

# The Challenging Museum/ Challenging the Museum and other subjects

ICME-ICOM Annual Meeting  
Shanghai, China  
November 8-10, 2010



2010 SHANGHAI CHINA

International Committee of Museums of Ethnography  
International Council of Museums  
<http://icme.icom.museum>

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**in collaboration with**

**The Cultural Palace of Nationalities,  
State Ethnic Affairs Commission, China**

## Welcome

Dear colleagues and friends:

On behalf of the Ethnic Cultural Museums Professional Committee of the Chinese Association of Museums (CCOM) I am honored to extend our highest esteem and warmest welcome to all on this great occasion when the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress and 25<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of ICOM are convening in Shanghai, China!

The ethnological or ethnic cultural museums, together with ethnic minority groups and their home areas have been developing rapidly in recent years. They perform important functions and render great contributions to the building of social harmony, the preservation and development of cultural diversity in China as well as promoting national and international cultural exchanges and communications. In the meanwhile, we are facing increasingly serious challenges. For this reason, we see both elaborations of the ICOM Congress and Assembly theme of “Museum for Building Social Harmony” and “The Challenging Museum /Challenging the Museum” theme of the International Committee of Museums of Ethnography (ICME) annual conference as timely and significant. We fully and firmly believe that the active participation of all of our colleagues and friends will greatly gear up our work and enhance our extensive communication and cooperation with broad international vision and abundant achievements.

Finally, welcome to Shanghai and let me wish you a most pleasant time here and best wishes for the Congress, the Assembly, the Conference - a most complete success. Thank you all.

**Li Tiezhu**  
**Director of the Professional Ethnic Committee of Chinese**  
**Association of Museums**  
**Deputy Director of Cultural Palace of Nationalities, State**  
**Ethnic Affairs Commission, China**

## Greetings

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2010 annual conference of the International Committee of Museums of Ethnography, held in conjunction with the 22<sup>nd</sup> General Conference and 25<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the International Council of Museums.

Each year ICME chooses a theme around which to frame our discussions. This year's theme emerged from a new ICME working group proposed at last year's meeting in Seoul, The Challenging Museum/Challenging the Museum. The presentations on Tuesday, November 9, will address this theme. We expect a lively discussion. Thanks to Per Rekdal for chairing this working group and for organizing a day that promises to be rich.

Wednesday morning, November 10, ICME meets jointly with the International Committee of Exhibition Exchange. Two sessions of professionals will discuss issues of meaning in museums. ICME board member Anette Rein ably organized a panel addressing meaning from the point of view of ethnography.

Additional papers were chosen from the many, many abstracts submitted. Unfortunately, time constraints did not allow all to speak. We look forward to the participation of all ICME members in future meetings.

This conference could not have happened without the coordination of our lady in Beijing, Duan Mei, an ethnographer at the Museum of Cultural Palace of Nationalities in Beijing and new member of ICME. I cannot thank her enough for ensuring that all arrangements for this conference were made. I also thank the Cultural Palace of Nationalities in Beijing for this assistance in this year's meeting.

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

## MONDAY, November 8

### 14:30-15:35 **General Paper Session I**

- 14:30-14:35 Chair, Henry C. Bredekamp, CEO Iziko Museums of Cape Town
- 14:35-14:50 Agnes Aljas, *Audience participation as the framework of activities for museums and heritage institutions*, Estonian National Museum, Tartu, Estonia
- 14:50-15:05 Yong-Jirong, *Development and Challenges of Ethnic Cultural and Regional Museums in China*, Cultural Palace of Nationalities Museum, Beijing, China
- 15:05-15:20 Zhang Min Jie, *The Thing about the Ethnic Museums Facing Challenge*, Ethnic Museum of Heilongjiang Province, Harbin, China
- 15:20-15:35 Discussion

### **15 :35 – 16:00 Coffee and Tea Break**

### 16:00-17:10 **General Paper Session II**

- 16:00- 16:05 Chair, Mihai Fifor, Manager, The Regional Museum of Oltenia. Romania
- 16:05- 16:20 Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov, *Roma/Gypsy Museum – Challenging the Museum's Traditions in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe*, Ethnographic Institute and Museum at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria
- 16:20-16:35 Ralf Ceplak, *Challenging the public (opinion) with the Roma culture festival in Slovene museums*, Slovene ethnographic museum/Slovenski etnografski muzej
- 16:35-16:50 Edgar Heap of Birds, *Heads Above Grass: Native American Public Art*, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Ok, USA
- 16:50-17:10 Discussion

## TUESDAY, November 9

### 9:00 - 17:00 ICME Sessions II –IV The Challenging/ Museum/Challenging the Museum

#### Introduction

09:00 - 09:10 Annette B. Fromm: *Opening remarks* Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, FL, USA

#### Challenge

9:10 - 09:40 Per B. Rekdal: *The Challenging Museum/Challenging the Museum* Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Norway

#### Identities

- 9:40 - 10:00 Stefan Krankenhagen/ Kerstin Poehls: *Beyond borders? On the Musealisation of Europe & Migration*, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Institut für Europäische Ethnologie, Berlin, Germany
- 10:00 – 10:20 Dr. Shelly Shenhav-Keller: *Visual Politics & Poetic Ethnography in Ethnic Heritage Centers in Israel*, The Academic College of Tel-Aviv-Yaffo, & Beit-Berl Academic College, Israel
- 10:20 – 10:30 Brief discussion/questions/answers

### 10:30 - 10:50 *Coffee and Tea Break*

#### In the service of society

- 10:50 – 11:10 Hadwig Kraeutler: *Otto Neurath's (r)evolutionary concepts for museum work*, Belvedere, Vienna, Austria
- 11:10 – 11:30 Zvezdana Antos, *Let's have coffee! - Interpretation of items from our daily life*, The Ethnographic Museum, Zagreb, Croatia
- 11:30 - 11:40 Brief discussion/questions/answers

#### Justice

11:40 – 12:00 Heidi McKinnon: *Exhibiting Controversy: Agua, Rios y Pueblos and the Global Fight for Water Justice*, Association for the Integral Development of

- Victims of Violence, Maya Achí Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, Guatemala
- 12:00 - 12:20 Ann Siri Hegseth Garberg: *Minda, the girl at the pharmacy – An educational programme on sexual assault*, The Museums of Sör-Trøndelag, Trondheim, Norway
- 12:20 – 12:30 Brief discussion/questions/answers

**12:30 - 14:00 Lunch Break**

**Truth**

- 14:00 – 14:20 Viv Golding, *'The elephant in the room'* School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, UK

**Respect**

- 14:20 – 14:40 Anette Rein: *Sacred Ritual or Profane 'Event' Culture? – How can Ritual Objects and Performances in Museums be Shown with Integrity?*, Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Germany
- 14:40 – 15:00 Tan Huism, *Presenting Islamic Culture – Case Study of the Asian Civilisations Museum*, Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore
- 15:00 – 15:20 Klas Grinell, *When legitimate claims collide: Dealing with critiques of dialogical efforts in Museum work*, Museum of World Cultures, Gothenburg, Sweden
- 15:20 - 15:40 Brief discussion/questions/answers

**15:40 - 16:00 Short break**

**16:00 - 17:00 Debate**

**What's the point of being challenging? What would be the challenges we'd like museums to do more of?**

**Challenging = controversial? difficult? surprising?**

**Challenging the concept of what a museum can be?**

- 16:00 – 16:15 Leif Pareli, *Summary and challenge*, Norsk Folkemuseum-The Norwegian Museum of Cultural History
- 16:15 – 16:50 Panel and plenary discussion

16:50 – 17:00 Annette B. Fromm: Closing remarks. Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, FL, USA

18:00-19:30 **Reception for ICEE and ICME Members at Shanghai Museum**

*Pre-registration required*

No. 201 Renmin Avenue

Transportation: By bus No.574, No.71,

No.123, No.46, No.123, Tunnel

Bus No. 6, No. 934, Subway No.1 No.145,

Subway No. 2

[www.shanghaimuseum.net](http://www.shanghaimuseum.net)

**WEDNESDAY, November 10**

**9:30-12:00 Exchanging Meaning, Joint Panel Session,  
Co-organized by ICEE and ICME**

**9:30-10:30 Part I: Defining Categories of Artifacts**

Moderator

Anette Rein, Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Germany

9 :30-9 :35 Opening Remarks

9 :35- 9 :50 Steven Engelsman, *Categorizing objects, does it make sense?*, National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, Leiden, Netherlands

9 :50-10 :05 Tanja Rozenberger, *Collections in (r)evolution*, Museum of Recent History Celje, Slovenia

10 :05-10 :20 Amareswar Galla, *Krishna's Dilemma*, University of Queensland, Australia

10 :20-10 :30 Discussion

**10:30-11:00 Coffee and Tea Break**

**11:00-12:00 Part II: Meaning as a Function of Display**

Moderator

Anne-Catherine Hauglustaine, Coordinator of the Jardin des Sciences, University of Strasbourg Science Museum, Strasbourg, France



Professor Lucie Morisset, UQAM, Montreal,  
Canada  
Marie-Paule Jungblut; History Museum of the  
City of Luxembourg and president of ICMAH  
Dr .Camille Pisani, Natural History Museum of  
Bruxelles, Belgium  
Bruno Jacomy, Musée des Confluences, Lyon,  
France

**12:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break**

- 14:00 – 15:20 **General Paper Session III**
- 14:00-14:05 Chair, Ms Victoria Phiri, Director, Moto Moto Museum, Zambia
- 14:05-14:20 Alex de Voogt, *Remote Museums: Degrees of Separation and Harmony*, American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA
- 14:20-14:35 Sabrina Yi, *The Comparison of the First and Second Generation of Chinese Ecomuseums*, School of Architecture, University of Adelaide, Australia
- 14:35-14:50 Hy Zhang, *The Necessity of a Paradigm Shift from Social Evolutionism to Cultural Ecology for Ethnological Museums in China*, Minzu University of China, Beijing China
- 14:50-15:05 Sun qi, *Map of Cultural Relics at Nanjian Village*, Anthropology Museum, Institute of Nationalities Research, Yunnan University, Kunming, Yunnan, China
- 15:05- 15:20 Discussion
- 15:30-17:00 **Annual ICME Business Meeting**  
followed by short board meeting
- 18:00 **Annual ICME Dinner at LuBoLang Restaurant**  
*Dinner and transport hosted by The Cultural Palace of Nationalities, State Ethnic Affairs Commission, China*  
Departure at 17:40 from the Conference Hall

Lu Bo Lang Restaurant is located by the nine-twist zigzag Jiuqu Bridge in the Old City God Temple. It faces the bustling downtown area in the south and overlooks a luxuriant garden in the north. It is a three-story imitation Ming Dynasty building with black tiles and red upturned eaves. The restaurant has a quiet and graceful environment, antique and quaint in structure and rich in traditional Chinese national style.

### **Followed by a visit to the Shikumen Open House Museum**

"Wulixiang" literally means "home" in the Shanghai dialect. "Dao Wulixiang Lai Zuo Zuo" means coming to my house and sitting for a while. "Open House" in English refers to the custom of neighbours informally dropping in for a visit to one's home. "Open House" follows on in meaning from "Open Invitation".

Over 70% of Shanghai residents were born and raised in Shikumen houses. However, Shikumen are now fast disappearing. The Shikumen "Wulixiang" Exhibition Hall in Xintiandi offers a chance to cherish the memories of old Shanghai and recall past events.

*Please note: The program may be subject to changes*

## **ABSTRACTS**

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Agnes Aljas (Estonia)

### **Audience participation as the framework of activities for museums and heritage institutions**

Memory institutions all over the world are embracing new opportunities provided by digital technologies. They vary in degrees of optimism hoping that these technologies will help in the basic functions of the heritage institutions. Museums have a potentially educational role for fostering cultural participation and thus also for strengthening the notions of cultural citizenship and democracy, in general.

Viewing democracy through the larger interpretative framework shows that democratising heritage institutions, by opening the collections to the general public, and even more specifically to the communities connected to the heritage institutions, has several potentially positive outcomes. Creative activities of internet users and participation in digital content creation in the heritage institutions are potentially also linked to democratic participation in the public sphere, although the connections are not direct.

Museums and heritage institutions can foster democracy through providing opportunities to challenge the expertise of the heritage professionals themselves. They also give visitors, whose position as active interpreters is usually left unconsidered, more visible opportunities to interpret their own heritage and cultural memory.

In my presentation I will look at how modern heritage institutions can motivate users to feel engaged with cultural heritage. The examples will come from Estonian museums and from Estonian National Museum activities. Today, museums are feeling the need to broaden the notion of Estonian culture along with different groups. I will analyse online and offline projects and discuss how sustainable they have or have not been.

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Zvezdana Antos (Croatia)

***Let's have a coffee!* - Interpretation of items from our daily life**

This paper is based on a two-year research project conducted within the scope of the EU project *Entrepreneurial cultures and European cities*, which focused on researching small and midsize entrepreneurship in seven European cities (Amsterdam, Berlin, Volos, Barcelona, Liverpool, Luxemburg and Zagreb). The aim of the project was to demonstrate how innovativeness and creativity are connected with new entrepreneurial initiatives in the sense of promoting interdisciplinary collection of tangible and intangible heritage of present-day entrepreneurs, predominantly of immigrant origin. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the project, each partner made a contribution from its immediate professional field using specific museum work methodology such as the outreach method as an innovative way of attracting new audience to museums.

The participation of the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum opened up new possibilities of interpreting museum items and collections (national and non-European) and linking them with contemporary items from our daily life. Using the example of the exhibition *Let's have a coffee!, Views of Zagreb Entrepreneurs on the Culture of Coffee Consumption*, I will demonstrate how the meaning of a particular item of global culture changes with respect to the scientific viewpoint, its social environment, but also its individual context. In this process, it is necessary to collect and preserve not only tangible items, but also evidence of intangible heritage. These data are extremely valuable even today and they will be especially important to future researchers in studying our daily life. Using ethnographic film and animated presentation, the exhibited items were placed into the context of daily life of urban dwellers and their lifestyles, which are as urban phenomena inevitable parts of the global culture and the consumer society (consumerism). The collected tangible and intangible heritage of present-day entrepreneurs is an important document illustrating the daily urban life.

Better interpretation and contextualisation of displayed items was facilitated by the presentation of works of contemporary conceptual artists, which resulted from an introspective into the social relevance of coffee. These works of art represent the artists' views of everyday culture, i.e. culture as part of daily practice and daily life of most of us. Contemporary forms of communication on the Internet enabled us to create and present a digital virtual collection of items from our daily life at the project web site [www.eciec.eu](http://www.eciec.eu) and at [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com), where exhibited museum items were presented together with items from other European museums who participated in the project. By putting items into various contexts and improving the quality of communication, we enrich items with information, while their placement on the Internet opens new ways of presentation that are unavailable to original items. As a result, such items become universal cultural assets. Good quality communication enriches items and opens up possibilities of interconnecting visitors, items and information.

Actually, the basic task of ethnographic museums today is to collect items from our daily life and identify them to be recorded and presented to future generations. When collecting items of daily life, museums must also integrate theoretical aspects into their practices, primarily from the domain of urban ethnology/anthropology and contemporary museology, to broaden the knowledge of multiple meanings of these items.

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Ralf Čeplak Mencin (Slovenia)

### **Challenging the public (opinion) with the Roma culture festival in Slovene museums**

The paper will deal with the presentation of different aspects of the Roma culture(s) and its affirmation and aspiration for social harmony between the dominant (Slovene) and subordinate (Roma/Romany /Gypsy) cultures and many obstacles it has to face in Slovenia.

The objective of the inclusion of Roma culture in some of the Slovene museums and other cultural institutions is to increase

the knowledge of Roma history, culture, values and lifestyle among the Slovenes (still very racist and full of prejudice), to encourage the contribution of Roma to Europe's cultural life and diversity, and ultimately contribute to giving a positive value to an image of Roma which are, more often than not, perceived in a negative and stereotyped way. Engagement through cultural heritage is a non-confrontational and attractive method of communication, which allows Roma people and their culture to be seen and understood, away from the tensions of policing, housing etc.

In June 2008, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana joined the Council of Europe's (Strasbourg /France) initiative and became partner in the Route of Roma Culture and Heritage Project, a joint project with France, Germany, Greece, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The tradition of research in Roma and Sinti communities in Slovenia extends into the early 60s with field work and collecting of objects. Since the first festival of the Roma culture in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, *Romano Chon / Romski mesec /Roma month* (April 2009), Roma have had the opportunity to communicate through a range of cultural media including song, dance, artifacts, family history and customs. While not wanting to romanticize the Roma, it is intended to investigate their culture, which allows the audience to meet it and to develop understanding of it. Thus, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum seeks to foster knowledge and appreciation of Roma ethnological heritage and fights against discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes.

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Alex de Voogt (USA)

### **Remote museums: degrees of separation and harmony**

In the twentieth century a number of museums have been erected away from their prospective audiences in the city. They feature modern art, classic art and ethnographic materials that have no geographic connection to the remote location in which they are situated. Instead, the museum founders have sought to balance art, architecture and nature into one location separated from the noise of city life.

With examples from Japan, Germany, Austria, Holland, Denmark, United States and Brazil, it becomes clear that despite the unique character of each of these museums they all share the quest for an experience that includes the journey to the museum. The entrance to the museum takes the viewer into a different world of nature, art and architecture. The relative success of these museums is found in this unusual combination.

Although social harmony is not mentioned by any of the founders of these museums, the social aspect can be clearly identified. The world that is created in their remote location allows for other conventions of behavior and control. These museums exemplify the unique role that a museum experience plays when it changes context and location.

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Steven Engelsman (Netherlands)

### **Categorizing objects, does it make sense?**

In order to work rationally, museums need intellectual control over their collections. So they should be able to retrieve objects in their collections as fast as can be done. The only way to proceed is categorize objects so as to be able to search collections successfully. The clearer the categories, the clearer the thinking behind them, the faster the museum curator can perform his core duty: retrieve an object from storage. However, there is also a downside in that clear and well determined categories always reflect basic assumptions which will eventually turn out to be insulting to others. Catch 22?

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Amareswar Galla (Australia)

### **Krishna's Dilemma**

This is a reflection on objects and constructs in museums and art galleries. It examines the extent to which the location of objects and art works in museums produce different contextual meanings. Do you think that objects acquire different meanings depending on where they are located? For example does an image of Krishna become an artwork in an art

museum, an object illustrating religious life in a social history museum or an ethnographic object contextualising the life of cowherds in ancient India in an anthropology/ethnology museum?

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Ann Siri Hegseth Garberg (Norway)

### **Minda. The girl at the pharmacy. An educational programme on sexual assault. A challenging theme at the Sverresborg**

In 2008, Sverresborg Trøndelag Folk Museum made an educational programme about sexual assault based on a true story about the young girl Minda. First to Minda's story:

*An October morning in 1888, a girl is found lying outside the pharmacy at the city square of Trondheim. She's unconscious and clearly intoxicated. Two witnesses could tell that her clothes were in a rather disorderly fashion. Minda was brought to the police station. The police examination tells that Minda explained that she was invited inside the pharmacy the night before, while waiting for her aunt to finish work. Further, she was offered something to drink, which she commented tasted peculiar. After this she remembered nothing. There was no medical examination and the case was dismissed due to lack of evidence. Her mother and aunt reacted intensively on this, demanding to know why the Head of Police didn't pursue a further investigation. Minda was only 14 years old and she had most likely been raped inside the pharmacy. One of Trondheim's main newspapers, "Dagsposten", printed a story about Minda and how her case got dismissed because she was a girl from the working class, as opposed to the men in the pharmacy, who belonged to the upper class. This led to a riot among the people in Trondheim outside the home of the Head of Police. The newspaper "Adresseavisen" angled it differently, indicating Minda was a prostitute, not an innocent girl. Minda's story became a part in the class struggle in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It seems that Minda led a promiscuous life after this. She didn't get a work and had to live with the shame and the blame. In 1894, only 20 years old, she stepped on to the emigrant ship Juno, with a ticket to Chicago – and, we expect, a new life.*

### **The educational programme**

Museum theatre was used as a method to present this story. It is a way of making the museum more real, a place where one



can get an experience that activates emotions, which again can be applied to one's own life and situation today. Museum theatre also gives the audience a choice of different degrees of involvement. Especially when it is based on challenging themes, such as sexual assault, the audience should have the opportunity to take a distance whenever necessary.

Through the performance we brought Minda's case to the court. The prosecutor and the defender acted in a 2008-setting, while the witnesses acted in an 1888-setting. The manuscript was true to the historical sources – the statements from the involved parts in 1888 and the newspaper reports.

The audience had to judge if the men in the pharmacy were innocent or guilty. Then the pupils went into 4 groups - girls in 2 groups and boys in 2 groups without their teachers. The actors left their roles to be themselves – the male actors talked with the boys and the female actors with the girls. The pupils had to state why they had voted innocent or guilty and interesting discussions about their situation today – personal boundaries, responsibility, prejudices and sexuality - followed. Then all the pupils, the actors and the teachers met talking together.

### **Questions to be discussed**

Why did a traditional open-air museum present *sexual assaults* as one of the topics in its educative programme? Is this really a task for an open-air museum and why? What reactions would this lead to? How could we be prepared if some people in our audience were victims to sexual assaults, or even sexual criminals? How would they react? And how should we cope with that?

Can a museum contribute to make people, and especially young people, reflect on subjects as responsibility, personal boundaries, prejudice and sexuality? What did the young people actually learn? Did the educational programme change their attitudes or did we on the contrary contribute to strengthen their prejudices? How can a true story from the past be important to people today? What connections can be made between the past, the present and the future?

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Dr Viv Golding (UK)

**‘The elephant in the room’**

When three blind men met an elephant in the dining room they soon started to argue. Each challenged the other about elephant nature and appearance: stroking the ear one described a flat fan-like creature; another holding the leg spoke of a thick, round tree trunk; while the third gripping the tail declared they had stumbled upon a long, hairy rope. Clearly all were correct and also wrong because each noted only the part and not the whole animal, nor the context of the room, house, street, city, nation, world in which it dwelled. This traditional Indian folktale is adapted from a Jain version, although it is popularly retold in many faiths including Hindu, Sufi Moslem, Sikh and Humanist. The value of the tale for me seems to lie in the Jain notion of *Anekant*. This concept translates as ‘Many-sidedness’ or ‘Multiple view-points’, which is seen in the diverse faith versions and in the narrative itself. Taken as a metaphor for polyvocality in the challenging museum the tale may be regarded as pointing to the complexity of Truth as viewed from individual standpoints and from broader perspectives.

Working from traditional belief systems and the material culture attached to it, this paper explores the possibilities and limits of the challenging museum. It proposes exploring contemporary meanings and discussing the potential clash of socio-cultural perspectives – the elephant in the room – the difficulties and dilemmas that museums ignore or silence at their peril. Overall it argues for museums today to raise their voices in protest against abuses of human rights around the world, to uphold certain universal human rights and values, to stand firm against injustice and be ever vigilant when prejudice and discrimination changes its ugly form.

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Klas Grinell (Sweden)

**When legitimate claims collide: Dealing with critiques of dialogical efforts in Museum work**

The article and presentation builds on the experiences around an exhibition called *Jerusalem* at the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg, Sweden. It is a photo exhibition portraying QTGBL (QueerTransBiGayLesbian) persons from the Abrahamitic faiths *in situ* in Jerusalem. Some of the photographs mix QTGBL-negative quotes from the three Holy Scriptures with nude depictions of QTGBL persons and activities. The exhibition will open in November 2010 during the ICOM general assembly. The process is thus ongoing.

The Museum held dialogues with religious persons on how to handle the questions and images of this exhibition. No one we talked to wanted to stop the exhibition, but many were critical of the artists mixing of holiness and nudity/sexuality. The problem for them was not homosexuality, but putting sexuality in what they considered holy spaces and situations.

The artist was critical of our efforts to meet these critics, and claimed a media debate on censorship and freedom of speech followed. The Museum was criticized for bending to fundamentalist pressure, assuming that we had plans to stop the exhibition.

The Museum of World Culture tries to promote an intersectional understanding of the world, and wants to address and acknowledge both the right to be QBTGL, and to be religious, and involve both parties in dialogue.

To understand what happened during this media turmoil we need to think about the concrete situation of the Museum, and the discursive belonging of it. How can a state governed institution like the Museum deal with legitimate and opposing claims, and counter both homophobia and islamophobia? What discursive 'we's are the Museum as an institution inscribed in? What power relations follow from that? Can the Museum be an arena for open debate? Or is it, due to historic, bureaucratic, and cultural legacies, tied to certain positions and affiliations in the public space? Is it thus possible to deal with different legitimate claims equally, or are we a part, institutionally supporting one side? Concepts like universalism,

situatedness, intersectionality, dialogue and sincerity are used to try to critically examine these challenges. How challenging can a stately museum be? Present mistakes and possible future strategies are discussed.

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Edgar Heap of Birds (USA)

### **Heads Above Grass: Native American Public Art**

*Many Tsistsistas (Cheyenne) were killed during the fight. However, somehow we ran to find a hiding place. We got near a hill and there we saw a steep path where an old road used to be. There was red grass along the path and although the ponies had eaten some of it, it was still high enough for us to hide. In this grass we lay flat, our hearts beating fast; we were afraid to move. When the noise seemed to quiet down we believed the battle was about to end, we raised our heads high enough to see what was going on. We saw a figure lying near a hill and later we learned it was a body of Tsistsistas woman and child. The woman's body had been cut open by the soldiers.* Quote from *Moving Behind*, a fourteen year old Tsistsistas woman, survivor of Colonel Custer's massacre at the Washita River, November 27, 1868, near Cheyenne, Oklahoma.

As that high red grass of the violent Oklahoma prairie offered shelter and seclusion for the young woman, she would live to see many more mornings. She would grow up to become a respected elder, matriarch and tribal leader. Perhaps that time of danger had passed in order for her to nurture and teach the children of the future, as well as facilitate the execution of future Native public art messages.

Today it is imperative that we acknowledge the historical ongoing brutality, intolerance and biased actions of the past via challenging Native museum programming. Thus, by lifting our heads above the isolation of the tall grass we can move forward to interject a true awareness of history through public art interventions which will explore the complex issues of society, thereby creating harmony through transparent education.

Heads Above Grass will present provocative public art interventions sponsored by Museum of Anthropology/Belkin

Gallery UBC, Vancouver, B.C., National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (52nd Venice Biennale), Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Mn., San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, Ca., Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Ct. and Atlanta College of Art Gallery, Atlanta, Ga. These projects based upon historical research and Native outspoken rebuttal will offer tribal perspectives from these nations: Cheyenne, Sioux, Pequot, Ohlone, Cherokee, Choctaw, Maya, Musqueam, Haida, Gitxsan, and Nuuchannulth. This paper will share how museums can support indigenous reflections upon understanding trauma, memory and reconstructive futures in public art.

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Hadwig Kraeutler Austria)

### **Otto Neurath's (r)evolutionary concepts for museum work**

This paper presents Otto Neurath's (1882, Vienna/Austria – 1945, Oxford/UK) museum ideas and projects, associated with his fundamental quest to ‘develop and employ a conception of knowledge as an instrument of emancipation.’ It specifically looks at how he worked with exhibitions and museums as society’s instruments for communication and learning. Neurath, best known as an influential philosopher, was the founding director of the *Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum* (Museum of Society and Economy, 1925-1934) in Vienna. With an interdisciplinary team of experts (after 1934, in exile, in the Mundaneum and Isotype Institutes, respectively), Neurath developed an effective methodology for engendering active engagement and empowerment on the exhibition users’ sides.

This Isotype technique (International System of TYpographic Picture Education) changed museum/exhibition production fundamentally. It was largely based on pictorial statistics and Isotype-charts, together with a strategic position in the museum team, the ‘Transformer’, the ‘advocate of the interests of the public.’ This methodology meant leaving behind traditions of peer review and ‘finite truths’. Instead, Neurath’s aim was to open sustainable processes with the users for

actively sharing the critical and dynamic discourse of 'insecurity/incongruity' and for democratic empowering.

Renewed interest in Neurath's work has emerged in areas as varied as political economy, fine art, design, philosophy, cultural theory, and urban studies, and especially in visual education. This paper describes features of Neurath's user-centered museum and exhibition work integral to his other interests, and relating to real and virtual spaces and times, to Neurath's (r)evolutionary democratic, egalitarian and social Utopia, and with clear relevancy for contemporary museum work.

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Stefan Krankenhagen (Norway) and Kerstin Poehls (Germany)  
**Beyond borders? On the Musealisation of Europe & Migration**

After almost sixty years of political and economic integration in Europe, we observe a certain need for cultural valorisation and musealisation of an ongoing process which affects most citizens in and beyond Europe on a daily basis. Various projects such as the *Museum of Europe*, the *House of European History*, the *Bauhaus Europa* or the *Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée* attempt to display the history of Europe as seen from the perspective of an "ever closer union". So far, those projects haven't revealed to a broader audience *which* Europe they are aiming at and *for whom* the idea of a Europe beyond borders should apply.

At the same time, the seemingly immaterial and placeless phenomenon of migration is turning into a popular theme of museal display across Europe. In our paper, we understand and investigate these debates as a step to self-reflexivity by which European societies "cosmopolitize" themselves – forced to do so by the ever-increasing significance that both the European Union as a political agent and migrants gain in Europe. Both the political centre of Europe in Brussels and the EU peripheries appear as driving forces in the process of Europeanization (Beck 2007, Delanty 2005).

We will illustrate our line of argumentation by turning attention to organizational struggles and the aesthetic and narrative strategies used by exhibitions on migration and Europe. Currently, temporary exhibitions manage to drive museums, asking for reflexivity and a broadened understanding of both national and European history. How do musealized representations of migration attempt and succeed in engaging in a broader debate on Europe? How do museums and exhibitions in European integration take up a position in political discourse on the EU? Linking these two discourses, is the figure of the migrant in the museum in danger of becoming the naïve fulfillment of a European dream about mobility and intercultural diversity?

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Heidi McKinnon (Guatemala)

**Exhibiting Controversy: Agua, Rios y Pueblos and the Global Fight for Water Justice**

This paper will address the development and significance of a touring exhibit called “Agua, Rios y Pueblos/Water, Rivers and Peoples,” which takes a critical look at the environmental and human costs of mega-development projects such as hydroelectric dams and mining concerns around the world. The development of “Agua, Rios y Pueblos” is linked to the phenomenon of an increasing number of civil society organizations, unaffiliated with any particular museum, who are using exhibitions as an advocacy tool in their campaigns for social justice. The exhibit is becoming a standard bearer in this movement to challenge and expand the reach of traditional exhibition development and public programming, and as such, deserves examination.

“Agua, Rios y Pueblos” highlights twenty-eight case studies of hydroelectric dams and mining operations in twenty-five countries. Associated public programming is developed in a participatory fashion with local civil society organizations at each venue, aimed at raising a greater understanding of the health of our watersheds and the effects of unchecked development on the communities that call them home.

Not all museums are willing to take on such subject matter. It can affect funding sources, diplomatic relations and exacerbate divides within a community. Educating the public on social justice issues, however, is valid and civil society actors are developing exhibitions with or without museum participation.

This shift is not emerging solely from civil society. Foundations such as the Open Society Institute understand the necessity of funding what some might deem 'controversial' exhibits. These projects are moving into non-traditional settings as a means to expand opportunities for dialogue and education beyond the landscape of the traditional museum. This paper offers background on the development of "Água, Rios y Pueblos," and its localized social agendas, concluding with an exploration of this shifting landscape in critical, socially-minded exhibition development.

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Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov (Bulgaria)

### **Roma/Gypsy Museum – Challenging the Museum's Traditions in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe**

The social and economic transition in the region of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe after the collapse of the so-called "socialist system" in the 90s was reflected also in the field of museum work. The communist ideology, which dominated the previous historical period, in theory proclaimed itself as leading the principles of internationalism and denied nationalism. In practice each of the countries of former Eastern bloc consistently conducted their national policy.

In all countries of the region the understanding of folk traditions as an expression of "national spirit" (according to the well known definition of Herder) dominated. Museums of ethnography there were perceived as an important tool for building and strengthening national identity. This concept was dominant in the exhibitions, research and teaching work. Therefore, the presentation of "others" (in the ethnic term) did not enter the exhibitions or in exceptional cases remained in negligible positions.



In this general context, Roma/Gypsy culture has been almost absent in museums of ethnography in the region. Their culture didn't enter either the permanent, nor temporary or thematic exhibitions. An additional factor for excluding their story from exhibitions in the region was the historically established unequal treatment of Roma/Gypsies and the disparaging attitude towards them as a people without distinctive, valuable ethnic culture, which is incomparable with the culture of the majority population.

The time of political transition challenged the work of museums of ethnography. Specialized Roma museums came into being as did specialized departments and funding. Quite regularly exhibitions devoted to traditional and contemporary Roma culture are organized in national and regional museums of ethnography.

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Anette Rein (Germany)

### **Sacred Ritual or Profane 'Event' Culture? How can Ritual Objects and Performances in Museums be Shown with Integrity?**

Religions and sacred world views are part of the classical topics that belong to anthropological research as expressed in the collecting and exhibiting activities of museums. Museum exhibitions tell stories about religious practices in order to mediate cultural differences as well as shared aspects between different world views.

There are many contemporary ways of presentation of ethnographic objects in different types of museums – from art museums to ethnographic museums. By using different presentation styles it is possible to show different perspectives on complex religious matters. However, to fulfill the public's growing expectation for entertainment, in addition to displays of objects and accompanying lectures, curators also offer also religious performances in the context of exhibitions. In Germany they are often referred to as *Events*. These appear to be in response to the German public's growing longing for an 'authentic spiritual experience'.

This paper asks how the museum as a public institution (*Bildungsinstitution*) can be aware of and uphold their ethical responsibility towards the cultures and religions that it represents and educates the public about. The paper will show alternative ways of presenting objects as part of a religious life and how the former, actual owners of these objects can react and participate with dignity and integrity, instead of becoming pawns within an event culture.

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Per Rekdal (Norway)

### **The Challenging Museum/Challenging the Museum**

Museums of ethnography/ethnology are museums about cultures and societies. As such they should be able to deal with all aspects of cultures and societies, also issues that are seen as challenging.

What is perceived as challenging will of course vary from country to country, from museum to museum, from profession to profession. A mere trifle in one setting may be unbearably “hot” in another. This theme is therefore risky in a global conference: We may talk past each other, insult each other, even bore each other, but also link in new and exciting ways.

I am not so fond of the intended controversies, but there is much to be learned from the “oops, it turned out controversial without meaning to be!” The fallible and complex is what brings us forward into new insights. Daring to point out dilemmas and paradoxes that we should not hide or simplify away, is at the core of what I see as being challenging – and truly educational.

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Tanja Roženbergar Šega (Slovenia)

### **Collections in (r)evolution**

The article wishes to present the issue of a museum which was founded by authorities in a former communist country. The museum was founded with the view to establish and legitimize the status, the power and the politics of the regime and at the

same time to form, control and re-shape the collective historical memory of a certain community. The museum's primary activity – collecting objects, maintaining, preserving and presenting the cultural heritage, education and scientific research – was largely ideologically biased; attention was mainly focused on affirmative contents. Collections in the so-called “Red museums” were tools to present the communist ideology. They were to build the institutionally formed and maintained collective historical memory, which was always an important part of the identity, (self) image and (self) awareness of a particular community.

The consequences of broader political and social changes connected to the fall of communism in Europe were indirectly also reflected in collections and activity of the Red museums. They not only lost numerous visitors, but also lost their mission and the essence of their existence. That is why such museums were closed down, renamed and re-formed after 1990. But what happened with their collections? What is the role and mission of these collections and museum objects in modern society?

The social integration of museums is one of the key and most recognizable new trends in the field of museology and of the increasingly important contextualization of heritage. Its purpose always has remained to justify the present and the future, while presenting the presentation of the past.

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Dr. Shelly Shenhav-Keller (Israel)

### **Visual Politics & Poetic Ethnography in Ethnic Heritage Centers in Israel**

Museums and heritage centers in Israel reveal significant trends in the role they play in the formulation of multicultural Israeli identity and the creation of a national ethos (Gonen,1992, Gorni,1990). This role is expressed through the ideology, cultural discourse and forms of presentation and representation. A careful gaze at the themes and contents of museums and heritage centers, in the last three decades, shows a search for roots and links to the past in connection to the present locality. These cultural and ethnographic inventions

construct an `imagined community` (Anderson,1991), ethnic identity, historical narrative (Kavanah,1996) and collective memory (Halbwachs,1980, Nora,1989, Urry,1996).

The research reported on in this paper focuses on four heritage centers in Israel. Three of them are Jewish heritage ethnic centers – Cochin, Babylonian and Libyan. The fourth is a Bedouin (non-Jewish) heritage centre.

The Cochin [Southern India] Jewry Heritage Center, located in an agricultural settlement, named Nevatim, in the Negev (the southern part of Israel), opened in 1995.

The Babylonian [Iraqi] Jewry Heritage Center and its museum, located in Or-Yehuda\*, opened in 1988.

The Libyan Jewry Heritage center located in Or-Yehuda (as the Babylonian center), opened gradually since 2001.

The Joe Alon Center for the Bedouin Heritage and its museum is located in the Negev (the southern part of Israel), opened in 1985.

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Sun Qi, (China)

### **Map of Cultural Relics at Nanjian Village**

The paper interprets the significance of cultural relics in the development of rural communities of the Huayao Sect of the Dai ethnic minority. Through a map of their locations in a village, it decodes their cultural implications.

In Nanjian Village the items and crafts from the past are integrated into present day life, remaining part of the living culture. The map reveals the nexus between their excavation, collection, succession or recreation, the mutual influence among these old items and crafts as well as the interaction between folk culture and village development. The paper illustrates a roadmap of the development of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of an ethnic group, which is in the forms of artworks, objects of daily use and traditional arts and crafts.

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Tan Huism (Singapore)

## **Presenting Islamic Culture – Case Study of the Asian Civilizations Museum**

Singapore is a multi-cultural and multi-religious country. While majority of the 3.5 million population are of Chinese descent and practice a form of Taoist cum Chinese folk religion, about 16% of the population are Muslims. The Muslim population of Singapore are mainly of Malay ethnicity and are Sunnis of the Shafi' school of thought. The Asian Civilizations Museum (ACM) was established to explore the ancestral cultures of Singaporeans and promote inter-cultural understanding. Given the strong presence of Islam in Southeast Asia and a Muslim population in Singapore – it is not unexpected to find a gallery dedicated to the Islamic civilization at the ACM.

The portrayal of Islamic culture in museums has become increasingly sensitive since events of September 11. Museums as secular institutions often find it difficult or uncomfortable to present religion. However, given that the museum is a secular setting, I feel it has great potential of providing a neutral ground to promote greater inter-religious understanding. In my presentation, I will share the experiences of the ACM in presenting Islamic culture – how does one, for example, explain the idea of *jihad*, the veil, the depiction of the Prophet Muhammad to non-Muslims. On the other hand, how does the museum provide the local Muslim population with food for thought about the Islamic civilization – for example exposure to Shi'i Islam.

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Yi Hong (Sabrina) (Australia)

## **The Comparison of the First and Second Generation of Chinese Ecomuseums**

Originating from France, the “*ecomusées*” concept has been universally acknowledged as a new paradigm for the holistic interpretation of cultural heritage, in which communities preserve, interpret, and manage their heritage for sustainable development. From 1998 to 2005, four ecomuseums were built

in nationality villages in the Guizhou Province of China, with Norwegian sponsorship. They developed these remote villages where 55 minority groups reside as well as to conserve their distinctive indigenous landscapes. These four ecomuseums of minority ethnography form “the First Generation of Ecomuseums in China.” As initial experiments in China, they present three major problems: the weak linkage between ecomuseum and museology; inadequate participation by minority people; over-emphasized tourism.

Explaining these problems, it has been argued that the ecomuseum concept is a special by-product of the Western post-industrial era, and therefore cannot be applied in Chinese poverty-stricken villages where communities have no awareness of the significance of their cultural identities. Learning from this unsuccessful experience, more recently, twelve ecomuseums of minority ethnography have been established in three other provinces; they are called “the Second Generation of Ecomuseums in China.” This generation presents significant improvements and demonstrates the localization of ecomuseums in China.

By reviewing the definitions, history and international precedents of ecomuseums, this paper brings forward key issues pertinent to Chinese ecomuseums. An in-depth comparison of the first and the second generation of Chinese ecomuseums is undertaken to highlight three main strategies for better management. These are: mutual cooperation between the traditional museum and the surrounding village-based ecomuseums; engagement of multi-disciplinary group of scientific advisors; and soundness of master planning of landscape architecture. These strategies are raised as criteria whereby China and other developing countries may be able to adopt the ecomuseum concept as an effective strategy for minority ethnographic interpretation, development and conservation.

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Yong Jirong (China)

**Development & Challenges of Ethnic Cultural and Regional Museums In China**

Ethnological and anthropological museums debuted in China at the beginning of the 20th century in the wake of the introduction of ethnology and anthropology from the West. A medium of culture, they play a significant role in promoting social development and harmony, particularly in the sense of protecting and continuing the cultural legacy of ethnic minority groups and preserving China's cultural diversity. They have made remarkable progress in these aspects in its century-old history. In a time defined by industrialization, urbanization, globalization, market economy and information technologies, China, with spiraling economic growth and profound changes in society, faces unprecedented challenges in preservation of the cultural heritage of its 56 ethnic groups. In response the government has increased preservation efforts; one of its measures is to build more and better ethnic museums particularly those in regions with large ethnic minority populations. While seeing tremendous opportunities down the path, China's ethnic museums and museums in ethnic minority regions have to work on issues, such as increasing their innovation, upgrading their functions, enhancing their academic muscles and building a more competent staff, before they could fulfill the expectations for them.

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Dr. Haiyang Zhang (China)

**The Necessity of a Paradigm Shift from Social Evolutionism to Cultural Ecology for Ethnological Museums in China**

Ethnological museums are dedicated to the exhibition of cultures, whether they are ethnic, ethnological, anthropological or natural history. These museums in developed countries are primarily related to the ideals of the renaissance, the great geographical discovery, the enlightenment and the modernization, but today they are bonded to the postmodern emancipation of mind. In most of the developing counties, they are more often a combination of the anthropological knowledge, enlightenment mentality, the modern nation-building endeavor and market economy. For this reason, they

tend to pitch tents with the ideology of the nation-state under construction.

As a showcase of cultural diversity, ethnological museums can nourish zeitgeist, ethnocentrism, national, social and political identity as well as objective cultural knowledge. For this reason, modern state governments are enthusiastic about planning and building these museums with a paradigm of social evolutionism, which has the function of weakening the position and discourse of ethnic minorities, to the point of denying their ability and legitimacy for participation in the formulation of policy and laws and specific decision-making. As a result, social prejudice and intensifying the cultural inequality are augmented and are harmful to the rights and interests of ethnic minorities in the process of cultural objects collection, exhibition and narration social evolutionism.

This paper argues that the current development of the IT industry and globalization accompanied by post-modern campaigns may open an opportunity for a paradigm shift from social evolutionism to cultural ecology to the ethnological museums. This shift will enable ethnological museums in China based their work on a paradigm of recognizing the values of ethnic cultural diversity for preserving ecology and furnishing a better platform for cross cultural dialogue and communication between the mainstream of diversified ethnic cultures. It will equip ethnic minorities with ethnological museums as their stronghold to fight against the ignorance, prejudice and misconception of the mainstream society. It will also enlighten mainstream society to have a better understanding of the paradigm of cultural ecology characterized by the anthropological bio-cultural holism, equity of ethnic cultural inheritance and transmission etc for promoting social harmony by keeping ethnic cultural diversity. Based on the IUAES Declaration on Cultural Diversity, this paper will recommend a pyramid model of harmonious society in light of cultural ecology



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Zhang MinJie (China)

## **The Thing about the Ethnic Museums facing challenge**

The collection of an ethnic museum vividly showcases cultural diversity. With the threat of cultural uniformity, we should give ethnic museums full play in saving endangered cultures by bringing out the best features of them.

For this goal we should employ the latest technologies in the restoration and exhibition of the most distinguished elements of endangered ethnic cultures, such as the fishing of Hezhe people and hunting of Oroqens, making the displays different from each other and more fascinating to viewers.

We should also increase the interaction between museums and visitors through presentations given by heirs of intangible culture heritage and functions that invite participation of visitors. These methods can inject life into exhibitions. Meanwhile, we should step up cooperation and exchanges with ethnic museums worldwide, bringing our displays overseas and inviting theirs to China. We can also experiment with digital exhibitions on particular themes.

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## ICME Post-Conference Tour

"In heaven there is paradise, on earth there are Suzhou and Hangzhou"

*(shang you tiantang, xia you subang)*

### Saturday, November 13

*"Above is heaven, below is Hangzhou."* (<http://eng.hangzhou.gov.cn/>)

8:00 am morning bus depart for Hangzhou via West Lake

Three pools mirroring the moon、 Spring Dawn at Su

Causeway、 Melting Snow at Broken Bridge、 Viewing Fish at flower harbor、 Enjoying tea at dragon well、 Lingyin Temple 、 Yellow Dragon hole.

Hotel: Hangzhou Wu Yang Holiday Hotel

### Sunday, November 14

Wuzhen is known as the Lifeblood of Heavenly Cities

8:00 am Start the day with a tour of Mao Dun former residence.

The Lin's Shop、 Imperial Academy、 Hundred-bed Pavilion、 Xiu Zhen Guan ancient stage, then coach to Suzhou.

Hotel: Suzhou Nan Lin Hotel, Lunch and dinner

[http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel\\_Review-g297442-d589546-Reviews-Nanlin\\_Hotel\\_Suzhou-Suzhou\\_Jiangsu.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g297442-d589546-Reviews-Nanlin_Hotel_Suzhou-Suzhou_Jiangsu.html)

### Monday, November 15

8:00 am Depart for Suzhou

Lion Grove Garden、 Lotus Root Garden、 River Cruise、 Silk factory、 Humble Administrator Garden、 Lingering Garden、 Tiger Hill.

Return to Shanghai in the afternoon.

Museums of ethnographic interest will be added to this itinerary in each city.

*Please remember – This program is subject to change, especially with regards to sites visited.*

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