visited in the town of Omaruru. Everywhere we visited, people treated us with genuine friendliness and hospitality. And last but not least: Kudos to our ICME man in Namibia, Jeremy Silvester, who did more than his utmost to make sure we all had a good time during the

tour, like earlier during the conference days in Windhoek. The whole ICME/2012 experience certainly left this reporter filled with good memories and a wish to come back to Namibia again at some future occasion.



*Post Conference group photo*

## **About a Post-Post Conference tour in Namibia**

*Lidija Nikočević Pazin, Croatia*

With the wish to learn and experience more about Namibia, I thought I should have a closer look at its sea shore. Therefore, I visited Swakopmund and Walvis Bay accompanied partly by two other Conference's participants, Sylvia Wackernagel and Lydia Icke Schwalbe.

Much colder windy weather, the sand, the mighty ocean and the German architecture made me feel at first that I was somewhere along the shores of the North Sea. My Guesthouse's keepers were Namibians of German origin as well (as many are in Swakopmund), who liked discipline & order, so they made me sometimes feel as a school child not sure if he/she did something wrong. I understood that some of younger

members of that Namibian-German community study in Windhoek, but if they can afford it, they like the idea of studying in Germany. The main reason is, as some of them said, that they don't see a bright future for themselves in Namibia.



*Fishing in the Atlantic*

On the other hand, at the outskirts of the neighboring harbor Walvis Bay (that overtook the role of harbor from Swakopmund in 1915), there is a rather big settlement of Namibians coming from all parts of the country searching for jobs. This settlement contains both very basic houses where newcomers live, somewhat more developed houses that belong to already established dwellers and comfortable, big houses that reflect the success of their owners. Contrary to Swakopmund, Walvis Bay, after belonging for decades to Britain and later to South-West Africa, doesn't have the same German flavor, showing architectural and urban characteristics that are closer to those of South African settlements.

However, the culture of the Topnaar people (a Nama branch) that was dominant in that area is not visible. Topnaars traditionally exploited the !nara plant, but nowadays, as a result of complex changes, this is a threatened local economy. Many Topnaar have migrated to mines or to coastal towns. The proclamation of the Namib-Naukluft Park and its expansion narrowed or put in question their traditional economy as well.



The local museum in Swakopmund gives a rather old-fashioned, yet surprisingly informative presentation of local natural and cultural life. The section on culture encompasses both the life of the German settlers and various peoples of Namibia, showing the transformations of their culture. Both objects and photographs follow the history of collecting and photographing local life. Most peoples of Namibia are shown through the earliest documentation made by the first researchers. Changes in the culture due to the force and influence of missionaries and colonizers in general are displayed, as well as some of today's cultural characteristics.



However, the cultural reality of Swakopmund streets is something completely different. Packed with hotels, guesthouses, souvenir shops, restaurants, cafés, and above all foreign visitors, the streets reflect the tourist orientation on the town. This phenomenon hasn't found its place within the museum yet. Many other relevant cultural themes could also usefully be included in the museum, such as how local indigenous Namibians cope with the dominant state orientation towards tourism, the proclamation of Natural parks and protected areas and protection of wild life. Having in mind this country's fast development, the inclusion of these themes might happen rather soon.

## NAKAMBALE – another excursion

*Raili Huopainen, Helsinki*

In Olukonda, located in Ovamboland, northern Namibia, there is a museum by the name of Nakambale. While attending the ICOM-ICME Conference in Namibia in September, I hoped that I would also be able to visit Olukonda. I had a very special reason for this, too.

Nakambale means “the one who wears a hat”. It was the nickname the Ovambos gave the Finnish missionary Rev. Martti Rautanen. Rautanen, you see, wore a hat which to the Ovambos resembled a palm basket. Rautanen worked in Ovamboland from 1880 up until his death in 1926.

In 1889 Rautanen had a church built in Olukonda, and four years later a mission house. The buildings are still there. Nearby is a cemetery where Rautanen and his family are buried, as well as many of the kings of Ondonga. In 1992, the church and the mission house were designated as Namibian national monuments, and museum which was given the name Nakambale was founded there three years later in 1995.



I was not the only person who made the visit to the Nakambale Museum. My colleague Thomas Laely, PhD, from the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich also had a very good reason to join the excursion.

In Etosha, which was one of the destinations on our post conference tour, the Chairperson of ICOM Namibia, Dr Jeremy Silvester, told us that a trip to Olukonda would be arranged early the following morning. Our experts and drivers were Michael Uusiku Akuupa and Aaron Nambadi. At the Nakambale

Museum, we were welcomed by Magdalena Kaanante.



*Nakambale, September 2012*

Nakambale is the home museum of Martti Rautanen. The exhibition chronicles Rautanen's work and family. On display are also numerous traditional Ovambo artefacts, utensils, musical instruments and decorations. The museum also includes a traditional Ndonga homestead, (*egumbo*).

Rautanen was a highly versatile man. He was involved in developing the written form of the Ndonga language, he translated the Bible into Ndonga, wrote hymns and collected folklore and Ovamba artefacts. As an ethnologist, he was thorough. He furnished the artefacts collected from Ondonga tribes with detailed information about their use and significance. Thus were born the unique collections which are now located mainly in the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission's Museum in Helsinki. A smaller collection of 130 artefacts is held in the National Museum of Finland's Museum of Cultures.

In August 1885 a young Swiss botanist, Dr Hans Schinz, arrived at the Olukonda mission station and met Martti Rautanen.

The meeting turned out to be very important for both of them. Schinz stayed there for six months. Martti Rautanen taught him the Ndonga language and Ovambo customs.



*Olukonda Mission Station 8/11/1911, Photo Hannu Haahti*

Schinz, in turn, taught Rautanen scientific documentation of plants and made field trips with him to collect specimens. Indeed, Rautanen began to systematically collect Ovamboland plants and sent specimens to Dr Schinz in Switzerland. The collections of the Finnish Museum of Natural History, University of Helsinki include hundreds of plants collected by Martti Rautanen in Ovamboland. Rautanen's name also appears in the scientific name of a number of plants. For example, the scientific name of the mongongo tree is *Schinziophyton rautanenii*.

Schinz inspired Rautanen to make weather observations as well. The first rainfall measurements in Ovamboland were made by Rautanen in 1886. He continued to make observations on temperature, rainfall and barometric pressure, and forwarded the information to the Institute of Meteorology in Berlin. The correspondence between

Schinz and Rautanen continued for four decades.

And now, 127 years after their first meeting, Martti Rautanen and Hans Schinz have once again achieved something new: the idea of an photograph exhibition! Rautanen's collections at the Kumbukumbu Museum in Helsinki as well as Schinz's collections at the Ethnographic Museum of the University

of Zurich include unique photographs of Namibia and in particular of Ovamboland. They would deserve to be placed on display extensively in Namibia too. The ICME Conference and the visit to the Nakambale Museum created an excellent basis for cooperation.

## ICME/2012/Namibia Fellows Reports



*ICME Fellows, 2012*

## Report on ICME/2012/Namibia

*Abiti Adebo Nelson, Kampala*

I have a cause to remember and look forward to be in the ICME family. The 3 day conference of the International Council of Museums for Ethnography that took place Windhoek, Namibia provided immense knowledge to my life. This was my first time to attend any conference of ICOM, and I was privileged to be sponsored for the conference. First, I would like to thank the ICOM-ICME 2012 committee for selecting me among the fellows to participate in the conference. The Fellow's scholarship covered my transport, accommodation and living expenses while in Namibia and on the post conference tour that created more friendly time to network and talk with the ICME/2012 members.

Before my visit to Namibia, I had questions on how the living museum would be interpreted because my ideas were that ethnography basically talks about material objects and labels or texts in a museum. Secondly, I knew it's the power of the knowledge of the curators to voice interpret issues. On the first day of the conference meeting, we began with the official opening of the conference from the Museum Association of Namibia and President of ICME Annette B. Fromm. The Deputy Mayor of Windhoek emphasized the need of connecting cultural villages with living traditions and that cultural objects held by the colonial countries should be restituted through dialogue.

Kathrin Dürrschmidt from Namibia presented about the living museums as way of preserving cultural knowledge. According to her work, traditional culture are presented

in various ways among which is establishing cultural village or the living museum by reconstructing traditional settlement with huts, dress, using local tools such as the blacksmith, finding people to undertake activities and interact with them. It was observed that such practices would depict original cultural tradition other than the museum showcased object traditions. A debate that followed about the idea of living museums as a way of preserving traditional knowledge was contested on three reasons. First, living museums are not an effective way of transferring cultural knowledge where ethnography sometimes stereotype the society, in the African continent living museums reproduce colonial anthropology. It was also noted that living museums in

Namibia was promoted for tourism purposes with a notion that African culture is lost. The critical discussion undermined the notion that African traditions must be salvaged; a thinking that culture is static and should be authentic in the changing global environment. This raises critical questions of who decides the original culture and for whom? It was recommended that, living museums should provide dignity and lessen the notion of ethnicity but rather strengthen functions of living museums as community interpretations. The need for regulatory measures and policies would stimulate economic well being and creativity on cultural expressions. The museums should not stereotype African culture but present the past for the next generation to appreciate where they have come from and where they are going.

During the post conference tour to the Damara Living Museum, a presentation of the living culture was shown to us as the visitors of the conference. At the entrance

we were welcome by a man and women; inside there are huts of “Manyatta” style. There was explanation about the herbal medicine, the games in our country called “Mweso,” black smith, weaving and powerful dance that thrilled the participants into dancing. I felt embarrassed to see the women with breasts, somehow they were uncomfortable but you could see some smiles with the ladies.

I reflected on two things whether the cultural right was supposed to be promoted against the dignity of women’s body. Then, there was the argument of traditional knowledge transfer, the critical observation in the Damara Living Museum was its creation away from the villages that had less link to learning process and how useful would the display of almost nude women help the younger Namibian children learn. This confusion between the ethnography of cultural knowledge and social development is critical. How should museum professionals regulate and provide a dignity to humanity in heritage sector?

Another conference paper was on the aspect of commodifying culture through intangible heritage in the National Folk Museum of Korea. A lesson learned revealed that the intangible heritage at the museum helps us to discover its value and increase public awareness besides safeguarding the cultural expressions. The Museum also provides a way of researching and archiving the knowledge of intangible heritage through folk dances, seasonal events like New Year, harvest, and full moon. It promotes family leisure and harmony by providing family experiences. The conference recommended that museums are ideal spaces for commodifying intangible cultural heritage associated with a community, they create

space for meaningful inter-generational dialogue and expressions of cultural heritage.

The project by Mario Buletic from Croatia on mediating culture in the frame of everyday life practices depicted that museums are sites of interaction between personal and collective identities; production of information. Lessons learned were that museums connect sites by providing regional itineraries of cultural heritage; they build confidence amongst the public and space. The museums are a way of displaying identity and local authority. The relevance of museums in research, collection, analysis, interpretation and representation should provide a frame work for the community and digital mediation in order to provide social engagement. A critical observation indicated that whereas museums could fulfill social harmony through citizen's initiatives there are possibilities of influencing political leaders in the public discourse of museum work.

With the emerging role of museums in peace making and conflict resolution, I learned that documenting the artefacts and providing community knowledge on the functionality of the objects that have meanings especially the sacredness of peace carried by women as motherhood. Women would carry a honey bag as a good gesture of sweet life to symbolize "non military culture." Sticks for blessing handed from mother to daughter were practical methods of indigenous knowledge of peace making and conflict resolution in a society. One reflection was

complicated and complex histories of the nation.

Through the conference, I was able to grow, learn and develop my career in the field of ethnography for our Uganda National Museum and will continue to establish a strong link with global family of ethnographers. I was happy to interact with professors and museum curators and would love to meet them again. Through the conference, I was able to express the work we have in Uganda been taking the National Museum in creating a living museum of post war memory. I had difficulty linking the project work we have in Uganda with the restoration of dignity and cultural values in post conflict places in northern Uganda where people had suffered for over two decades. Through the conference, there was a realization that museums are relevant in social engagement especially in preserving the memory as a living museum in order to promote peace and reconciliation.

### **ICME Annual Meeting, Windhoek-Namibia 2012, Commodifying Culture? Cultural Villages and Living Museums**

*Mario Buletic, Pazin, Croatia*

Since my first ICME Conference that was held in 2009 in Seoul, I realized how important it was to take part in such an international network – both on professional and personal levels. Sharing experiences with colleagues from different museums worldwide brings constant learning, generates new challenging ideas for our day-by-day museum practical work, and opens possibilities for future collaborative experiences. Moreover, the human character



of ICME Conferences facilitates a friendly and informal atmosphere that permits one to go beyond just the professional relationship with other colleagues. Thanks to the ICME support, I had again the opportunity to be a part of the international community of museum ethnographers, anthropologists, scholars and other professionals that have been in Namibia and contributed to what I can define as a successful conference and a great personal experience.



*Heroes Acre*

A patchwork of different images, stories and sounds were crossing my mind before the departure to Namibia. Most of these images were related to different films, reportages or magazines that I associated with what maybe belongs to a completely different African reality. Others were linked to stories that I was told by people I met in Western Europe, or that I have imagined while reading newspapers, more or less specialized books, or just listened to experiences of someone who had visited these places. The soundtrack I could associate to such images was just the result of my limited knowledge

and musical taste. It varied from hypnotic afro-beat of Fela Kuti's groovy saxophone and his orchestra, unique Miriam Makeba's voice or Tinariwen electric guitar tunes coming direct from the Sahara desert. Another important source of my superficial understanding of African culture was represented by western museums, which in more or less successful way are trying to tell us stories and exhibit the (im)material culture of distant worlds of their own - in space, time, societies and culture.

A long trip and endless waiting on airports helped me to forget for a while about my narrow imaginary. Airport transfers reminded me also about the main topic of this year's ICME Annual Conference, especially while exploring souvenir shops on Johannesburg airport. Commodification of culture is a complex set of practices performed by different actors in different places all over the world. Its expressions are an integral part of the global economy, of collective and personal values, of professional perspectives and everyday life situations. As museum workers, tourists or just regular consumers we are all involved. As it was pointed out by Per Rekdal in one conference presentation, "tourism shapes one's self-conception." I would add - it also shapes the conception of *others*.



From the perspective of a person that is coming “*From the Mediterranean as it once was*” to the country of “*Endless horizons,*”<sup>1</sup> questions and reflections focused on similarities, rather than on differences, have emerged on the first days while walking through Windhoek city center. How to promote cultural and natural particularities of a young developing country with idea to strengthen local identities and unity? How to create attractive touristic marketing based on these values? How to reconcile the tradition of different people, colonial history and commodifying globalized present? How do socio-economically disadvantaged individuals and communities contribute to this reality and what are the outcomes?

I didn’t have to wait much for the answers that in a circular way had created the effect of diving deeper into my questions and rising new ones. The conference was there and the participants have been strongly motivated from the very beginning to comment and discuss dynamically different ethnographically shaped experiences on these topics coming from the museum world **all over the globe. The first presentation of the conference about the living museums and cultural villages in Namibia delineated the general atmosphere of discussions.**

Living museum representations of the supposed pre-colonial past of local communities (in Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa...), of traditional culture, knowledge and way of living have been strongly criticized and debated.



*Damara Living Museum*

Rather than be seen as examples of “preservation” of local cultural identities, many African colleagues with living museums phenomena perceive a concrete danger of “freezing Africans in timeless space for tourists’ gaze and financial interests of few” (Michael Uusiku Akuupa), or support to “(re)enforce exclusions and stereotypes, objectification of some and alienation of other local ethnic groups” (Jasmael Mataga and Farai M. Chabata). There is no reference to cultural and social changes, dynamic aspects of culture and local answers to global challenges. Such performances are not just an African phenomena. As a colleague pointed out, living museums are part of “global theatre.” where similar patterns are used in many places in order to perform “true” representations with “fixed choreographies”

of a particular culture (Anette Rein). Petrified representations of *self* and the *other* create a solid base for existential questions regarding museums and other similar institutions. Following this line of thought, and as it was critically pointed out many times in debates: “do we really need museums?” Museum experiences such as work on local memory through the collection of people’s life stories with a focus on promoting reconciliation and peace in a post-conflict situation, as well as collecting important resources for the education of younger populations (Nelson

<sup>1</sup> Croatian and Namibian Tourist board slogans.

Abiti Adebo), makes the question easily resolvable. A similar experience has been shown with the illustration of how the research on traditional knowledge in peace and conflict resolution can be used in practice also in today's context (Martin Tindi). We do need museums that work for a better and more harmonious society. Like museum educational practices that promote complementary learning for children, focused on understanding *other* cultures through their active engagement (Viv Golding). As well as we need *curators without borders*, dedicated to “reframing museum agendas and engaging with pressing humanitarian, environmental and social justice content through unexplored avenues of exhibition development” (Heidi McKinnon). As some other examples have shown, museums with solid roots in community also demonstrate the utility of being an important resource for achieving common needings, documenting and rethinking the local tradition, as well as today's social and cultural practices. In conclusion, continuous change and rethinking the museum practices as more collaborative and educative and less authoritative set of activities, experimenting with new forms of interpreting, presenting and mediating culture, is a trend that is widely recognized. With all innovations and possible excursions in other sectors of museum practice such as tourism, it is important to keep firmly a set of ethical standards, to consider and to remember that people, individuals and communities must not be treated as commodity, as objects for just economical purposes.

What couldn't have been shared during the conference sessions, found its time and space in many informal situations, from the hotel swimming pool and bar to daily tours and visits to the city of Windhoek and its surroundings. We have been guided to different realities, from national monuments celebrating the young nation to neighborhoods in diametrical opposition of what one can experience downtown.



From the ethnographic museum collection showing the way of how local cultures are interpreted, to small creative projects on how local women with different social needs interpret local culture by creating beautiful products. Food and drinks are probably the most common way of consuming and getting in touch with different culture. A fancy lounge restaurant where future chefs practice their skill on one side, and a picturesque barbeque house on the other were both perfect and friendly places where we have stayed for hours socializing in quite a hedonistic way. “A bit of everything”, as Jeremy Silvester, Namibian ICOM chairperson and local organizer, told me in one moment. This strategy was also adopted on the post-conference tour. To make it more adventurous, I am sure that the broken air-conditioning on the bus was also a part of the well-planned tour. To make it more real and not a dream-like reality, to try to

evoke some general sensations, as it was happening now.

Collective fascination. For the idea of capturing moments, freezing the picture for the memory, images of imagined world. The bus is crossing wavy dusty roads that end on the horizon. Eyes are hypnotized and mind meditative. Vast desert landscapes, grey and green bushes and naked trees, termite mounds, yellow grass and red rocks, white pan, dry air, burned ground and blue sky. The life is there, just behind the window.



Animals that in our world normally live in TV screens or in sad ZOO's; small villages and big farms, improvised offices of surreal activities; herds of goats crossing the road, good looking cows doing what they have to, few persons doing their daily duties in the middle of nowhere. Gas stations as a kind of oasis where different stories meet: workers sitting in the back of a Japanese pick-up truck on their way to or from their job; local people passing their Sunday afternoon; craft markets near the road selling whatever a tourist recognizes as a representative object of African otherness to bring back home.

The same tourists are invading toilets and the gas station store in search for refreshment and something to eat. Another day is behind us. Fresh beer in the glass

draws a smile on the face; the sun is going down behind the new tourist resort.

From living museums, to classical ones to nature parks and other sites and places of interest, we had a taste of impressive nature combined with elements of local history and culture, rising curiosity and a bittersweet feeling of not having more time to explore every bit of everything we've left behind during the trip. Another day left to recollect all impressions, to buy some *biltong* dry meat snakes as a present for friends back home, write few postcards, have a nice dinner and talk with a colleague. Before the arrival to the airport, a couple of baboons crossed the road. I wanted to understand it is a way to say goodbye and hope to see you soon.



Each conference or professional experience somehow creates new thoughts and paths that will be followed in the future. On one side, it is very important to be in touch with other colleagues, ideas and experiences in museum ethnography field. The creation of professional networks can always produce new contents, collaborations, sharing of knowledge and ideas. I must say that there have been many occasions since my first participation in ICME Conferences that contacts made during the conference were

very useful. In my personal day-by-day museum job I will continue dealing with issues that continuously appear as topics of interest also in many other museum experiences. Inclusive and participative approach within our activities and being engaged with local communities is a strategy that as museums we are aimed to follow as a normal practice. Awareness for intangible phenomena of local culture has been materialized within activities (documentation, research, education, events) of our museum's Intangible Heritage Center. Digital technologies are also representing a challenge to rethink our collections and document archives, especially when thinking on how to make them accessible to wider public with the help of Internet. More abstract and theoretical reflections regarding museums in relation to anthropology finds its place in my academic activity.

At the moment I am doing my PhD study on Ljubljana University. On the other side, after my third participation in the ICME Conference I am getting closer to the idea of getting involved more actively in the work with the organization, perhaps as a candidate in the near future as a board member. In a few words, participation in ICME Conferences is a fundamental part of my professional growing and hopefully it will still be in the future. It is a place of sharing knowledge and practical museological experiences, as well as a platform for present and future collaborations and friendly relationships with people from all over the world.

## **ICME - ICOM ANNUAL MEETING – WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA: SEPTEMBER 2012**

*Esther Chipashu, Harare*

My sincere gratitude goes to the ICME for awarding me a fellowship to participate in the ICOM- ICME Annual meeting in Windhoek, the Namibian capital. In national and global orders, where cultural industries play an increasingly central role in the socio-economic and political organization of contemporary societies, the study of culture becomes vital. Culture has widely been perceived as a commodity and beyond. Notwithstanding this, the roles of cultural heritage and in particular, museums in contemporary society have been a subject of massive debate, yet in actual fact it is heritage that binds communities together. Against this backdrop, I commend ICME for organizing international conferences that enable people from all over the world to converge periodically and debate on the fundamental aspects of cultural heritage. I have always relished the idea of attending such conferences where I get to interact and exchange ideas with fellow ethnographers, anthropologists, scholars and other personalities of diverse cultural backgrounds.

I certainly have no doubts that attendance of this conference was a real honor as it enabled me to shape my approach towards the whole aspect of ethnography and museology. Debates and presentations during the conference really broadened my

the topical issues during the discussions were: Do we really need museums?; Culture is dynamic, but are the changing dimensions incorporated into the living museums? The concept of 'living museums' has, however, been received with mixed feelings. From an Afro-centric perspective, the idea of 'Living museums is not a new phenomenon in Africa.' - 'Just visit the traditional village and witness a real living museum', according to Lunes Mpunwa of the National Art Gallery of Namibia.



*Cross section of events at Damara Living Museum*

Some participants were of the opinion that in Africa museums are not necessary because they are perceived as a colonial invention and yet they are a replica of the traditional village. This statement, however, sparked a lot of debate among the participants. I personally feel some concepts of the living museum have been modified and sometimes are exaggerated for commercial purposes. As the debate on the museums rages on, another point of interest from a European colleague was that Africa needs museums more than any continent because it is experiencing tremendous social change due to the growth of urbanization. With the majority of the African population

migrating into cities and towns, 'cultural heritage' is fast disappearing. Furthermore, some of the objects found in museums have since disappeared in the traditional village hence the need to have objects kept in museums for posterity.

Museums are very instrumental in the making of identity. According to Annete Rein, "If we study the performances of 'Living Museums' in different countries, we identify very easily that they follow a clear structure in their ways of representation. Being part of a global theatre, 'Living Museums' work with a common dramaturgy to be accepted as 'true' representatives of the culture they feature." The only problem that may arise may be, "a situation that has led to representation that (re) enforces exclusion and stereotypes leading to objectification of those represented and alienation for those unrepresented" (Jasmael Mataga and Farai M Chabata). But what really is a museum setting? Are objects in museums static? Ultimately there is a need to start rethinking how museums should be framed. The world over, museums are no longer regarded as repositories of dead artifacts that are haphazardly collected and dumped.

According to Martin Tindi, "Museums are now used as a platform for addressing peace and conflict resolution. Exhibitions of art work and artifacts symbolizing peace and offering space for dialogue and discussion; initiating more public programs would also be vital in making museums and culture resourceful to the communities thus more lively and relevant to the needs of society" (Martin Tindi). Interpretation of the collection and interactive displays are, therefore, a necessity in the modern museum. Perhaps dialogue that embraces



*Section of objects displayed in the National Museum of Namibia*

not just policy-makers and museum practitioners but the local community represented in the museums may be the panacea.

From presentations and debates on living museums, modern museums, traditional museums, etc.,

I must mention, again, that it was a real honor for me to participate in the ICME conference for the first time. Apart from enhancing my skills towards ethnography, the conference largely capacitated my skills in museum practice. I commend the Organizers for making the conference not just focus on presentations while participants were stuck at one place: “a bit of everything”, according to Jeremy Sylvester, the Namibian ICOM Chairperson and local organizer. From the conference centre, to different places such as the National Museum of Namibia (which basically houses a huge and diverse ethnographic collection of Namibia) to the Owela Arts and Craft centre, touring of the National Heroes Acre, to a memorable township tour and visit to Xama Cultural Restaurant for an evening *braai*.



*Participants interacting at Xama Cultural Restaurant*

The highly organized conference did not end here, as the following morning we had to depart Windhoek for a post-conference tour. It was a pleasure walking through Omaruru, an important centre for the Herero people. From Omaruru to a guided tour of Twyfelfontein (a world heritage site, with one of the largest concentrations of petroglyphs {rock engravings}); thereafter, a visit to Damara Living Museum complimented the adventurous weekend. I must reiterate that attendance of this conference was a lifetime achievement and real honor. Monday the 17th of September saw us embarking on a morning game drive through Etosha where zebra and springbok were scattered across the endless horizon, while the many waterholes attracted endangered black rhinoceros, lions, elephants, etc.

I cannot forget viewing of the extensive displays at Tsumeb museum and the very interesting cultural performances by school children at night.

In conclusion, I must mention that attendance of the ICME/2012/Namibia in Windhoek for the very first time was a real eye-opener. The topical issues and



*Cultural performance by Tsumeb school children*

presentations no doubt will help me improve my approach towards ethnography and museological concepts. The numerous visits and excursions also improved my general capacity as a museum practitioner. Following my participation in the ICME, I am imparting knowledge acquired to my fellow workmates as well as making some recommendations to my organization where possible. For example, it would be ideal for my organization to have a small restaurant/ takeaway at our National Heroes' Acre. In the case of Namibian visitors who enjoy touring the Heroes' Acre without difficulties, they can easily procure water or a cool drink from the takeaway situated at the shrine. Our architecture is more or less the same, but the Zimbabwean shrine lacks a takeaway to cater to visitors considering that there are no shops located close to the site. Overall, I immensely benefitted from participating in the ICME conference for the first time and I hope to attend more of such conferences. I commend ICOM-ICME for such a wonderful job. Creation of professional networks and collaborations during such conferences remain fundamental. Thanks to the generosity of ICME, I did not come back home empty-

learned a lot during presentations and excursions.

## **Short account about participating in the Conference**

*Daniel Inoque, Maputo*

My first perspective about participating in this conference was to find out experiences of inventory in museums ethnography. So, I contacted the National Museum of Namibia which out-of-hand agreed to give me the opportunity to visit the technical sector of the museum including the inventory sector. Thus, my first expectation was overcome.



*Damara Living Museum*

Then I analysed the conference theme to think about which experiences I could get directly for our project to establish the Fisheries Museum in Mozambique. I was able to reflect on the stage of development of artisanal fisheries in Mozambique and how to preserve this thousand year tradition in the face of the introduction of high technology on fisheries. The fisheries sector is implementing a long term strategic plan which gradually, as a consequence of the



process of the development, is changing a traditional technology to the modern means and many social practices have been lost.<sup>2</sup>

These processes started at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the Portuguese colonial government settled many Portuguese people in Mozambique territory; they brought with them the first ‘revolution technology’ to the artisanal fisheries in the territory. Some of these Portuguese were traders and introduced in Mozambique many modern technologies that in consequence of process are part of the contemporary technologies of the artisanal fisheries used by local appropriation.<sup>3</sup>

The contemporary technologies of the artisanal fisheries in Mozambique are a great example of the mixture of culture. Another important process of culture mixture is reflected in north of Mozambique, where the presence of Arabic people is more visible. History says that these contacts begin in 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup>

So the contemporary technologies of the artisanal fisheries reflect the long processes of contact between the natives of territory we now call Mozambique, first with the Arabic people then the Europeans, particularly Portuguese people. Because of the richness of this cultural heritage it needs to be preserved.

<sup>2</sup> Republic of Mozambique, Ministry of Fisheries, Fisheries Master Plan 2010-2019.

<sup>3</sup> HEDGES, David. et al, 1999: História de Moçambique: Moçambique no Auge do Colonialismo, 1930-1961. 2 ed. Maputo, Livraria Universitária

<sup>4</sup> MOURA, Armando Reis, Barcos do Litoral de Moçambique, *Monumenta*, 8, 1972, Comissão dos Monumentos Nacionais de Moçambique, p.28-32.

These notes propose to reflect how the experience of participating at this conference will impact our work to establish the Fisheries Museum in Mozambique. Our first impression was that this kind of meeting is a great opportunity to make connections of museum professionals. We now have more information about other museums with the same subject, in particular in Northern Europe and America respectively, with which we started to make contacts to establish technical cooperation.

With regard to the presentations, in the first session, *The Challenges of Collecting Culture: Living Museums and Traditional Villages* and in connection with the post-conference tours, the centre of discuss was if there is authentic tradition or representation the traditional (performance) in a case of ‘Damara Living Museum.’ I learned that in the process of the preservation of culture, static but influenced by others in the instance of contact. It is important keep in mind best practices in doing our work. In this case, we saw many examples of that such as in the dress, false hair and so on particularly in the women’s presentations at museum. (See the picture)

This is important because we concluded that representation is way to preserve the culture and democratize the information. It could be a way to follow by our project. On other hand because these habits are no longer practiced, this could be a way to transmit the performance to other generation and be tourism experience as we observed. In the second session, *Commodifying Culture? Tourism and Representation of Culture Heritage*, the main point reflected the impression above but is important to say that it is fundamental in our case to involve the

fisheries communities in the beginning of process of preservation of their culture.

The third session about *Festivals and the Performance of Culture*, made me reflect upon the every other year 'National Festival of Culture' in Mozambique. In addition, we are thinking to organize the 'National Festival of Fisheries Culture' which could be a very interesting event to promote the Fisheries Museum. It will involve academic activities, gastronomic exhibitions and a fish market. The fourth session was so important because the Project of Fisheries Museum is starting to discuss the methodology to safeguard the 'Intangible Fisheries Culture Heritage' and we heard a bit about this topic. However, at eighth session it was very helpful for putting into the practice of the involvement in our project of the mediation of frequent conflicts, in general, between artisanal fishers and the industry respectively in Mozambique particularly on sea fisheries.

During the fifth and sixth sessions, *Speaking for Ourselves: Communities and Museums Exhibitions and Constructing Culture? Museums, Culture Villages and Identity*, respectively, I thought that all processes of constructing culture and, of course, planning exhibitions could be identified at the centre. After that we learned that the 'cultural identity' is constructed by dialogue between the academic view of the culture in agreement with the communities which belong to the culture that are plan to preserve and communicate.

Finally, the session seventh, *Collections make Connections* was crucial for our participation in this conference because I think that the new paradigm of cooperation between the museum is basically on the

collection, so they could make the connections between the museum professionals which are working or research on the some subject, because many museums are still have various collections on their protection. In this way, the participants of conference which we contacted in Namibia will introduce our project in their countries and make contacts with quick results. In this manner, we plan to invite these museums to exchange information about our collections to draw the terms of reference for probably future cooperation.

## 2012 ICME CONFERENCE REPORT

*Jesmael Mataga, Roma, Lesotho*

### Introduction

The ICOM-ICME (ICME Annual Conference 2012) was carried out between 12 and 14 September, 2012 and the equally exciting and stimulating Post-Conference Tour between 15-18 September. The conference in Namibia was co-hosted by the ICOM National Committee for Namibia and the Museums Association of Namibia. The setting of the conference in Namibia with its rich cultural and natural heritage, an eventful colonial past and its diverse multi-cultural society provided a perfect backdrop for the conference theme "*Commodifying Culture? Cultural Villages and Living Museums.*" The conference theme resonated with developments in the African continent on the issue of techniques and methods of representing African cultures. In Africa, representation of African ways of life within the confines of colonial museums and sites has a long history that stretches back to the establishment of the institutions themselves,

a history that has created a complex legacy which the museum has to traverse in the post-colony. In Africa, the colonially-derived museum is in many countries largely perceived as a colonial institution that appropriated and objectified African customs, traditions and material culture and still struggling with that legacy. The museums occupy a paradox position where on one hand they have to offer objective, authentic representation of cultures while on another they are expected to serve as entertainment, educational and to some degree touristic resources. How to balance this dichotomy is a challenge that the museum in Africa faces. It is these issues in that characterized the discussions during the conference, with a lot of interaction and exchange with ideas and experiences from other parts of the world.

### **The Conference Programme**

Immediately after the introductory remarks, the academic sessions kicked off. All in all, 23 papers were presented in the 3 days of the presentation programme. The variety of the papers was quite stimulating. The themes and subthemes that the papers focused on represented the various disciplinary and geographic backgrounds of the participants who were practically from all the regions of the world, Europe, Asia, USA, the Americas, Africa and the Middle East. All the sessions were held in plenary and this meant that all participants were able to listen to all the papers and this was a wonderful thing.

Because of this geographic representation, there was an interesting balance of the papers from the different regions with a good number of papers focusing on Southern Africa. Given that the conference was being held in Southern Africa, the

conference sessions were able to somehow balance the other geographic areas and the peculiarities of Southern Africa.

### **Cultural Programme and Post conference tour program**

The cultural programme was as insightful and thought provoking as the academic programme and the selected sites gave a nice connection between with the debates and discussions in the papers. The visit to the National Heroes Acre gave me a lot to  
*Petroglyphs Twyfelfontein*



think regarding the emerging notions of liberation heritage- an emerging 'heritage category in Southern Africa.' The major post conference 15th-18th September, 2012 provided to us an exposure to the nature and culture and traditions of Namibia. While Windhoek had struck me as a nice, well manicured clean city, the countryside was a ride through old colonial towns, a world heritage site, natural heritage sites, living history museums all exposing us to the diversity that Namibia contains.

The Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site shown the long links to landscape that the prehistoric communities had and how this has continued to today. Looking at the quietness, the serenity, the charm of the

open veldt, one can understand why the these have enchanted generations. Twyfelfontein or /Ui-//aes is Namibia's only World Heritage Site and has one of the largest concentrations of petroglyphs (rock engravings) in Africa.

The visit to the Damara Living Museum was the highlight for me as it directly related to some of the major issues raised in the conference debates. The Damara Living Museum was developed and built by Hansbernhard Naobes and opened in February 2010. It seeks to represent the traditional culture of one of the Khoekhoegowab speaking communities of Namibia. Operated by the Damara themselves, the museum focuses on the Damara reenacting their 'traditional' life. after the day's work they return to what the tour guide referred to as their 'normal modern life'. Is this type of museum, the best form of showing Damara history and cultures. Does it rehash the long held stereotypes and stultifies Damara life and culture in a static time period for the benefit of tourists.

On my first encounter with the museum I was a bit taken back with what I perceived as nakedness of the performers. My own perceptions on nudity and the 'decency' of the human body made me uncomfortable with the traditional garb of the performers. Reluctantly, I dragged myself into the museum which is set within the serene natural environment. It was warmth of the welcoming smile of the museum head, the confidence and charm of the very eloquent female guide that changed my perception. As I moved through the various activities in the museum I slowly warmed and was

beginning to be comfortable. It was the zealotness, and the energy of that traditional dance that invited me even to join in. In that moment of the dance all performers came to life and you could sense the pride with which they wanted to show their culture. Yet still questions remained in my head. One major one ... It was clear that the Damara were getting some economic benefit from the activities of 'museumfying' their traditions, but the framing of their performance in a distant past for still showed how they choreographed them for the tastes of the tourist. More importantly, were these activities in the museum 'preserving' the cultures and traditions? What of the presence of young men and women viz a viz their future? Wouldn't they be better off doing something else with their lives? Is it right to have naked children and half naked men and women pause for photographs that will likely be circulated globally and virtually in places that the performers will probably never access? Yet still was I placing my own personal judgment and feelings on life, well being, nakedness on the performers? What does the gaze mean to the performers? Are we as museum professionals still bringing our own thoughts and perceptions and ideals on the communities. I guess the discussion has to go on!!!!!!

### **Reflection**

The conference theme set a very important issue pertinent to the whole world as was clear from the presentation. As museum professionals issues surrounding commodification, objectification, stultifying and fixing of cultures and traditions, agency of practicing communities are largely universal. Balance between

commercialization, the visitor/tourist gaze and the actual preservation of cultures.

In Africa these issues are complicated further by the legacies of the colonial experience. Presentation of African ways of life within the confines of colonial museums and sites has a long history that stretches back to their establishment of as part of the colonization process. The history of the museum in sub-Saharan Africa is tainted by its colonial past. Most of the museums were created at the stage when the countries were being colonized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, the disciplinary practices of museums and their ideological positioning marked them as part of colonial political and cultural patriarchy. Museums encapsulated the colonial attempts to classify record, represent and process non-European societies as an attempt to re-order worlds that were often incomprehensible to make them more manageable and comprehensible for imperial consumptions.<sup>5</sup> The museums in Southern Africa for example became involved in physical anthropological practices that dehumanized Africans either through their representational forms on museums or the way they took them as subjects of study.<sup>6</sup> The museum space remained racially segregated and exclusive

<sup>5</sup> Anderson B, 1991, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York: Verso; Loomba A, 2005, *Colonialism/Post-colonialism*, London and New York: Routledge, Second Edition

<sup>6</sup> See for example Davison, P. 1990, *Ethnography and Cultural History in South African Museums*, *African Studies* 49(1); Saul Dubow, 1995, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*, Cambridge University Press; Steven C. Dubin, *Transforming Museums: Mounting Queen Victoria in a Democratic South Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006; Kratz C and Karp I, 2006, Introduction, *Museums Frictions: Public cultures/Global transformations*, in Kratz C, Karp, Swwaja L and Ybarra-Frausto T, eds, *Museum*

the locals limited in patronizing the museum. Because of this the museum grew as a racialised institution that objectified the local populations.

Such consideration takes us back to the perceptions of the post-colonial museums, and their role in post-colonial Africa. There is a considerable literature, deriving from many parts of the world, questioning whether the western European concept of a museum is opposite to non-European interests and traditions.<sup>7</sup> Exhibitions, and museums themselves, have come to be criticized as hegemonic devices of cultural elites or states that distort and hence mask the oppression of the cultures they supposedly represent. Yet some have even invoked the dim view of the 18<sup>th</sup> 'Eurocentric' museum as a place of death in line with Foucault's treatment of museums as 'heterotopias' and places of death<sup>8</sup> or Adorno's treatment of the museum in terms of death, disorder, and constraint.<sup>9</sup>

It became clear for me during the conference that the issue of representation of local cultures and traditions is one that has to be negotiated. It is also clear that there can be

*Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, Duke University Press: London

<sup>7</sup> See Arinze E, 1998. African Museums and the Challenge of Change, in *Museum International*, UNESCO, Paris, no 197, 50 (1), 28-32; Oyo, E, 1994. The conventional museum and the quest for relevance in Africa, *History in Africa*, 21:325-337, Abungu 2002, *Opening Up New Frontiers: Museums of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, in PU Argren & S Nyman, eds, *Museums 2000: Confirmation or Challenge*, 37-43, Stockholm : ICOM Sweden and the Swedish Museum Association

<sup>8</sup> Foucault, M. (1998) 'Different Spaces', trans. R. Hurley, in M. Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, Vol. 2, 175-85, London: Penguin

<sup>9</sup> Adorno, T. W. "Valery Proust Museum", *Prisms*, trans. S. and S. Weber. MIT Press, 1983. pp176-7

no one-size-fits-all approach; the discussion has to be ongoing and should include as many stakeholders as possible. As professionals we can no longer see ourselves as having the authorized versions. As communities become much more aware of the sensitivities associated with being represented, more power will eventually have to be given to them to decide how they prefer to be represented.

I would like to end my report by thanking ICME for their generous assistance which enabled my attendance to such an interesting conference. The ideas gained from the conference, the friendships and other professional and social connections made during the week will go a long way in improving our professionalism. To the local organisers, ICOM Namibia and the Museums Association of Namibia - we know the challenges that go with organizing such a big conference and hosting such a diverse group. Annette, Jeremy and their



*The Damara Living Museum*

team were always available. From playing pleasant hosts, to acting tour guides and even waitressing (the supply of cold water in the long bus trip was constant and Jeremy did a great job of making sure no one among us was dehydrated in the Namibian heat). Everything was in place and the stay

was as comfortable as it was enjoyable and intellectually stimulating.

## ICOM-ICME CONFERENCE

*Martin Tindi, Nairobi*

### Background

ICME (International Committee for Museums of Ethnography) is an international committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) devoted to ethnography (ethnology, anthropology, folk) museums focusing on local, national and international cultures. ICME is concerned with the challenges facing ethnographic museums and collections in a changing world.

### Theme of the conference

Museums have long collected things, objects which reflect the achievements of a society. Many have also attempted to both collect and interpret the intangibles associated with the material culture. There is no better context for the public to understand their use than in a natural setting as many living museums endeavour to present. But are we, as museologists putting some sort of seal of approval on the real thing? Are other elements of traditional culture being denigrated by lack of attention in the artificial museum setting? How are changing times and influences reflected in these museums? And what role do community members take in collecting and presentations?

### The conference

The papers presented were stimulating and enlightening, they brought forward clearly examples and discussions on the theme of Commodifying Culture? Cultural Villages

and Living Museums.

To cite some of the presentations that evoked exciting discussions for example on the perception of the African living museums by some of the African scholars was a paper on ‘Museum and Living museums in post-apartheid Namibia: A critical look,’ presented by Michael Uusiku Akuupa. Akuupa analysed the research in the Kavango region of North-Eastern Namibia, and looked at the problems of commodifying and staging of African culture under the guise and pretence of preservation. The presenter argued that the living museums create a danger of freezing Africans in a timeless past for tourists gaze and the financial interest of the few. It further argued that there is greater risk of presenting Africa as a stagnant continent that does not respond nor relate to global activities or change.

The presentations also highlighted the dynamism of museums, for example the paper on ‘The changing museum’s concept: From colonial; site collections to preservation of cultural heritage,’ by Lydia Icke-Schwalbe. This presentation highlighted changes that have taken place since the original European historical concept of a museum has more or less been transformed them into modern education and cultural centres of younger National State museums for example in Germany.

The role of museums as living also came out clearly on its role in promoting peace and reconciliation among different communities in Africa. For example the paper on “Post Conflict Memorial preservation for

reconciliation and promotion of peace: the case of Pabbo Internal Peoples Displaced Camp Memorial in Uganda,” by Nelson Abiti Adebo, and also the paper on the role of museums in peace making and conflict resolution in Kenya, which I presented.

The conference had exciting and stimulating discussions and presentations that enabled me to intellectually learn a lot of information about the exhibitions developed in living museums across the world and how they are relevant to issues arising in the present contemporary societies. It also enriched me with knowledge on the advantages and also challenges facing cultural villages and living museums and also how they can help in the promotion of tourism hence earning income to the museums and heritage sites in Africa and other parts of the world.

### **Excursions**

During the excursions visits to the Owela Display Center of the National Museums of Namibia and the Heroes Acre were educational and amazing. The Heroes Acre gave a useful insight into the history of the freedom and independence struggle in Namibia.

### **Lessons learned as an ethnographer**

How culture can be commodified (Cultural Villages and Living Museums). This is illustrated by some of the presentations, where example of exhibitions demonstrating how cultural centres have been commodified as tourist attraction sites hence vehicles for economic empowerment of the people with from Botswana and Namibia.

The second lesson is that museums can be places of many other roles apart from the

traditional roles. The museum can play more roles of uniting people and living up to the challenges facing the present society for example the National Museums of Uganda.



*Heroes Acre*

I conclude that the conference was an eye opener; I learned a lot about museums in Namibia and other parts of the world. More so, I made new friends and networked professionally effectively. Finally, I would like to thank ICME for giving me the fellowship to participate in the conference. And special thanks to the ICME president Annette B. Fromm and the conference host Dr. Jeremy Silvester and the National Heritage Council of Namibia.



*Group photo, Owela Cultural Center, Windhoek*

## **Beyond Modernity. Do Ethnography Museums Need Ethnography?**

*Laurie Beth Kalb, Rome*

This was the question posed and the title given for an invigorating and challenging conference that took place on April 18-20, 2012 at Il Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico “Luigi Pigorini,” the Italian state museum of prehistory and non-Western material culture originally opened in 1876 in Rome’s Collegio Romano but presently located just south of Rome in the evocative Fascist-era World’s Fair exposition complex built by Mussolini prior to World War II. The museum’s three-day symposium, which gathered leading professionals and Diaspora spokespeople from ethnography museums and universities throughout Europe and the United States, was the first of two international conferences of the five-year RIME project funded by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission. The second and final conference of the RIME initiative, called “The Future of Ethnographic Museums,” will take place on July 19-21, 2013 at the Pitt Rivers Museum of the University of Oxford, England  
[www.prm.ox.ac.uk/pdf/PRMconference.pdf](http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/pdf/PRMconference.pdf)

RIME, an acronym for the International Network of Museums of Ethnography [www.rimenet.edu](http://www.rimenet.edu), is a consortium of ten major European ethnography museums of the European Union that came together in 2008 with a common goal to rethink the place and role of ethnography museums in a postcolonial, global and intercultural world. The consortium’s activities consist of research, workshops, scientific laboratories,



travelling exhibitions, and publications, as well as international colloquia. Underlying all these endeavors is a re-examination of the now-outdated concepts of modernity and first encounters, two ideas that formed the institutional premise for many European ethnography museums founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Products of Imperialist, commercial and colonizing efforts in the Americas, Asia, Oceania, and Africa and corresponding evolutionary studies of the science of man, many of these early ethnography museums grew out of colonial villages displayed at international expositions.

The lead museum for RIME is the renowned Musée Royal de l’Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Belgium, launched in 1898 as The Congo Museum by King Leopold II and today a collaborative institution with a world-class collection that delicately though ardently negotiates its historic and scientific past with aspirations to reflect current-day Africa and the challenges it faces. The nine RIME partner institutions include, along with Rome’s Pigorini Museum, Musée du Quai Branly, Paris; Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford; Museum für Volkerkunde, Austria; National Museum of World Culture, Gothenburg, Sweden; National Museum of Ethnology (Museum Volkenkunde), Leiden, the Netherlands; Museo de America, Madrid; Naprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures, Prague; and Linden-Museum, Stuttgart, Germany. With the exception of the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg, which opened in 2004 as a contemporary component of a larger consortium of National Ethnography Museums in Sweden, all the RIME partner institutions share the burdens and challenges of a complex colonial past. Institutional responses to these pasts have been innovative, though not without

include Musée d’Ethnographie de Genève, Switzerland; The Minneapolis Museum of Arts, Minnesota, USA; Diaspora Association Plus au Sud, Brussels; and La Cambre-ISACF, Brussels.

While controversy may exist over varied exhibition approaches, it is precisely the research credentials and collections of these institutions, as the RIME website proudly asserts, “that finely position them to promote a better understanding of cultures and to help foster the intercultural dialogue that is emerging as one of the greatest needs in the world today.” With an acute self-awareness of their history as well as an urgent call to re-think the potential for ethnography museums in a global world, a major research goal of RIME is to address the colonial heritage of the museums’ collections rather than shy away from it, arguing that it is actually “these collections...[that] offer...the tools through which colonial ideology can be studied and understood by the visiting public” ([www.rime.net](http://www.rime.net)).

With these critical issues in mind, the RIME conference was organized into three sessions that addressed the following:

- 1) Ethnography Museums: New Missions and Work in Progress;
- 2) Between Past and Present: Museums, Collections, Representations; and

---

<sup>10</sup> For example, the Musée du quai Branly, which opened as a “New Museum of Non-Western Arts” in 2006 with a garden-like campus designed by architect Jean Nouvel, prides itself on a spectacular presentation of global culture in the heart of Paris. Some criticize the quai Branly for an overly aesthetic approach, as the provenance for its artifacts traces directly to the 16<sup>th</sup> century royal cabinets and 19<sup>th</sup> century explorers’ collections that once formed the ethnographic backbone of the Trocadero Museum and Museum of Man.

### 3) Issues and Problems for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Do Ethnographic Museums Need Ethnography?

In Section 1, Directors Yves Le Fur of the Musée du quai Branly, Boris Wastiau and Steve Bourget of the Musée d'Ethnographie, Ginevra, and Guido Bryseels of the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale addressed the re-visioning of new identities for their institutions and, in the case of the encyclopedic British Museum, curator Jonathan King discussed how research of historic guides, catalogues, etc., offered an intellectual window into changing views of Europeans and non-Europeans during colonial periods and thus could be utilized for the presentation of new ideas in anthropology displays.

In Session Two, nine presentations focused on the need to identify relevant uses for colonial ethnographic objects. Curators reported on what Ruth Phillips of Carleton University, Ottawa, elegantly termed “the change of relations between indigenous people and museums” and a current re-engagement with first contact objects. In this vein, for example, Emmanuel Kasarherou, Director of the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Noumea, New Caledonia, spoke about his own mission to the Musée du Quai Branly where he embarked on a survey of Kanak objects in Western collections, not only to grasp a fuller picture of his own people the Kanak, the indigenous populations of New Caledonia, but to understand them in terms of the Western gaze.<sup>11</sup> The Tjibaou Cultural

<sup>11</sup> With 15,000 objects in eighty European museums, Kasarherou called these collections a distinctly European phenomenon with local knowledge about the objects nearly lost. The Musée du quai Branly is planning an exhibition of Kanak funeral masks, to open in 2013.

assert its indigenous community in a contemporary global context. The Centre, built to reflect vernacular Tanak building types, was designed by international architect Renzo Piano, and since its creation, has witnessed a revival of local craft activity. Clare Harris of the Pitt Rivers Museum, in her talk “Digital Dilemmas: The Ethnographic Museum as Distributive Institution,” elaborates on the idea of museum ownership as a distinctly Western phenomenon. Describing her museum’s *Tibet Album* project, where six thousand colonial period photographs of Tibet were put on a website launched by the Dalai Lama, and conceived as a resource for Tibetans in Asia and the Diaspora, Dr. Harris examined the “afterlives” of these historic photographs, not all of which were put to ethical use. As Harris spoke with a Tibetan acquaintance about the dilemma posed by placing unrestricted photos on the web, her associate replied, “Distribution is [the museum’s] concept; ownership is [the museum’s] prerogative.”

The voice of the Diaspora was also directly heard in conference presentations. Ken Ndiaje of the Association Plus au Sud in Brussels offered a bleak view of post-colonial museums. Responding to an African colleague from the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, who said, “our museums are settings for the free expressions of others,” Ndiaje replied, “it is not an issue of Diaspora; it is an issue of citizenship.” Multiculturalism is a failure, he continued, and in his opinion, “we have to find a coffin for the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale ... Our identity lies ahead of us.” Joe D. Horse Capture, a second-generation Native American curator from the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts, USA, also expressed discomfort with discussions of the Other. In

his paper “By the People, for the People: Perspectives on Representing Native American Arts and Culture,” Horse Capture commented, “Source community? What does that mean?”

The eight presentations of the conference’s final session addressed the future of ethnography museums. Professor Xavier Roige, Director of Museum Studies at the University of Barcelona, gave a historical overview of the troubled relations between anthropology and museums, particularly in Spain, noting the Boasian view of the difficulty of communicating ethnographic research through tangible heritage. He ended, though, by claiming that the (re)invention of ethnological museums throughout the world presents theoretical and methodological challenges and opportunities for the discipline and that “it is crucial for anthropologists to take an interest in *their* (italics his) museums.” Marc-Olivier Gonseth of the Musée d’Ethnographie de Neuchâtel, Switzerland presented images from recent exhibitions at his museum. The Neuchâtel museum, formed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, developed out of an early 18<sup>th</sup> century military general’s natural history cabinet. Works from Africa, including ancient Egypt, make up more than half the museum’s collection. In mounting exhibitions, the museum uses its collections to argue a theme, or to make a point, in most cases revisionary. In this sense, it is among the most innovative ethnography museums in Europe. Gonseth argued in his talk that museums must problematize their exhibition spaces and called for attention to what he called “the creative antinomies between ethnography and expography.” Michael Rowlands of University College London and Grame Wene of University of Queensland

presented another paper on Digital Heritage Technologies, and shared their experiments in establishing what they called “digital storytelling methodologies” around already digitized collections. To apply such an approach, they argue, is to engage ethnographic museums with migrant heritage and advocate for shared and collaborative efforts in cultural interpretation and ownership.

Collaboration, Diaspora, “contact zones,” “insertion zones,” heterotopia, post-colonialism, and neocolonialism were among the many academic terms that permeated official presentations and intermittent conversations during this provocative, intellectual and edgy conference. An unspoken encounter, however, was at least as important as the others addressed. The ten European consortium Museums of RIME invited leading North American museum scholars and practitioners to take pride of place at this important meeting. Ruth B. Phillips, Sally Price, Corinne Kratz, Joe D. Horse Capture, and George Marcus were asked to present papers, moderate and chair sessions and serve as discussants. The conference was officially dedicated to the late Ivan Karp (1943-2011), the American anthropologist of Africa who edited seminal readers on postcolonial museology, and who died last year. The issues addressed at the RIME conference: *Primitive Art in Civilized Places, Exhibiting Cultures, Museums and Communities, Writing Culture*, are book titles published by these North American scholars over the past twenty-five years. Many of the practical issues raised during this conference have long been put into practice in North America, through such initiatives as NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act), the

building of tribal and ethnic museums, and even new national museums on the Washington mall, dedicated to Jewish Holocaust and Native American and now African American communities. But in Europe, while ethnography museums share a postcolonial discourse with those of North America, the similarities end there.

Ethnographic collections in Europe are much older than those in the U.S. and Canada. Recent migrant communities in Europe are more global than any from the past. In the U.S., repatriation has been a focus of postcolonial museography. In Europe, finding meaning for objects that have outlived their museum histories and a model for inclusion of migrants who never before lived on European soil is the project at hand. Ruth Phillips and George Marcus offered fascinating prescriptions for new types of museum encounters and contemporary anthropological research that could be applied to the museums of RIME. They advocated for the museum to function as a diplomatic space, between scholars and indigenous peoples, between indigenous peoples and politicians, between scholars and politicians. As we now look toward the second and final RIME conference to be held at the Pitt Rivers Museum in July, 2013, and slated to host an equally stellar cast of North American keynotes and guests, I for one look forward to a more integrated dialogue, to an “insertion zone,” where North Americans and Europeans can interact more fully to address the particular challenges of the museums of RIME.

In conclusion, one more encounter bears mention. Leaving the eerily beautiful Rationalist style marble halls of the Luigi Pigorini Museum at the end of the

provocative and challenging RIME conference, I could not help but notice the jarring juxtaposition of a symposium meant to untangle the political and cultural web of colonial collecting that took place throughout Europe for hundreds of years, and the setting for the meeting--a Fascist-era building meant to celebrate the same type of political and colonial control that the conference presenters were rejecting. In his welcoming remarks at the RIME conference, ICOM Executive Council Member Daniele Jallà declared, “We never have been allowed to talk about the architecture of museums.” We should accept Mr. Jallà’s remark as a challenge. Museum buildings, as online images or veritable storehouses, are powerful ambassadors for encounters between objects and their constituents. They are also filled with cultural and aesthetic history that can amplify the rich dialogues already taking place.

*Laurie Beth Kalb is on the Art History Faculty of Temple University Rome, where she teaches Museum History and Theory, and a Research Associate at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University.*



Conference details, including for online booking and the application process for poster presentations, are now available on the conference web pages at <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/PRMconference.html>

PRM Conference  
Tel: 044 -1865 - 613014  
Postal address: PRM Conference  
Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford,  
South Parks Road  
Oxford, OX1 3PP, United Kingdom

### **Sharing Cultures 2013 - web-site available**

The web-site of the Sharing Cultures 2013 Conference is now public at <http://sc2013.greenlines-institute.org/sc2013website/>  
3rd International Conference on Intangible Heritage, Aveiro – Portugal, July 2013

Sharing Cultures 2013 - 3rd International Conference on Intangible Heritage follows the path established by the previous Conference on Intangible Heritage (Sharing Cultures 2009 and 2011) and aims at pushing further the discussion on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), under the main topics proposed by the UNESCO Convention adding some new field of discussion, namely on what concerns management and promotion of ICH, educational matters and musealization

Sérgio Lira (Associate Professor), PhD  
Museum Studies (University of Leicester - UK)

**Mark your calendars**  
**August 10-17, 2013**  
ICOM Triennial  
Rio de Janeiro, Brasil

### **Tourism and the Shifting values of Cultural Heritage: Visiting Pasts, Developing Futures**

University of Birmingham - Ironbridge Institute and National Taiwan University in association with UNESCO UNITWIN Network – Tourism, Culture, Development (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) and Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change, UK

April 5-9, 2013, Taipei, Taiwan  
Contact: [ironbridge@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:ironbridge@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

### **11th SIEF International Congress 6/30/2013 to 7/4/2013**

Contact - [sief@meertens.knaw.nl](mailto:sief@meertens.knaw.nl)

The Societe Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore will be holding its 11th International Congress in Tartu, Estonia from June 30th to July 4th, 2013. All relevant details can be found by visiting SIEF's [website](http://www.siefhome.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=195) at [http://www.siefhome.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=195](http://www.siefhome.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=195).

### **International Commission for Research into European Food History 2013 Colloquium**

Brussels, September 16 – 20, 2013

Contact:- Peter Scholliers by e-mail: [pscholli@vub.ac.be](mailto:pscholli@vub.ac.be)

## BOOKS OF NOTE

### Forthcoming ICME Publication.

*Dissolving Boundaries. Museological Approaches to National, Social and Cultural Issues*, papers from ICME/2011/Banz, Germany, edited by Annette B. Fromm and Baerbel Kerkhoff Hader is at press as part of the Bamberger Beiträge zur Europäischen Ethnologie, Studienreihe Band 6. Please watch for this forthcoming publication.

## ICOM NEWS

### ICOMMUNITY

Are you part of the ICOMMUNITY yet?

ICOMMUNITY is ICOM's new online member information and collaboration portal, now in Beta testing. Already, ICOMMUNITY includes a worldwide calendar of ICOM events as well as the most up-to-date information on Rio 2013. Soon you will be able to manage and update your personal contact information. By the end of the year, you will have access to dedicated workspaces containing the latest information from ICOM-US as well as your personal international committees.

All ICOM Members have an ICOMMUNITY account and should have already received an email with login information. Your account is linked to your individual ICOM Member Number. To retrieve your personal login information, go to <http://icomcommunity.icom.museum>, click 'Forgot Your Password?', and provide your ICOM Member number and email address.

The ICOM Secretariat will re-send your Username and Password by email.

Log in today and be part of ICOMMUNITY.

Thanks to Leif Pareli, Mario Buletic and more for their images of ICME/2012/Namibia!



Our tour bus – ICME/2012/Namibia

### ICMENews 65

### Contents

Words from President.....	1
ICME/2012/Reports.....	3
Fellow Reports .....	14
Conferences, RIME Report.....	32
Books of Note .....	38
ICOM News .....	38

ICME News is published by ICME, the International Committee of Museums of Ethnography.  
President: Annette B. Fromm, The Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, <http://thefrost.fiu.edu/>  
e-mail: [annettefromm@hotmail.com](mailto:annettefromm@hotmail.com)

Editor:  
Prof.dr. Mihai Fifor, General manager of the Regional Museum of Oltenia, [www.muzeulolteniei.ro](http://www.muzeulolteniei.ro)  
e-mail: [mfifor@yahoo.com](mailto:mfifor@yahoo.com)