

Intercultural Dialogue and Social Cohesion in museums

The Learning Museum project (LEM) midterm international conference
Riga, 27th April 2012

Given that society is constantly changing, museums must regularly assess whether they are fulfilling their task of serving society adequately. In the last decades the number of residents in Western European countries with an immigration background has increased steadily. Also the reemerging of nation states across Eastern Europe following collapse of Soviet Union has caused division of population along ethnic lines.

This international conference will consider recent developments in social justice museum movements across Europe, particularly concentrating on the museums role in social cohesion. It will draw on examples of current Latvian cultural policy, where for the first time since regaining independence larger attention is being placed on possibilities offered by heritage institutions to address social cohesion and foster stronger civic society.

The conference will examine museum responsibilities and experiences in offering opportunities of cultural participation to people from all walks of life against the background of cultural integration policies of represented nation states.

- Are museums being considered an asset for social cohesion in Europe?
- To what extent have museums and their collections have been instrumentalized in fostering an open and unprejudiced civic society?
- How do museums and their representative organizations campaign for an active voice in national cultural policies and how successful are they?
- How do museums cope with potentially controversial questions with ethnically diverse audiences?
- How do museums retain their academic independence under the pressure of political demands?

These are some of questions the midterm evaluation conference will address by offering floor to project participants from various European countries and some specially invited high profile museum policy makers and researchers. The event takes place within the Grundtvig sponsored LEM project.

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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

27.04.2012

9:00 – 10:00

Registration and coffee

10:00 – 10:15

Opening of the Conference

Session 1. Cultural Policy Perspectives

10:15 – 10:45

Keynote

Diana Walters

Cultural Heritage without Borders and International museum and heritage consultant, Sweden

10:45 – 11:15

Divided social memory and museums as an integration resource

Sarmite Elerte

Advisor of Minister of Culture on Integration Policy, Ministry of Culture, Latvia

11:15 – 11:45

Beyond integration courses. Ways to face the challenge of intercultural dialogue in museums in Germany

Dietmar Osses

Director of the Westphalian State Museum of Industrial Heritage and Culture

11:45 – 12:45

Lunch

Session 2. Museum Sector Perspectives

12:45 – 13:15

Keynote: New paradigms for intercultural dialogue in museums

Simona Bodo

Independent researcher, Italy

13:15 – 13:45

Social Inclusion in Liverpool

David Fleming

Director of National Museums Liverpool

13:45 – 14:15

The barbarian museum

Paul Spies

Director of the Amsterdam Museum

14:15 – 14:45

Coffee

14:45 – 15:15

An ethical exchange of ideas: how can museums prepare for the 'messy' bits of collaboration and intercultural dialogue?

Janice Lane. Senior Museums Manager (Public Programming and Customer Service), Glasgow Life/Glasgow Museums

Victoria Hollows. Contemporary Arts and Museum Manager, Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow

15:15 – 15:45

Digital media's social side-effects

Japer Visser

Innovator and Digital Strategist, Netherlands

15:45 – 17:00

Panel discussion

Conference moderator:

Raivis Simansons

House of European History

Conference venue:

Latvian War Museum, Smilšu Street 20, Riga

<http://www.karamuzejs.lv/>

Registration:

Please confirm your participation by 1 April, 2012 muzeji@muzeji.lv

Conference Supporters:



Conference Project Coordinator:

Ineta Zelca Simansone

Project Consultant at Latvian National Museum of Art

T: 00 371 28819796

E: inetasimansone@gmail.com; muzeji@muzeji.lv

I: www.lnmm.lv; www.muzeji.lv