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Abstracts



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Katherine Hauptman

She is the Chairperson of ICOM Sweden and currently Acting Museum Director of the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm, Sweden. She holds a PhD in Archaeology and has wide experience from museum studies, teaching and education, as well as from exhibition production together with world-wide touring, public archaeology projects and governmental assignments. Her key interests include the role of museums in society and her research have often embraced gender perspectives, the use and abuse of history, and the development of inclusive museums.

Beate Reifenscheid

She studied History of Art, Literature and Publicism at Ruhr University, Bochum, 1984 grant for studies at Universidad Complutense, Madrid, 1985 Magister Artium in History of Arts, 1988 PhD, 1989–91 traineeship at Saarland Museum, Saarbrücken, 1991–97 Director of the Graphic Department and of the Public Relations Department, since 1997 Director of Ludwig Museum Koblenz, 1994–1997 lecturer at University of Saarland, since 2000 lecturer at University Koblenz-Landau, since 2013 Honorary Professor there, since 2015 Guest Professor at Tianjin Fine Arts Academy, China, since 2010 Member of the Board of ICOM Germany, since 2017 Chair of ICOM Germany.

Mats Sander

He is the Mayor of Helsingborg and former chairman of the Board of Culture of the city. Curiosity is his main driving force and as an enthusiastic user of social media he shares the political daily life in public. Following military service, he completed officer training in the Air Force and continued as among other things flight engineer, educator and communications director. Mats Sander has been active at different Air Commands as well as at the Military Academy, the Swedish Defense Materiel Administration and in private companies. From 2002 he is an elected representative of the Helsingborg city council for the liberal-conservative party Moderaterna.

Suay Aksoy

She is President of ICOM since 2016 and has been the founding Chair of the Association of Museum Professionals of Turkey. She has taught graduate and undergraduate courses in Museum Management and Cultural Heritage at the Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts and the Bogaziçi University, respectively, in Istanbul. Suay Aksoy worked as Director of Cultural Heritage and Museums at the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency. She is a trustee of the History Foundation of Turkey where she formerly headed the museum projects and also served as a Board member and Vice-President for consecutive terms.

Stefan Bohman

Introduction to the conference theme

At the ICOM meeting in Paris 2017 the key note speaker Chris Withead asked about contested history in museums: *"What stories are told, and what stories are not told in museums"*. That's the main theme for our conference. Next question can be, formulated by Ulla-Maija Peltonen: *"Who has the right to decide what to be remembered or forgotten in the past?"* That leads us to a third observation, formulated by Jette Sandahl in the ICOM meeting 2017: *"We need to have strategies and techniques for handling with difficult heritage"*. Those questions are central for us all. In this conference we will hear several examples of difficult issues at museums, with the question – what can we learn from those examples?

Dr. Stefan Bohman: Dr. phil. in Ethnology and docent in Museology. He is the former president of ICOM Sweden and former director of Musikmuseum and Strindbergmuseum in Stockholm, Sweden. He is teacher in Museology at Stockholm and Uppsala University, Sweden, and has written several books in museology.

21 SEPTEMBER 2017, 15:15–16:30
ETHICAL CHALLENGES FOR MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS

Moderator: Helga Lára Thorsteinsdottir, Board Member ICOM Iceland

Kathrin Pabst

Moral challenges for museum professionals when working with difficult issues – a short overview

More and more museums are working as dynamic actors for social change, often by drawing attention to sensitive, taboo-laden subjects. The work normally includes co-operation with groups of people from the local society or individuals who contribute with personal narratives. Presenting difficult issues may evoke strong reactions among visitors and the general public, and it is highly important to take this into account at any step of a museums project.

The working process is in many ways demanding for museum employees. It often means meeting and touching people at a deep emotional level, including being touched oneself, and this makes it essential to find the right tools. Many museum employees still feel a great deal of uncertainty how to proceed and how to handle moral challenges which normally arise at several levels, and this uncertainty could cause major stress. In recent years, my research has dealt with the following: What are the moral challenges employees at a museum of cultural history faces in dealing with sensitive, contemporary-related exhibitions that involve external collaboration, how are they handled and how should they be handled? My starting point is thus the museum employees and the framework in which they work, and the needs that become visible during the specific projects.

At the conference, I will draw attention to some fundamental aspects of working with difficult issues, and present a short overview how they have been handled by museum professionals in different projects and countries over the last fifteen years or so. I also give a short introduction how they should be handled taking ethical theories in consideration.

Dr. Kathrin Pabst: She is Head of the Department for Research, Collection Management and Education at the Vest-Agder Museum in Kristiansand, Norway. She is a German ethnologist with a PhD in professional ethics. Her working experience includes practical and theoretical sides of working with difficult issues, and she shares results through publications, lectures and workshops.

Gudrun D Whitehead

House of Silicone: displaying macabre and contested history at the Saga Museum

In *House of Wax* (1953), Prof. Jarrod argues with his investor about the value of his Wax Museum. To turn a profit, it needs to feature great villains of the past. The curator disagrees, placing aesthetical and historical validity and value above economic growth. The Saga Museum, Iceland, is within the boundaries of this discussion, valuing both beauty, realism and a healthy profit margin.

There is a constant need to affirm the economic and social value of museums, often done by emphasising education; they display 'real' history, art and nature. Thereby museums are distanced from low-brow forms of entertainment, such as 'dark tourism' and blockbuster exhibitions, including dungeon museums, providing an experience resembling haunted-houses in amusement parks as opposed to distinguished educational experiences.

Yet history itself is gruesome and shocking, which is especially clear in historical wax museums. At the Saga Museum, the nation's most famous historical moments (both fictional and real) are brought to life with silicone. Therein lies the true uniqueness as well as controversy of the museum, frequently deemed as empty sensationalism, undermining the Icelandic museum sector by displaying an outdated version of history, one based on oral storytelling traditions and glorified historical narratives.

In this talk *House of Wax* (1953) is used as an analytical tool to discuss the Saga museum's use of the uncanny and sensational, rather than working to dissolve the dark atmosphere in favour of a more realistic, muted and distanced historical narrative. The aim is to create a discussion on the limitations of restrictive museum practices, relating to a neutral exhibition 'voice'.

Dr. Gudrun D Whitehead: She is Assistant Professor of Museum Studies at the University of Iceland, Reykjavik. She has a background in literature and folklore and a PhD in Museum Studies from the University of Leicester, UK. Her co-edited volume, *Fashioning Horror: Dressing to Kill on Screen and in Literature*, comes out in 2017.

Ralf Raths

The German Tank Museum: a blood diamond as a regional touristic crown jewel?

The German Tank Museum Munster is an important attraction in the touristic region of Luneburg Heath. Of the over four million tourists that visit the region annually, over 100.000 visit the Tank Museum, making it one of the top 4% museums in Germany. This success is

partially based on the fact that for over 30 years the tanks and guns were presented clean and clinical. The narrative centered on technical facts and operational aspects; suffering and dying were not part of the exhibition. Thus the objects could be enjoyed as technological masterpieces without dark and depressing undertones. But now the museum is in a phase of radical renewal. Right now the museum is fundraising for a complete remodelling of the permanent exhibition. The concept includes dying and suffering, killing and wounding as core themes and will present them in different ways. Among them will be explicit, drastic photographs of violence – an approach that is unheard of in modern German museology.

Implementing “dark” and therefore potentially disturbing elements in a successful touristic destination seems like commercial suicide to some and like museological integrity to others – sometimes both. Discussions are inevitable: The town of Munster as one body responsible for the museum (besides the German Armed Forces) has to consider both aspects: On the one hand, Munster needs the money from the highest possible number of tickets per year, on the other hand, the town also has to ensure the quality of the museum’s work – and one-dimensional, uncritical exhibitions are outmoded. Then again such uncritical approaches, maybe even some glorification of the German armies are exactly what the more conservative faction of the museum’s booster club wants, as well as a large portion of the over 65.000 Facebook fans, condemning the new approach as typical for the German “Schuldskult” (cult of guilt). The majority of potential sponsors from the cultural scene on the other hand firmly demands a critical approach – but is divided regarding the question if drastic photographic violence is one step too far.

Ralf Rath: He studied History and Political Science and was Visiting Lecturer for Military History there from 2005 to 2011. He works at the German Tank Museum in Munster, Germany, since 2008 and is Director since 2013. He is a member of the German Section of the International Commission of Military History since 2013. His publications cover military history as well as museology.

21 SEPTEMBER 2017, 17:00–18:15 DIFFICULT OBJECTS AND SENSITIVE STORIES

Moderator: Eero Ehanti, Chair ICOM Finland

Lulu Anne Hansen / Flemming Just

Witch hunts, immigration and integration. New 'difficult' museums in the making

In engaging with difficult and dissonant issues museum risk being perceived as politically biased and hence lose their credibility as a knowledge institution or risk losing their relevance in a time where an increased focus on the relevance of topics to contemporary society is what makes exhibitions interesting and attractive to a greater public.

At Museum of Southwest Jutland, the process of creating two new museums engaging with difficult issues has made this dilemma pressing. One museum deals with the history of the European witch trials in Renaissance Europe while the other deals with Denmark's most famous emigrant to America, Jacob A Riis whose haunting pictures of New York's poor immigrant society have claimed an iconic status in American culture. The theme, therefore, engages with the story of European immigration and integration in America at the end of the 19th Century as well as national belonging and identity.

The paper will from a supplier perspective discuss two key issues. First, both museums arguably hold a dark history that is echoed in contemporary issues such as persecution and immigration. Hence as attractions, they can be placed within the field of dark tourism. However, in recognizing that dark tourism attractions should also be understood as culturally constructed narratives where dark aspects are culturally defined and emphasized, it becomes relevant to reflect on the interpretative strategies chosen at each particular site. For this reason, secondly, the paper will address the importance of not only addressing difficult issues from a professional research perspective such as history but to also include a systematic analysis that engages with popular uses of history in order to engage visitors in a more reflexive manner.

Lulu Anne Hansen (PhD): She holds a PhD in History and one of her key research interests revolves around history and heritage interpretation and tourism. She has previously dealt with the Atlantic Wall as contested heritage in Denmark. She is Head of History Department, Museum of Southwest Jutland, Ribe, Denmark.

Dr. Flemming Just: He was professor of contemporary history at University of Southern Denmark, before he became director of the merged regional Museum of Southwest Jutland in Ribe, Denmark, in 2011.

Natalie Meurisch

Conservational challenges in dealing with Holocaust objects

The presentation will highlight different aspects of working with Holocaust objects in today's memorials or museums. It will focus on objects which were artistically created from everyday objects in an active camp time and how the intersection between an object as a historic evidence and an object as a work of art or craft might change the way a conservator should approach it. Is it possible to combine functionality, highest authenticity and readability and measure up to the standards of historical and artistic representation? Can art be displayed on the site of a former concentration camp and how will it be comprehended by a visitor? With focus on the storage and exhibition strategies of smaller and larger memorials or museums, the decisions on which objects should be on display and which should not, the different approaches for a conservator in the field of Holocaust objects will be dealt with by using examples from the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Ravensbrueck Memorial.

Natalie Meurisch: She is a master student at the Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences in Cologne, Germany. She gained her BA's degree in the Conservation of Easel Paintings, Sculptures and Modern Art at the CICS and worked at the State Museum Auschwitz Birkenau and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Birgitta Witting

Documenting collective grief

When the Djurgården and HIF football clubs met in the first Premier Division match at Olympia on 30 March 2014, a 43 year old Djurgården supporter was knocked down and died of his injuries. On the day of the match as well as the previous evening, there was a great deal of unrest in Helsingborg, with several cases of assault and vandalism. The day after the game, the city was in shock; in the evening, HIF's supporter club organized a manifestation against violence which several thousand people attended. At the spot where the Djurgården supporter had been knocked down, tributes of scarves, club shirts and candles gradually built up.

When the tributes were removed by the Peab construction company, staff from Kulturmagasinet were there to deal with some of the material that had accumulated. Kulturmagasinet's photographer, who was there to document the removal, had previously photographed the manifestation as well as the way in which the collection of tributes had developed. Newspaper articles about the event and the ensuing debate were gathered continuously.

The removal of the tributes was preceded by discussions, with opinions being somewhat divided. How should we conduct the collection procedure? Some methods were considered too technocratic and it was feared that human value would be lost. What gives us the right to collect people's private thoughts? As the memorial had grown to a considerable size, we realized that we could not take everything – but how could we take a representative sample? Another question also arose, namely the importance of being prepared for unexpected, significant events.

Birgitta Witting: She is an antiquarian at Kulturmagasinet in Helsingborg, Sweden. She is responsible for the annual contemporary documentation but is also working with the museum collection in several ways. She is a member of DOSS (Documentation of Swedish Society) steering committee since 2016.

Ageliki Lefkaditou / Jon Røyne Kyllingstad / Henrik Treimo

FOLK: an exhibit on science, identity, and politics

The movement of museums towards telling difficult (hi)-stories, revisiting, or even deconstructing their institutional pasts, and exploring their political potency, has resulted in the production of several exhibits related to race and racism. These topics provide an opportunity to develop more nuanced interpretations of historical racial science, explore contemporary research, and empower their audiences to engage critically with science. One such case is the exhibition FOLK at the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology.

FOLK explores research on human biological diversity related to Norway by juxtaposing the scientific practices of interwar racial science with contemporary genetics. The emphasis is on practices of measuring, visualizing, classifying, mapping, standardizing and (e)valuating human variation and their multiple entanglements with society, culture, politics, technology and economy. Building on and advancing the insights emerging from a 4-year research project, the exhibit is the result of multi-disciplinary collaboration between professionals from all sectors of the museum, the exhibition's designer and several other external actors. Thus, the narratives on how human biological similarities and differences have been studied and produced take shape at the intersection of academic research and museum work with texts, things, space and people.

By turning our attention to the stories this exhibit facilitates, we reflect on how the methodological choice of bringing together the diverse museum disciplines and external partners around museum objects has allowed us to increase ownership and confidence in handling a highly relevant and sensitive topic.

Dr. Ageliki Lefkadiou (PhD): She is Senior Curator of the History of Medicine at the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology/National Medical Museum in Oslo, Norway, and Co-curator of the exhibit FOLK. She is a historian of science writing on the history of physical anthropology, race and racism. Her interests include the development of museum theory, methods and practices.

Dr. Jon Røyne Kyllingstad (PhD): He is Senior Curator at the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology in Oslo, Norway, focusing on the history of science knowledge and academic institutions, and especially on research and ideas on race, ethnicity, culture and the nation. He is currently co-curating the exhibition FOLK.

Dr. Henrik Treimo (PhD): He is Senior Curator at the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology in Oslo, Norway. He holds a PhD in Social Anthropology and he has been researching material culture and cultural studies of science and technology. He is engaged in practices of integrating research and exhibition making in museums.

22 SEPTEMBER 2017, 9:00–10:15 MUSEUMS AND CHANGING COMMUNITIES

Moderator: Kathrin Pabst, Board Member ICOM Norway

Áile Aikio

Guovtti ilmmi gaskkas. Balancing between two contested worlds. The challenges and benefits being an indigenous museum professional

In this paper, I'll discuss the encounters of being an indigenous museum professional and the challenges and benefits I have faced when balancing between two contested worlds.

The idea of museum bases on European worldview and outlook. For indigenous peoples, this means the role of the other. As a part of the colonial system, museums had a role in suppressing and assimilating indigenous cultures. Museums still manage indigenous heritage and represent indigenous people's culture as passive and inferior in exhibitions and publications. Still, the indigenous communities see museums as a possibility to present their story to themselves and the others.

The role reserved for the Sámi people in museums has been a study object or a resource for knowledge and research material. We are not involved on how our culture is interpreted

or exhibited. The discussion what would be the Sámi way to work in a museum has just started.

Being an indigenous museum professional working with your own culture has many advantages. Communication with your own people is easy; you share a common language and cultural background. You also have the authority and the knowledge to evaluate the knowledge shared with you. This provides you with a special insight but is also the greatest challenge. As a Sámi you always represent a certain family, which strongly affect on how people interact with you.

Indigenous professionals can help to build understanding and collaboration. I see my work as a mediator in the process of indigenizing museums so that our museums would exist for our indigenous community. Museums could give new experiences to the indigenous community, be a benefit and even heal traumas caused by colonization.

Áile Aikio: She is a Sámi museum professional, working as a curator in the Sámi Museum Siida in Anár/Inari, Finland. She has a master's degree on Ethnology. She is writing her PhD on the University of Lapland on how to sámify a museum, what would be the Sámi way to work with exhibitions in a Sámi museum.

Maja Leonardsen Musum

A difficult issue, or a difficult place? Adapting National Museum Policies to local museum realities

In 2015, Hadeland Folkemuseum opened the exhibition "Alt for Norge" ("Everything for Norway"). Through audience participation, contemporary challenges such as racism were discussed in light of local Second World War history. The exhibition spurred an unprecedented amount of critical media coverage and complaints from the general public. With its clear emphasis on bridging the gap between past and present, the exhibition seemed to be in line with current Norwegian national museum policies which increasingly encourage museums to offer critical perspectives on both past and current issues. However, the local communities in which these museums are located, often maintain a more nostalgic view of the museum, imagining its role to be a unifying meeting place for the strengthening and affirmation of local identities.

These opposing and inherently contradictory expectations pertaining to the role and the mandate of local museums became apparent during the debate that followed the exhibition. Through this case study, I argue that these often opposing expectations were largely left unidentified, and hence were often used interchangeably as tools for legitimation within the same institution, leading to frustration and misunderstandings both among museum staff as well as the local community. In this paper, I argue that the shift in national museum policies,

coupled with insufficient attention to the dynamics of local adaptation, did, in the case of the exhibition «Alt for Norge», lead to a struggle over the power to define the symbolic space of the Cultural Heritage museum. In the process, the debates in the wake of the exhibition revealed fundamental ambiguities and tensions constitutive of the question of the role and purpose of the local Cultural Heritage museum in Norway.

Maja Leonardsen Musum: She studied Cultural Anthropology in Brooklyn, New York, before moving to the Norwegian countryside where she, quite unexpectedly, fell in love with museums. She currently heads the Department for Exhibitions and Education at the local cultural and natural history museum, Randsfjordmuseene in Oppland, Norway. She is doing a degree in Museum Studies at the University of Bergen.

Antonio Rodriguez

The politics of diversity: excluding identities from the inclusivity movement

In January 2017, the US museum community was shaken by a series of unprecedented Presidential actions that undermined the core values of diversity and inclusion, foster bigotry, and generated fear and isolation among communities across the nation. The executive orders signed by President Trump included ordering the construction of a wall along the US border with Mexico, restricting federal funds to sanctuary jurisdictions, and imposing a ban on travel to the US from several Muslim-majority countries.

A few weeks later, the Trump administration repealed Title IX of the Education Amendments that offered protection to transgender students in schools and colleges, including allowing them to use bathrooms and facilities corresponding with their gender identity. In March, the political climate became even more hostile when a 2018 Fiscal Year Federal budget proposal called for the elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and proposed tax deduction limitations on charitable contributions.

These presidential actions generated a climate of confusion, growing xenophobia, intolerance, and public distrust of institutions that required a redefinition of the role of museums. To what extent do museums facilitate safe spaces for conversations and inspiring civic engagement? Can museums play a significant role in fostering tolerance, promoting mutual understanding and dialogue? Should museums remain neutral in such a turbulent political climate? Should museums become less social and more political? The paper emphasizes critical roles museums play in affirming cultural diversity and fostering inclusion, and presents examples of US museums actively assuming new roles as an effort to respond to the current climate of increasing xenophobia and intolerance.

Antonio Rodriguez: He is a senior-level consultant with more than 25 years of experience in museums, arts management, touring exhibitions, strategic planning, project management, and strategic partnerships. He serves as Chair of the ICOM ICEE, and Past Chair of the Latino Network at the American Alliance of Museums, AAM.

Valeria Pica

Trembling walls. When the earthquake changes the identity of local museums

Last year the Central regions of Italy were affected by a set of tremendous earthquakes and many tremors reawakened the fear in the area of L'Aquila, where a massive earthquake destroyed the city and the community in 2009. More than 300 people died and, since now, the city has been only partially reconstructed; in the meanwhile, the community got crumbled as well as the walls. The most of the population moved out from the city and probably will never get back. Their homes are still not habitable and their job, their families, their kids started a new cycle of life elsewhere. As a consequence of that, the social fabric has deeply changed as well as the cultural agenda. Only last year the National Museum of L'Aquila opened its doors, but in a new building and in a different area of the city.

This paper aims to examine how museums have changed in the perception of citizens and visitors and verify if the new display talks about the experience of the earthquake. Other museums in the area of L'Aquila were also opened a few years after 2009 and were dedicated to the memory of the city. In these terms, a focus will be dedicated to giving voice to local museums to see how they interpret the point of no return for the community who stays and for the one that leaves.

Local museums can become a key agent in the comprehension of the cultural identity and memory. They can represent privileged locations to enhance social inclusion, to talk about difficult stories, to rethink at the cultural implications of history. This is very true if we look at the international agenda and the need to face our past to comprehend where we are and where we are going.

Valeria Pica: She is an art historian and has been working since 2001 in museums and cultural institutions as educator and educational activities planner. She also works as an adjunct professor for Museum Education at the AUR. From 2016 she is the Italian National Coordinator of ICOM Committee for Education and Mediation.

Terje Anepaio / Kristel Rattus

Managing the 'Other': stories of the Estonian Russian-speaking minority in the core exhibition of the Estonian National Museum

Last October, the Estonian National Museum opened its new building and new core exhibitions. With the core exhibition about Estonian culture, the „Encounters“, the ENM has introduced several new topics as well as novel approaches, which highlights the points of contact between different social groups, and stresses the importance of tolerance and equality.

The largest minority in Estonia is the Russian-speaking community. Amazingly, it has not been common to exhibit the culture of the Russian-speaking minority in Estonian museums. In the Estonian media, the tendency has rather been to contrast the two communities. „Encounters“, however, aimed to create a dialogue.

The paper will address some challenges, which occurred in the communication with the Russian-speaking community during the preparation of the exhibition. Firstly, for the Estonian National Museum, the communication turned out to be more difficult than expected, since the Russian-speaking community did not have acknowledged leaders and was not accustomed to communicating with the public as a group. Secondly, exposing one's everyday culture in a museum was sometimes considered improper by the Russian-speakers.

Terje Anepaio: She is a Researcher Curator at the Estonian National Museum in Tartu, Estonia. In the team of the exhibition „Encounters“, she mainly treated topics about the everyday life of the Cold War period. She is experienced in the museological exposition of the everyday life of the late Soviet period.

Kristel Rattus: She is a Researcher Curator at the Estonian National Museum in Tartu, Estonia. She was the leader of the team of present core exhibition „Encounters“. Her fields of interest include patterns of cultural memory and heritage representation in present-day Estonia, automobility in present-day Estonia.

Maria Kobielska

Warsaw, 2004 – Gdańsk, 2017.

Evolution of the Polish museum boom

From the beginning of the 21st century a dozen of new museums, especially dealing with the 20th century Polish history, have been founded or rearranged in Poland. What associates all the “new museums” is the intensity, interactivity, and poli-sensuality of their exhibitions, persuasiveness of experience they create and their connection to certain memory politics. Such a museum is a “memory device” that shapes and transmits a vision of the past via the influencing remembering pattern it offers.

This “museum boom” dates back precisely to 2004 when the spectacular Warsaw Rising Museum was opened. Memory shaped within the WRM’s exhibition can be described not only as attractive, interesting, immersive or convincing, but also as a conservative vision of the past, in which Polish national perspective is a default one. Taking this into account, a comparison between WRM, the oldest of all Polish “new museums”, and the newest one can be informative. The Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk, just opened in 2017, was considered to likely take a position of a “liberal answer” to the WRM.

In such circumstances, analysis of these two exhibitions’ strategies in terms of their similarities and differences will allow sketching answers to the questions of: 1) origins and development of the current Polish museum boom; 2) both museums’ choices of what is remembered and hidden in the shaped vision of past; 3) awareness (or its lack) of these choices embedded in the exhibitions’ design; 4) museums’ freedom and/or dependence in the context of their political associations; 5) the existence of dominant patterns and counter-projects among Polish museums.

Maria Kobielska (PhD): She is a memory scholar, working at Faculty of Polish Studies of Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, member of the Research Center for Memory Cultures. She has recently published a book on Polish memory culture in the 21st century (*Polska kultura pamięci w XXI wieku: dominanty*, 2016).

Anja Petersen

Ingeborg Holm changed the world. An early whistleblower

The play *Ingeborg Holm*, which later became the silent movie *Ingeborg Holm* – considered to be Sweden’s first social drama on the screen, was written by Nils Krok in Helsingborg 1906. It caused a fierce discussion in Swedish media at the time. *Ingeborg Holm* was a play and a film that questioned some of the ground values in Sweden at the turn of the century. Nils Krok was in that perspective what we might call an early Whistleblower. *Ingeborg Holm* is usually

not a part of Helsingborg's reproduced grand history. Nils Krok is usually not considered as one of Helsingborg's important men.

What matters and what counts when it comes to the history of a town like Helsingborg? What and who on the other hand, is never seen or accounted for? Who has made those choices and why? The stories we produce and reproduce about the past matters. A master narrative is often created in which certain perspectives and people are placed at the fore front, while others are forgotten or left out on purpose. Who is allowed to represent the past of a town like Helsingborg and who is not? What might the consequences be of the use of one sole master narrative and the constant re-presentation of it?

Through the story of *Ingeborg Holm* I will address the choice of people, processes, and perspectives that are presented and re-presented in the master narrative of Helsingborg. What is remembered, forgotten or hidden? To choose is a political standpoint. What do you choose?

Anja Petersen (PhD): She is currently working as an antiquarian at Kulturmagasinet in Helsingborg, Sweden. Together with a colleague at Campus Helsingborg, Lund University, she is also engaged in a three-year research project, focusing master narratives and criticism on local history. This presentation is part of that research project.

22 SEPTEMBER 2017, 13:30 – 14:45 MUSEUMS AND PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Moderator: Beate Reifenscheid, Chair ICOM Germany

Michael Terwey

Collection management and public consent: the practice, politics and perception of collections disposal and transfer

It is taken as axiomatic among museum professionals that curators must actively shape collections through the processes of acquisition, de-accession, disposal, and transfer. However, these processes are not well understood by the public as a whole, by politicians, or by policy-makers. This leaves museum professions at risk of making decisions about public collections for which they do not have public approval or consent.

In 2016 the National Science and Media Museum took the decision to transfer parts of its photographic collections to the Victoria and Albert Museum. While the decision was justified by the museum in terms of professional practice, the subsequent public controversy and political response suggests that these arguments did not convince a sceptical public that it was a necessary move. This represents an unusually rich case study with which to explore difficult

issues facing museums, touching on museum funding, national and local identities, the complex nature of museum collections, and the mobilisation of concepts of 'art' and 'science'.

Using an analysis of the public and political responses to the decision as a starting point and drawing on other recent examples of controversial de-accessioning, this paper explores the gap between the public and professionals, and the intersection with governmental policy. It argues that museum professionals can build public consent for their actions and maintain public trust in their institutions if they communicate better, and that key to doing so is to understand how they are actually understood by the public and by politicians, and they ways this differs from the institutional and museum-professional viewpoints.

Michael Terwey: In his career, he has worked at Hull Museums, Tyne and Wear Museums, Historic Scotland and at the National Maritime Museum. For the last seven years he has been at the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford, UK, where he is responsible for collections, exhibitions and research programmes.

Karen Sivebæk Munk-Nielsen

Hidden objects on display

Museums cannot control media nor the views of politicians. It would, in fact, normally be a good thing that people have an opinion on what we are doing. Of course, we also love when the press bothers to write about our activities. However, in the present case, this coverage went in an unexpected direction taking on a surreal spin which the museum had no chance of controlling.

In 2017, Denmark commemorates the Centennial of the transfer of the former Danish West Indies over the United States of America. At Museum Vestsjælland, we have created an exhibition on the many connections between our local region and the former Danish West Indies. A portion of the exhibition on Danish colonial history addresses the use of stereotypes and designations. This choice placed the project in the midst of a media storm created by leading politicians in Denmark even before the exhibition opened. Even though nobody had seen the exhibition nor the objects in question, discussions arose on the radio, in newspapers and online, lasting for several days. The museum even received hate mails. The museum was accused of exercising self-censorship and hiding controversial objects from the public in an act of 'political correctness'. In actuality, the museum did just the opposite. However, the incorrect view kept circulating and duplicating itself, despite any attempts to explain the underlying considerations. After a week of the media storm, a blog media finally made an appointment with the museum and came to see the objects in question, as the very first media. No one else from the press had wanted to come before that and even up to this day, everyone remembers 'the hidden objects' when they hear the name of our museum.

This whole experience could make museums hesitate when considering working with controversial topics. One could even imagine museums changing their exhibitions altogether when facing pressure or nervous management with worries about funding. How can we act when media and politicians have their own agenda? And do we, as curators, exercise self-censorship wittingly or unwittingly to avoid pressure from media, management, and the press and in so doing are guilty of exactly that which we were accused of?

Karen Sivebæk Munk-Nielsen: She is a historian and has been working in the National Archives of Denmark with the project 'St. Croix African roots project' and in the National Museum of Denmark. She is employed at Holbæk Museum, Museum Vestsjælland, in Holbæk, Denmark, since 2009.

Solveig Hanusardóttir Olsen

A bloody tradition – whale killing in paintings by Mikines

People on the Faroe Islands have been killing whales for centuries, and the killing itself is marked by tradition and old customs. This is opposite to Fine Arts on the Faroe Islands, which started in the late 1920s. One of the most renowned artists from this generation is Sámal Joensen-Mikines. The lack of history of art on the Faroe Islands made him want to create a relation between old, traditional European art and new Faroese art. Mikines was especially fascinated by the Italian master Paolo Uccello (1397–1475) and his paintings of the Battle at San Romano. The Faroe Islands have not experienced war in the same way as larger countries in Europe, so one of the most dramatic events at these latitudes is whale killing. Mikines used this imagery to create a Faroese pendant to these old, traditional paintings. The whale killing itself is a dramatic scene – the ocean turns red with blood and the dead whales are lined up on the beach. Mikines' paintings of whale killing became an important part of his career and Faroese art in general. Two of them are on display in the permanent collection at the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands.

The last decades there has been a strong critique from the outside world. National heritage has been vandalized in opposition against the killing. This is something that the National Gallery has to consider: should the paintings be displayed, whilst constantly being on watch, or should they be taken down to protect them from danger. The presentation deals with this subject and how the National Gallery strives to find a durable solution to the problem.

Solveig Hanusardóttir Olsen: She is cand.mag. in History of Religions and MA in History of Art. She works as a curator at the National Gallery of the Faroe Islands in Torshavn where she arranges exhibitions and takes care of daily operations.

22 SEPTEMBER 2017, 15:15–16:15 COLLECTING AND DISPLAYING THE HIDDEN CONTEMPORARY

Moderator: Katherine Hauptman, Chair ICOM Sweden

Diana Chafik / Peter Ostritsch

Collecting and telling outside the comfort zone

How can museums – regulated and influenced by public discourse, politics and their own history – find ways of defining and handling difficult issues?

In our presentation, we argue that both defining difficult issues and the ways of handling those can be approached by a museum's clearly formulated, open-minded vision. Initially, we will present the vision and mission statement of Sörmlands museum and how these are debated and developed internally. Secondly, taking the vision as starting point, we will introduce some of the "difficult" social topics, sub-topics and objects the museum decided to discuss, collect, present and preserve.

We want to showcase different "difficult" topics that we are working on, such as a documentation about refugees and migration. Some other examples are life stories and conditions of people with impairments and a documentation of life-stories and collected objects from homeless EU-migrants. All these documentations and stories are new at the museum in different ways and in some aspects, they have never been told or collected before. This has led to new ways and work ethics in handling difficult topics. Besides presenting suggestions how to tackle difficult issues, we will also name "unsolved" issues. We will raise questions like "what happens if the museum never works outside it's comfort zone?" that can be discussed together. Finally, returning to the museum's vision, we will argue for a mindset that focuses more on individual's narratives than on objects themselves.

Diana Chafik: She has a master's degree in Ethnology. She leads a project about migration at Sörmlands museum in Nyköping, Sweden, and diversity has always been of interest. The last years she has been developing education programs for museum workers, like accessibility and integration of disability in the collections.

Peter Ostritsch: He was born in Budapest, studied Social and Cultural Anthropology in Tübingen, Germany. He has been working as a curator at several German museums, among others the city museum of Stuttgart and the Landesmuseum Württemberg. Since 2016 he is Head of Collections at Sörmlands museum in Nyköping, Sweden.

Karen Logan

Collecting the Troubles and Beyond: the role of the Ulster Museum in interpreting contested history

Collecting the Troubles and Beyond is a new initiative being taken forward by National Museums Northern Ireland and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The aim of the project is to widen the scope of the collection through greater academic and community engagement and to ensure that the collection can be used to support a full and inclusive narrative.

As well as material relating directly to political developments and conflict, collecting activity is being focussed on wider social, cultural and economic themes thereby enabling more nuanced and inclusive engagement with this complex period of history. We are working with community groups and representatives to establish the significance of events and objects through workshops and dialogue resulting in an important element of co-production within the project.

This case study will illustrate that despite the inherent challenges in interpreting contested history, the museum can play an important role in building understanding and in helping to address the legacy of the past. It can offer a shared and neutral space in which to explore controversial issues through critical narrative and interpretation which presents multiple perspectives and offers the opportunity for dialogue and debate.

Karen Logan: She is the Project Curator of the Collecting the Troubles and Beyond project based in National Museums Northern Ireland.

Ellen Lange

At home with people with severe mental illness

New understandings of mental health open up new ways of investigating it – including for researchers outside the healthcare profession. Access to voices from *inside* the illness experience, out in public, is greater now than ever before. This is an interesting opportunity for cultural institutions like museums. A museum, too, can treat mental illness. Not with diagnosis, therapy, and medication for the individual patient, and not in a hospital. But as an open and accessible venue where different beliefs and practices can be lifted up and added to the public dialogue about mental health and about the understandings and treatment options available in the field.

There are many stories about the experience of mental illness. Psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and other health professionals hear them all the time. The ill person describes symptoms and the effect of medications on their health; consider diagnoses, the best possible medication and other care measures. The roles are rather clear: the patient receives help and treatment;

health workers provide this help and treatment. However, the person who in this case is a patient may also have a potentially important role to play as a creator of knowledge and converser in a larger and open forum. Society can use the expertise and skills people with mental illness have.

In this paper, I will present the exhibition project "At home with ..." closer, and open a discussion on methodology, results and further use of the exhibition.

Ellen Lange: She is trained as a historian of ideas. She has worked at the National Medical Museum in Oslo, Norway, since 2003 and has curated several exhibitions and lead several museum projects. Many of them have tried to give voice to people, groups or positions seldom heard in the society.

22 SEPTEMBER 2017, 16:15–17:00 **UNFOLDING DARK NARRATIVES**

Moderator: Minna Sarantola-Weiss, Board Member ICOM Finland

Branko Šuštar

Museums and presentation of education, wars and the socialist period as problematic memories – experiences in Slovenia

The paper presents dilemmas in ten different museums (national, regional, specialized museums) in Slovenia regarding the exhibition presentation of the issue of education, World War I and World War II and the socialist period. The origins of the oldest Slovenian museums belong to the time of the Habsburg Monarchy, while the activities of modern museums were marked by the Yugoslav state and especially after 1945 the socialist political system. On the other hand, – due to proximity and greater openness of borders – in addition to the Slavic connections in museums in Slovenia also professional encouragements in contacts with neighbors (Italy, Austria), as well as the wider international experience, started to enforce.

We wonder how the museums exhibitions on the history of education presented emphasized and hidden social issues at different times, which were the dominant topics and what remained behind? Does the changing evaluation of education affect the exhibition on the history of education? How did the initially overlooked topics on World War I over the years became important in museums, at least as much as the after 1945 notable and political supported topic of World War II? The paper also shows how the content of ideological exhibitions and topics spread through critical approach and pluralism of different presentations.

Are the causes of the slow integration into exhibition topics in the relative insignificance of certain subjects and the overlooked personalities only in the changing cultural or political orientation? What are museums and curators avoiding, what are they unwilling or unable to speak about at exhibitions? How do museums face multiple traumatic experiences and the problematic time? In the context of a greater social responsibility, a number of museums are becoming more interested in the presentation of marginal and overlooked topics, but this is a process. We watch the analysis of museum exhibitions that highlight the social changes after 1990 through the writing of museum journals and other press, exhibition catalogs and collected statements of museum colleagues on these topics. And the question for the future: What unpleasant or overlooked topics should museums face in the future?

Branko Šuštar (PhD): He is historian (PhD at University in Ljubljana) at Slovenian School Museum, the national museum of education; more years editor of journal *School Chronicle/Šolska Kronika*. He is working on the history of education, museology and archives science; Board Member of ICOM Slovenia (2013–2016) and Historical Association of Slovenia

Mirkka Hekkurainen / Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto / Suzie Thomas

Sind wir noch Freunde? Displaying the difficult history of the German presence in Finnish Lapland, 1941–44

In the Second World War, Finland allied with Germany in the war against the Soviet Union. The end of the alliance leads to a conflict. Still, after 70 years, Finns face difficulties in acknowledging and engaging with this period of time. This is illustrated particularly well in the recent exhibition “Wir waren Freunde / Olimme ystäviä” (in English “We were friends”) at the Provincial Museum of Lapland in Arktikum, Rovaniemi. The exhibition covered the experiences of both local residents and the German soldiers posted in Lapland from 1940–44 and ran from April 2015 to January 2016. The exhibition received mainly positive feedback from both media and museum visitors, but also other, equally strong but negative (and sometimes surprising) reactions.

However, the marketing material of the exhibition included matchboxes with the text “Wir waren Freunde”; the box colored black with the text itself in an old-style red font. The matchboxes inspired powerful reactions in local people and were banned after the mayor of Rovaniemi had asked the museum to cease distributing the matchboxes. In this presentation, we discuss the exhibition process and its critical points, which are reflected in interviews with the museum staff as well as in the responses to the exhibition, which were collected in the form of visitor exit survey that resulted over 400 answers. We discuss the case as dark heritage and difficult history that continues to be a sensitive issue in the local cultural heritage politics.

Mirkka Hekkurainen: She is a post-graduate student at the University of Helsinki. She is an ethnologist who handles the social media of the project and is interested in participatory ethnography.

Dr. Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto: She is an ethnologist/folklorist and works as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. In this project, she interviews local people about their knowledge on German sites and remains, and observes sites, objects, and landscapes of Lapland.

Dr. Suzie Thomas: She is university lecturer in Museology at the University of Helsinki, Finland. On this project, she is particularly interested in researching the collecting, retrieval, and trade of objects and material connected to the German presence in Lapland.

23 SEPTEMBER 2017, 09:00–09:45 BRIDGING HISTORY WITH THE PRESENT

Moderator: Tine Bagh, Board Member ICOM Denmark

Satu Savia / Hanna Talasmäki

Post-mortem photography – is it right for museums to decide who is remembered, forgotten or hidden?

Publishing photographs of deceased online has begun in Finland quite recently. The focus of this paper is on the challenges of open data publishing of images representing such a taboo motif. The paper describes how two Finnish memory organization succeeded in giving online access to difficult cultural heritage in their photography collections, and discusses the legal and ethical issues which were raised during the process.

The study concentrates on Finnish photographs of deceased dating around the turn of the last century. As a source of photography sampling, we use Finnish National Digital Library, Finna (www.finna.fi). Finna provides open access to collections of Finnish museums, archives and libraries. We use methods of digital humanist theory to gather the research data, and concentrate on the images from the Photography Collections of The National Board of Antiquities and Helsinki City Museums Archive of Photographs.

In the late 19th and early 20th-century post-mortem photography, deceased were photographed and memorialized in the studio or in the funeral. Sometimes the deceased were accompanied by funeral attendees or family.

The legal background of this work is based on the Finnish copyright and protection of privacy laws. Open access to digital images raises questions about museums' ambitions, breaches of individual rights and use permissions, along with the question of a proper way to present dead people on the internet or in mass media. Releasing images as open data passes the responsibility from the museum to the user.

Our study is the first attempt of Finnish museums to create good practices for publishing historical photographs of deceased online. It attempts to initiate the discussion of the ethical and legal issues to a larger professional audience and to enhance cooperation, joint decision making, and sharing information among museums.

Satu Savia: She is art historian and curator from Helsinki City Museum, Finland. She has worked as project manager and senior researcher. Current projects focus on photographic collections care and development. She has published books and articles on history of photography and museum guidelines.

Hanna Talasmäki: She is art historian and curator. Previously she has served in Helsinki, Finland, as a researcher in the museum sector. She has worked as a researcher in many digitalizing projects at the National Board of Antiquities. She has published articles and books on history of photography and medallion art.

Merete Ipsen

Difficult issues around gender

Museums can be places for untold stories and difficult themes. Museums can frame debate and ideology as well as political discussions.

The Women's Museum in Denmark was founded more than 30 years ago. From the very beginning, this museum has developed a reputation for giving voices to minorities and bringing hidden or shameful realities to the forefront. How to combine cultural heritage with uncomfortable questions?

Our Goal is not to have a blockbuster exhibition using difficult themes – rather to heightened awareness and reach new target groups. By switching between difficult themes and mainstream exhibitions we also reach our more traditional guests.

Creating exhibitions about uncomfortable subjects from personal cases is a challenge. Ethical considerations are of the utmost importance when using authentic personal experiences. The informant must not feel abused at any time.

Museums are an excellent place to create identity. They can be a comfort zone but should not try to be places of social healing and recovery. Difficult themes in our museum can give substance for social reflection, tolerance, and understanding of difficult conditions and

acceptance of diversity. We don't interpret women as victims even when we focus on gender conflicts in themes such as refugees and religion, drugs and alcohol, prostitution and trafficking, abuse and rape. Transgender stories are included in our newest exhibition. Together with LGBT persons, we train our staff to be norm-critical.

If a museum is to be a platform for modern life it has to be dynamic and open to new challenges – and create a dialogue with communities surrounding them.

Merete Ipsen: She is co-founder (1983) and Director of the Women's Museum in Aarhus, Denmark. Held a number of positions of trust as chairman of the Danish Council of Museums (1998–2002), chairman of the Danish national committee of ICOM (2003–2009), member of ICOM's Executive Council (2010–2016) and of the Danish national UNESCO committee (since 2010).

21 – 22 SEPTEMBER 2017 ROLL-UP PRESENTATIONS

The following Roll-up Presentations on the theme of the conference will be on show during the conference (foyer)

Tone Cecilie Simensen Karlgård

Congo Gaze – people, encounters and artifacts. Obstacles trust and mistrust

The roll-up will present a recent cooperative collection and exhibition project between Congolese diaspora and the museum. Bernadette Lynch's concept radical trust is a point of departure for a brief description of the project idea and organization and also for exploring how this particular project developed.

The aim is to raise questions and share experiences. How to design an open, yet structured process that could ensure the development of a common understanding of what it would involve to work according to the ideals underpinning the concept "radical trust"?

Could this idea become implemented within the framework of current practice in public administration as such? Escaping power structures – a wild dream?

Tone Cecilie Simensen Karlgård: She is Museum Lecturer at the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Norway.

Anne Sofie Vemmelund Christensen

An international refugee museum

The Varde Museums are working on establishing an international refugee museum in Denmark. The museum will tell the story of the 250.000 German refugees who arrived in the German-occupied Denmark after having fled from their homes due to the progress of the Red Army at the end of World War Two. At the liberation, in May 1945 Denmark was obliged to help the German refugees. It is a challenging, but also a useful story: Especially in a time where Europe faces huge challenges regarding refugees, which also will be included in the museum.

The overall goal is to create a museum, which prepares the grounds for reconciliation and understanding but also leaves room for debate. Even though the last German refugee left Denmark almost 70 years ago, the era still shares similarities with the present.

Anne Sofie Vemmelund Christensen: She is Curator at the Varde Museums in Varde, Denmark.

Carolin Vogel

‘Kunst auf Lager’: from blind spot to spotlight

How a network of supporters encourages museums to turn difficult issues into new chances

14 partners, 230 projects, and 20 million Euros have brought thousands of exciting objects that were too damaged or too forgotten to be shown from depots into exhibition halls, research projects, radio series and on political agendas. The focus of this funding initiative is on the collection as a museum’s unique and outstanding value. We deal with confusing stocks, mouldy boxes and spalling color. And we have learned that old stuff from cellars can raise as much attention as spectacular purchases and borrowed exhibitions. So the good news about this difficult issue of museums is: There are still treasures to be dug out.

Carolin Vogel: She is Project Manager at the Hermann Reemtsma Stiftung in Hamburg, Germany.

Kathrin Pabst / Søren la Cour Jensen / Per B. Rekdal

An open forum for reflection about ethics – a new ICOM International Committee on ethical issues?

In everyday museum work, we often face ethical questions and challenges which can present themselves in many ways and situations: our contact with guests, informants and colleagues; in the handling of artefacts, presentations and exhibitions – or economic questions. Many museums and museum professionals can face here the same issues, especially while working as societal actors. We would like to initiate a new international committee which could function as an open forum which is easy to access and participate in by all museum professionals. Such a forum would be open for reflection, sharing and discussing pressing ethical issues and thereby help museum professionals to take more informed choices.

Dr. Kathrin Pabst: She is Head of the Department for Research, Collection Management and Education at the Vest-Agder Museum in Kristiansand, Norway, and Board Member of ICOM Norway.

Søren la Cour Jensen: He is Senior Curator, Head of Archives and Manager of The House of Knud Rasmussen in Hundested, Denmark. Chair of ICOM Denmark 2015, Member of ICOM DRMC and Chair of Blue Shield Denmark.

Per B. Rekdal: He is retired Head of Exhibitions, Education and Public Services at the Museum of Cultural Heritage, Oslo, Norway, Chair of ICOM Norway 1996–98, ICOM ICME 1998–2004, Member of ICOM Executive Council 2004–2010, Chair of ICOM Working Group on Governance 2013–2017.

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