

ICME IN TRANSITION A NEW BOARD • A RENEWED VISION

After ICOM Dubai: Strengthening Global
Dialogue in Ethnographic Museums



- MEET THE NEW ICME BOARD (2025–2028)
LEADERSHIP, PRIORITIES, AND NEXT STEPS
- FROM MEXICO CITY TO DUBAI
ICME ACROSS TWO GLOBAL CONFERENCES
- ICME DAY AT AL SHINDAGHA MUSEUM
HOSTING DIALOGUE IN A LIVING HERITAGE SPACE
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PREPARING FOR THE NEXT ICME ANNUAL CONFERENCE
- ICME NEWS RETURNS
A PLATFORM FOR VOICES FROM OUR WORLDWIDE
COMMUNITY

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On the cover:

Al Shindagha Museum, Dubai, an integrated heritage site presenting Dubai's cultural history.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dear ICME colleagues and friends,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Issue 97 of ICME NEWS, and to my first issue serving as Editor-in-Chief. I am honored to take on this role at such an important moment for ICME, following the ICOM General Conference in Dubai and the start of a new board term (2025–2028), a period marked by renewal, reflection, and forward thinking. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Dr. Abdelrahman Elsayed, former Editor-in-Chief of ICME NEWS, for his dedication, professionalism, and valuable contributions over the past years.

This issue comes at a time of transition and momentum. It captures the continuity of ICME's work while opening a new chapter shaped by fresh perspectives, collective energy, and shared responsibility. You will find messages from the Chair, Vice Chairs, and the Editor, reflections on ICME's presence at the Annual Conference in Mexico City (2024), highlights from ICOM Dubai 2025, and a warm introduction to the new ICOM-ICME Board. We also look ahead to the upcoming ICME Conference in Taiwan (2026), inviting our members to stay engaged and involved.

Beyond conferences and governance, this issue reflects a broader and inspiring regional and global context. As the saying goes:

«أمة بلا تاريخ هي أمة بلا مستقبل»

A nation without history is a nation without a future.

What is especially encouraging today is how history is being re-imagined and communicated through technology, making heritage more accessible and meaningful for new generations. In less than two months, three Arab countries inaugurated landmark museums of global significance:

- On 1 November 2025, Egypt opened the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo.
- On 3 December 2025, the United Arab Emirates inaugurated the Zayed National Museum in Abu Dhabi.
- On 6 December 2025, Saudi Arabia opened the Red Sea Museum in Jeddah, housed within the historic Bab Al-Bunt building in Historic Jeddah.

These are not isolated events, but powerful signals. Heritage is present, and the future is being built with awareness, responsibility, and vision.

ICME NEWS is, above all, a platform for its members. I warmly invite ICME members and museum professionals worldwide especially early-career colleagues to share your experiences, research, exhibitions,



projects, and reflections. We are preparing upcoming issues dedicated to Dubai and Mexico City, and we look forward to receiving your contributions, statements, and news to enrich future editions.

As Editor-in-Chief, I speak to you first and foremost as a colleague. ICME's strength lies in its diversity, dialogue, and collective knowledge. I hope this newsletter continues to be a space for exchange, inspiration, and collaboration and I look forward to shaping it together with you.

With my best wishes,

Ali Mahfouz
Editor-in-Chief, ICME NEWS

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

December 2025

It has been two years since our newsletter was published and all I can say on behalf of our 2025-2028 ICME Board is that we are committed to renewing our connections with you after not having an editor for several years.

First, I would like to express my deep gratitude to our previous Chair, Ralf Čeplak Mencin, for his decades of devotion to ICOM and ICME as a board member, Chair, and a member of the ICOM DEFINE Working Group that helped shape our new museum definition. It was a pleasure to work alongside him over the past three years, and we welcome his continued involvement in ICME well into the future. I would also like to express thanks to all our 2022-2025 board members for the time and commitment that gave to ICME.

After our elections in October 2025, many of our new board members were able to attend the ICOM General Conference in Dubai this past November. It was a pleasure to meet in person with most of our new board as that rarely happens. During the conference, ICME helped three sessions and our ICDay in various collaborations with ICOM ARAB as well as SOMUS. I would like to thank board members Anamaria Rojas Múnera, Ali Mahfouz and Mario Buletic for all their support during those sessions. Dubai offered a chance to meet ICME members, both ongoing, new and potential contributors to our work over the next three years.

The end of the year is always a time to reflect on how much has happened and is happening in our community and our world, particularly over the last year. My vision as the newly elected Chair of ICME is to engage with our members to focus on strengthening our work and our reach both internally and externally. Internally, we must deepen our ties within the ICME community. It is our responsibility as a board to facilitate and engage in continuous dialogue and collective scholarship with our members around the prescient topics we face as a community of museum professionals and the day-to-day tasks of collaboratively stewarding collections, undertaking critical research, deepening connections and broadening relationships in service of the plurality of communities your collections represent.

Externally, it is our responsibility as a board, and my personal mission as Chair, to prioritize ICME's thought leadership within ICOM as a committee devoted to the representation and shared interpretation of collections that reflect our incredible diversity of peoples and cultures. It is part of our mission to foster meaningful dialogue and understanding within our respective communities, to advocate for their human rights and be partners in supporting our shared humanity wherever possible.

It is equally important that our members engage with our ICOM colleagues on subjects that they navi-



gate in their daily work such as shared stewardship, restitution and decolonization in its many forms. None of our nominated ICME members were present in the Working Group on Decolonization. As that Working Group evolves into its second iteration as a Standing Committee (see Resolution #6, RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE 40th ICOM ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY), I would like to hear from those of you who would like to be more engaged with this committee on behalf of ICME.

Beyond ICOM, we will look outward at ways that we can expand both our collective reach and the relevance of your voices within previously unexplored international arenas where our collective knowledge and resources would bring value and significance. One of my areas of research has been developing pathways for humanitarian agencies to engage with the museum sector, particularly culturally relevant refugee and emergency education.

Today, as we begin to shape a strategic plan for our new ICME board, my attention is always captured by news from the humanitarian sector as migration, whether forced, economic or climate related, profoundly affects the communities with which we all collaborate.

I read a recent report by Wayan Vota, a digital strategist in the humanitarian field, regarding how humanitarian and development agencies have been decimated in the past year, beginning with the dismantling of USAID in the United States. Concurrently, the cessation of funding to UN organizations, whose budgets relied on now defunct US funding in percentages ranging from 20-44%, has caused a cascade of cuts in food aid and healthcare across the world. It is estimated that so far this year these cuts can be attributed to over 600,000 deaths (mostly children) and those numbers will climb significantly in early 2026 when pipelines in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan are cut off. Imagine the repercussions on migration and cultural heritage that will ensue. These are all regions where our members live and work and our institutions hold significant collections.

While I have read through our 2018 ICME survey and understand the hesitance of some members to want ICME to engage in what some may consider activism, I ask you to consider

how your research and collections are supporting or might support the communities with whom you work who will be most impacted by these cuts. We are moving into a world that will be far less humane than it was just one year ago.

Are there any innovations in our partnerships or areas of work that fill some of this void that has already begun to appear and will only deepen? I welcome your comments and suggestions and ask for your patience and open-mindedness as I will continue to press and provoke a bit on ways in which we can broaden our focus in the museum sector for the foreseeable future.

For now, we wish those celebrating holidays in December a happy and healthy season with family and friends. Please look for more emails with requests for your participation in upcoming events and publications as well as our call for the Annual Conference in Taipei which we have slated for October 18-25. We look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Heidi McKinnon
ICME Chair

LETTER FROM THE VICE-CHAIR



Dear ICME members and friends,

As we wrap up the 2025 calendar year and welcome the summer season in the Southern Hemisphere, I would like to extend my thanks to all of you for your active participation in ICME. I would like to thank our outgoing Chair, Ralf Čeplak Mencin, for his dedication to ICME and ICOM over the years. My thanks also go to the 2022–2025 Board, with whom we shaped the themes of our past three years of work under Museums and Change.

With our new Chair, Heidi McKinnon, we are delighted to welcome the 2025–2028 Board members: Ali, Sing-Da, Shaimaa, and Yaarob. Today, ICME reflects a multicultural and diverse platform, with Board members speaking Arabic, English, French, Spanish, and Mandarin, working and collaborating with museum communities in Egypt, Syria, Chile, Taiwan, Qatar, Aotearoa New Zealand, Colombia, New Mexico (USA), and México.

From 2022 to 2025, we achieved milestones that make us feel proud. Some of them:

- We held ICME annual conferences at three spectacular museums: the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest (2023), one of Europe's most extensive repositories of world cultures and Hungarian folk heritage; the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City (2024), one of the world's largest and most significant museums for the preservation of pre-Hispanic and contemporary histories of the American continent; and at Al Shindagha Museum (2025), one of the United Arab Emirates' largest heritage museums showcasing Emirati life and culture, in the historic Shindagha district of Dubai.
- Diversity was central, we had three keynote speakers from Egypt, Mexico, and Belgium/UK representing various facets and tastes of the museum practice: Ahmed Rashed (Founder of the Civilization Rights Institute), Teresa Morales Lersch (Founder and Advisor to the Networks of Community Museums in México and Latin America) and Laura Van Broekhoven (Director of the Pitt Rivers Museum).
- ICME started two working groups in Latin America and in the Middle East and North Africa.
- The ICME Newsletter continued to be published in three languages: Arabic, Spanish, and English.
- An Abstract Review Committee was created for our conferences in Mexico City and Dubai, bringing together colleagues from more than 15 countries.

▪ We had important collaborations: at ICOM Dubai 2025, we developed joint sessions with the International Committee for Social Museology (SOMUS) and with ICOM ARAB; our conference at the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City was developed in partnership with the Committee for Museums and Collections of Instruments and Music (MUSIC, previously CIMCIM), ICOM Mexico, and the important support of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH); and in Budapest with the impressive team of the Museum of Ethnography.

For 2025-2028, in alignment with the 2025 ICOM Resolutions, we carry the responsibility of increasing the participation of our youngest members and supporting the journeys of small- and medium-scale museums and heritage institutions, by facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing. We also aim to support our network in implementing the concepts introduced in the new museum definition.

I believe museums of cultures, Indigenous-led and community-based museums, as well as ICME itself, are powerful platforms for cross-regional dialogues. When, as communities, we interpret and manage our own heritage, our museum practice becomes an authentic platform for witnessing the social function of museums. We open spaces for Indigenisation of museology and community-based curatorial approaches that transform relationships between people, nature, and identities.

As we look forward to 2026, we face the crucial task of revitalising ICME and opening it to a broader spectrum of museum types that care for and interpret world cultures heritage. This includes moving beyond inherited and colonial understandings of the term "ethnography", towards perspectives that feel familiar, respectful and inclusive of Indigenous nations, models of museums and alternative ways of doing and knowing in different areas of the world. It also means recognising that many museum workers — including guides, artists, curators, educators, scholars, conservators, and so on — who engage with their own cultures as well as with world heritages today, do not sit comfortably, or ethically, within "ethnographic" labels.

I want us to keep welcoming fresh voices and approaches that reflect the colourful diversity of museums and heritage today, and most importantly, of museums-makers: creative humans across different territories acting as guardians of nature, knowledges, memories and future.

Warm greetings from Aotearoa's summer!
¡Felices fiestas!
Anamaría Rojas-Múnera, ICME Vice Chair

MEET THE NEW ICOM-ICME BOARD 2025-2028



Heidi McKinnon
ICOM ICME CHAIR

Heidi McKinnon is a museum consultant and business owner who has worked for over twenty years to support cultural heritage as a curator, writer, public speaker and social entrepreneur on issues of historical memory, indigenous history, human rights and cultural heritage throughout Latin America.

In 1996, Heidi began her career working with artisans and culture bearers for the Smithsonian Center for Folklife Studies and the 1998 Smithsonian Folklife Festival program. She then joined the curatorial team of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian which opened in 2004.

After the Smithsonian, Ms. McKinnon spent several years working in Latin America on both curatorial and economic development projects in Guatemala, Chile, and Panama. She was the founding Director of Exhibitions and Planning and inaugural curator for the Museum of Freedom and Human Rights, where she managed the development of a new national museum which opened in Panama City in 2019. She currently focuses on cultural consulting and long-term development of the UNESCO Creative Cities program in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



ANAMARÍA ROJAS-MÚNERA
ICOM ICME VICE CHAIR

Anamaría is a curator and museum educator from Barranquilla, Colombia, focused on social history and natural heritage interpretation in community-based museums.

Currently PhD candidate in Museum and Heritage Studies at Victoria University of Wellington (Aotearoa New Zealand), researching curatorial practices in NZ and Chile. She was a board member and secretary of ICME from 2022–2025 and has been a member of ICOM Chile since 2018,

as well as was part of CECA Chile between 2018 and 2022.

Anamaría has worked as curatorial advisor to community-based museums in Chile and Colombia, supporting the development of exhibitions and the interpretation of cultural and natural heritage, collections research and care, education programmes, and fundraising in isolated territories. She also has been involved in museum accessibility projects in England. In 2018, Anamaría co-founded the museums' network of the Aysén Region in Chilean Patagonia, co-curated and developed the concept for the permanent exhibitions of the Museo de Cochrane, Museo de Chile Chico and Museo de la Patagonia Padre Antonio Ronchi in Villa O'Higgins. She has also curated exhibitions for other grassroots organisations and local governments, highlighting nature conservation, industrial heritage, and arts, in collaboration with Patagonian artists, historians and activists. Following her passion for birds and natural heritage, in 2025 Anamaría became a tour guide at Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne, the first fully fenced urban ecosanctuary in the world, located in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand.



SHAIMAA MATAR
ICOM ICME SECRETARY

Shaimaa Matar is a Senior Museum Curator at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, with extensive experience in curatorial practice, exhibition strategy, collection interpretation, and exhibition development. She currently serves as Treasurer of ICOM Arab and is a Board Member of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography (ICME-ICOM), contributing to international discussions on museums, communities, and cultural policy.

She is a researcher in museology and heritage studies, with a particular interest in exhibition strategy, community-based museums, ethnographic collections, and the social role of museums in safeguarding cultural identity. In 2025, she published a peer-reviewed book chapter with Springer Nature examining the ecomuseum paradigm as a tool for sustaining cultural heritage in the context of climate change. Her work bridges academic research and professional practice, focusing on inclusive exhibition models, sustainability, and community engagement.



Huang Sing-Da
ICOM ICME TREASURER

Huang Sing-Da is an assistant professor in the Department of Arts and Creative Industries at National Dong Hwa University. He holds a Ph.D. in communication from National Chengchi University and has extensive leadership and curatorial experience at major national museums in Taiwan, including serving as chief of the Operations, Collections, and Information Division at the National Museum of Natural Science; chief of the Education Department at the National Taiwan Museum; and chief of the Research Division at the National Museum of History. He has also served as secretary-general of the Taiwan Museum Association, where he coordinated national museum affairs and professional networks. An academic and curator, he has curated and led numerous museum projects, including the ICOM Taiwan Pavilion, multimedia and interactive exhibitions, and digital and online exhibition initiatives. He demonstrates strong competency in international collaboration, public communication, and museum innovation.

His major research fields are museums, art galleries and the cultural creative industries. His research interests include museology, museum governance, mediatization, technology and society, popular culture, narratology, education and psychology, ethnic representation, and museum on prescription. His major publications include *From Objects to Institutions: Reconstructing Mediation, Classification, and Governance in Museum Collections* (2025), *Exploring Transnational and Transdisciplinary Museum Practices through the Lens of Taiwan–Japan Prescription Exchange* (2025), *Managing Communication in Contemporary Museums* (2022), and *Probing the Mediatization Process of Museums Combining Concepts of the Virtual and the Real Worlds: A Narrative Analysis of the Online Display of Collections* (2020).



ALI MAHFOUZ
BOARD MEMBER,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF,
ICME NEWS

Ali Mahfouz is a Cultural Heritage Consultant at FalconViz (KAUST), Saudi Arabia, with over 13 years of experience in cultural heritage site management and museums.

He began his professional career in January 2012 as an archaeologist with the Ministry of Antiquities in Egypt, where he progressed to become Supervisor of the Mansoura Storage Museum (2015–2018) and later served as Director until December 2023. Since January 2024, he has been working as a Cultural Heritage Consultant at FalconViz (KAUST). Ali is PMP certified from the Project Management Institute (PMI).

Ali holds a Bachelor's degree in Archaeology (2010), postgraduate studies (2011), a Master's degree (2017), and a PhD in Archaeology (2025). He has published four academic articles and one book, and has contributed to international heritage projects with UNESCO, USAID, the American Embassy, and the Dutch Embassy. In 2021, he co-founded the Egypt Heritage Association, a non-profit organization focused on heritage documentation and professional training. Ali has been an active member of ICOM since 2017 and served as a board member of ICOM Egypt (2021–2025 and 2025–2028). He has also acted as a scientific committee jury member for ICOM-ICME conferences in Azerbaijan, Prague, Mexico, and Dubai, and maintains strong professional connections with UNESCO, ICON, and CAA.



YAAROB ALABDULLAH BOARD MEMBER AND CHAI OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Yaarob ALABDULLAH is an experienced archaeologist and museum specialist. Yaarob has dedicated their career to the protection of cultural heritage across conflict-affected regions in Syria. With extensive expertise in archaeological fieldwork, museum leadership, and emergency heritage response, they have played a pivotal role in safeguarding some of the region's most significant collections during times of crisis.

From 2004 to 2013, Yaarob served as Head of the Archaeological Excavations Department in Deir Ezzor, directing major international missions in collaboration with German, French, Spanish, and British teams. Their work spanned key sites along the Euphrates Valley—including Tel Ayash, Dura Europos, Tel Kasra, Halabiya, and Zalabiya contributing vital knowledge to the archaeological record of the region.

During the outbreak of war in 2013–2014, Yaarob led the Deir Ezzor Department of Antiquities, where they oversaw emergency protection measures for museum collections. Under their direction, more than 36,000 artifacts were secured, documented, and protected. In parallel, they cooperated closely with UNESCO and the Free University of Berlin to support international documentation and heritage-preservation efforts.

From 2014 to 2018, as Director of the Damascus National Museum, Yaarob supervised national artifact documentation programs, prepared files on stolen objects for INTERPOL, and actively engaged with UNESCO initiatives dedicated to cultural heritage protection. Their academic research at Lyon 2 University focused on combating the illicit trafficking of cultural property, further strengthening their international expertise.

A contributor to several global professional forums, Yaarob was a member of the Museum Definition Working Group that developed the new museum definition adopted in Prague in 2022. They are currently a Board Member of the International Committee of Ethnography Museums (ICME) for the 2025–2028 term and a Member of the Board of Directors of the International Election Committee (IEC) 2025–2028.

Yaarob holds a Master's degree in Arts & Archaeology and a Master-level certification in Museum Management.

WINDS FROM THE SOUTH - THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ICME ANNUAL MEETING IN MEXICO CITY 2024

Renata Curcio Valente, Curator, Ethnology Section and PPGAS, National Museum, UFRJ, Brazil

Andrea Pegoraro, Director, Juan B. Ambrosetti Ethnographic Museum, FFyL. University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

October, 2024

The ICME meeting at the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City was marked by the convergence of interests, ongoing projects and research experiences. A small but tuned group of representatives of museums, universities and research centers from the most diverse contexts—especially from the Americas, and from Europe and Asia—personally attended the meeting, highlighting important contributions to the debate on ethnographic collections and the new challenges that museums face today with this type of collections acquired mostly in a colonial context. The concepts of dialogue, reparation, repatriation, restitution, decolonization, inclusion, reactivation of objects, new memories, repressed histories, among others, showed signs of transnational and interdisciplinary debates that cross museological institutions. The numerous presentations and panels allowed for reflection on a wide range of topics, highlighting the

debate on collaborative work, partnership building, networking and dialogue.

The cohesion of the group, despite the linguistic differences, allowed a very harmonious coexistence with the possibility of participating, in addition to the presentations, in visits to archaeological sites and countless museums and historical sites that only Mexico City has, and that the organization of the event, in the person of Heidi McKinnon, was able to offer us.

Political positioning

After the collective listening and debate among the participants, we consider it important to suggest deepening more horizontal practices within ICME. On the one hand, we consider it necessary to consider other countries in the Americas to carry it out, and on the other hand, to reduce costs to make it more accessible to representatives of communities that were subjected to a colonial past, such as those in the Americas, Asia, Africa and Oceania.

As we pointed out before, the collections of ethnographic museums are the result of European colonial contexts towards the rest of the non-Western world, mainly from the nineteenth century, accompanied by genocidal processes, especially with the Indigenous peoples (autochthonous and tribal) of the planet.

In this sense, the presentations have given an account in different ways of these processes of collecting collections to fill museums in different parts of the world. Along these lines, it is important to guarantee conditions for expanding the participation of regions whose history was marked by colonialism and which are still experiencing its social, cultural and economic consequences in the global structure. The Indigenous and autochthonous peoples of these regions were colonized and studied by scientific expeditions in order to collect objects of their material culture to transfer to local and international museums.

In line with this, the debate on the restitution of human remains and their exhibition, as well as cultural heritage, was very important, puts on the table the importance of reflecting on the issue of property rights over cultural heritage and the need to bring together representatives of different contexts in this debate. It is important to highlight the importance of having an international forum such as the ICME, which can be a space for representation and dialogue for representatives of countries suffering from social and income inequalities, violence, authoritarian hierarchies and contexts of internal colonialism to raise issues related to the communities of origin that are represented in ethnographic collections and museums.

As a committee, we suggest having a clear position on the matter and that is why we reiterate the need to hold these annual meetings in global majority countries to facilitate the participation of Indigenous peoples.

ICME AT THE ICOM GENERAL CONFERENCE IN DUBAI

Scientific Exchange, Committee Engagement, and Future Planning



SHAIMAA MATAR
ICOM ICME SECRETARY

The ICOM General Conference held in Dubai provided an important platform for the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography (ICME) to actively engage in scientific dialogue, committee collaboration, and strategic planning. ICME's participation reflected the committee's continued commitment to advancing ethnographic museology and fostering international exchange within the ICOM network.

ICME Scientific Sessions at the General Conference

During the General Conference, ICME organized three dedicated scientific sessions that addressed contemporary issues relevant to ethnographic museums and collections in collaboration with ICOM ARAM and SOMUS. The sessions brought together presenters from diverse cultural and geographic backgrounds, offering a wide range of perspectives on museum practice, representation, and community engagement.

Topics discussed across the sessions included the role of ethnographic museums in interpreting cultural identities, approaches to safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage, and current challenges related to museum narratives, ethics, and collaboration with source communities.

The sessions were marked by active discussion and strong audience engagement, highlighting the relevance of ethnographic museums as spaces for critical reflection and cross-cultural dialogue.

Al Shindagha Museum as Host of IC Day

On the margins of the General Conference, Al Shindagha Museum hosted the International Committees Day (IC Day), welcoming members of ICOM's International Committees. As a host venue, the museum offered participants the opportunity to experience a cultural institution dedicated to presenting the heritage and social history of the United Arab Emirates.

Al Shindagha Museum focuses on documenting traditional ways of life, crafts, community structures, and historical transformations within Emirati society. The visit provided IC members with insight into a locally grounded museum approach that interprets national heritage through contemporary exhibition practices.

Preparations for the ICME Annual Conference in Taiwan

During the General Conference, ICME representatives met with the organizing committee of the upcoming ICME Annual Conference,

scheduled to take place in Taiwan. The meeting focused on discussing the preliminary conference framework, proposed thematic directions, and organizational planning for the event.

These discussions formed part of ICME's broader efforts to ensure the continuity and quality of its annual scientific program, while strengthening international participation and scholarly exchange among members and partners.

First Meeting of the Newly Elected ICME Board

The Dubai General Conference was also significant as it marked the first General Conference following the election of the new ICME Board. The newly elected Board convened an in-person meeting to discuss priorities for the upcoming term and to outline an initial roadmap for future activities.

Key areas of focus included strengthening scientific programming, enhancing communication with ICME members, and reinforcing the committee's role in addressing contemporary challenges facing ethnographic museums worldwide.

Conclusion

ICME's participation in the ICOM General Conference in Dubai demonstrated the committee's active role within the international museum community. Through its scientific sessions, committee meetings, and forward-looking discussions, ICME reaffirmed its commitment to promoting ethnographic research, supporting professional exchange, and contributing to the evolving discourse on museums, heritage, and society.

UPCOMING ICME CONFERENCE IN TAIWAN (2026)

Main Theme-Recovery and Regeneration:
Ethnographic Museums as Spaces of Healing,
Continuity, and Transformation



Huang Sing-Da
Chair, ICOM ICME 2026 Conference

About the Conference:

The 2026 ICME Annual Conference, to be held in late October in Taiwan, marks an important milestone for the global ethnographic museum community. Hosting the conference in Taiwan, a place shaped by layered histories, Indigenous presence, and vibrant cultural diversity, provides a meaningful setting for addressing how museums can more responsibly engage with contemporary social, cultural, and political transformations.



Meeting of the newly elected ICOM ICME Board during ICOM Dubai General conference



Members of the newly elected ICOM ICME Board during a meeting with the Taiwan 2026 Conference Organizing Team

In alignment with ICME's commitment to human rights, community collaboration, and the critical reassessment of colonial and exclusionary legacies, the conference offers a vital platform to explore how museums recover marginalized voices, regenerate cultural knowledge, and support living traditions in a rapidly changing world. By gathering in Taiwan, ICME members can collectively advance new practices that foster intercultural understanding, ethical stewardship, and innovative responses to the evolving needs of communities worldwide.

A NEW YEAR, SHARED HERITAGE: HAPPY 2026 FROM ICOM ICME



CONTACT ICME NEWS

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ICME NEWS is, above all, a platform for its members. We warmly invite ICME members and museum professionals worldwide, to share your experiences, research, exhibitions, projects, and reflections. We encourage contributions on upcoming conferences and exhibitions, reviews of past events, or articles that reflect on current trends in museum practice. We are particularly interested in pieces that introduce an ICME member museum or provide insights into contemporary debates, including restitution and repatriation. In future editions, we plan to explore these topics in innovative ways, such as through comics, to examine how ethnographic museums are addressing them.

We are preparing upcoming issues dedicated to Dubai and Mexico City, and we warmly encourage you to share your contributions, statements, and news to enrich these and future editions. We also welcome members who wish to support the newsletter by volunteering with our editorial team. Your engagement will help us expand our global perspective and ensure ICME NEWS continues to reflect the richness and diversity of our worldwide community. Please reach out if you would like to submit a contribution, refer content, or join our team of volunteers.

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