Museum International

Museum international: fiftieth anniversary issue

Vol L, n°1, january 1998

Guest editorial

With this issue Museum International (formerly Museum) celebrates its fiftieth birthday. Coming right on the heels of the fiftieth anniversary of UNESCO in 1995 and of ICOM in 1996, this occasion seemed the appropriate time to look at how the magazine and the museum world have changed over the past half-century and to take stock of UNESCO's significant achievements in support of museums and the cultural heritage. To mark this special event we are pleased to publish the following guest editorial by Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO.

In 1948 UNESCO launched a new magazine – Museum. It was one of the first periodicals to be published by the young Organization and its very existence bore witness to the important role of museums in carrying out UNESCO's constitutional mandate 'to maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge … by assuring the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science …'.

The very first editorial set out Museum's goals: it was to serve as a medium for the exchange of professional opinion and technical advice, and to provide a stimulus to museums and museum workers in the development of their services to society; it would strive to reach a worldwide audience beyond the confines of continental Europe; and it would support UNESCO's aims by enlisting museum professionals in the common task of spreading knowledge and promoting international understanding as a positive contribution to peace.

Fifty years later, these guiding principles have not changed. What has changed, and dramatically so, is the museum world itself and the magazine – now called Museum International – designed to serve it. A simple figure tells the story: experts say that well over half the world's museums today were created in the last fifty years. The winds of change that have swept through all our traditional institutions and practices have also transformed museums and revolutionized our ways of perceiving and using them. From peaceful havens of scholarly pursuit where footsteps often echoed in half-empty rooms, museums have become bustling spaces of excitement, challenge and dialogue; places where people can ask important questions about their own culture and its relationship to others, about aesthetics and history, about the link between nature and culture – in short, about everything under the sun.

Museum International thus celebrates its golden anniversary at a time of great upheaval and innovation. I believe its essential task is to convey the substance and the spirit of this new museum environment and to provide a forum for museums large and small, rich and not-so-rich, encyclopedic and specialized. The continued support and participation of its readers in more than 100 countries will play a vital part in achieving this goal.

Federico Mayor

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Museum: 'for the benefit of the museums of the world'

Raymonde Frin

Raymonde Frin was the very first editor of Museum, presiding over its destiny from its founding in 1948 until her retirement from UNESCO in 1972. We asked her to share her recollections of the magazine's early days and its evolution. To illustrate this article and others in this special anniversary dossier we have selected photographs of museums then and now, showing how even the most venerable institutions have adapted themselves to a swiftly changing world.

In 1946, at the request of the French Government, UNESCO took up residence in Paris [1] where its Headquarters have remained ever since. The most urgent question was where to house it in a city which was just beginning to recover from a difficult period, and where life was very slowly getting back to normal.

The building chosen was the Hotel Majestic, which had been a luxury hotel for a time. It was used by the delegations which met to sign the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, and, indeed, a staff member of UNESCO had been a member of the British delegation then. In 1940 the occupying authorities took up residence there, but in 1946 the Majestic became the site of the new Organization whose name conveyed so much hope: education, science, culture.

UNESCO's programme was being drawn up for the first General Conference, which was to take place in Paris, and people's minds were galvanized by the scale of the proposals being made, but practical problems still had to be addressed.

The installation in a former hotel comprised a team of staff members who were undoubtedly enthusiastic but were also, perhaps, somewhat at a loss because of their unusual environment and its inadequacies. Was it really possible to set up an office in a former bathroom, which still carried the signs of its previous function? Could the telephones be made to work and the supply of needed materials and equipment secured? All of this posed serious, albeit temporary, problems. In the end, adaptation came rapidly and was characterized by a remarkable spirit of co-operation and comradeship.

Once the General Conference had adopted its programme, it had, of course, to be put into effect. With regard to the Department of Cultural Activities, both the Director-General of UNESCO, Julian Huxley, and the Department's director, Jean Thomas, frequently wrote to emphasize the increased role played by culture in a rapidly changing world. 'One of the tasks entrusted to the Museums Division was to collect and ensure the exchange of all information concerning museums, their techniques, and modern exhibition methods and activities.' [2]

What was to be the method of approach? Thanks to the efforts of a great American, Chauncey Hamlin, who had secured the backing of all the leading figures in the world of museums, the International Council of Museums had just been created. It was left to UNESCO to ensure its support. Furthermore, the International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation, which had been created by the League of Nations before the war, was a unique example of an organization entirely devoted to intellectual co-operation, and 'it would not have been wise to overlook the tools at its disposal'. [3]

Although UNESCO's more representative character was to distinguish it from the IIIC, it was natural for it to take over some of the activities of the defunct institute and in particular, with regard to the Division of Museums, to carry on the tradition of the magazine Mouseion. But whereasMouseion had dealt only with art and history museums, Museum was to encompass the activities of all types of museums and strive to address itself to people from all walks of life on all continents.

Presenting the magazine, the Director-General, Julian Huxley, said: 'UNESCO takes pleasure in launching Museum for the benefit of the museums of the world, on whom UNESCO calls directly for co-operation in its programme and for aid in its work of establishing the intercultural and international understanding basic to the peace of the world.'

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The purpose of Museum was thus established and the Secretariat, assisted by Board of Editors, [4] drew up a work plan. It was obviously necessary to begin by taking stock of the state of museums at the end of the war, then to envisage the prospects of museums in a world springing back to life, to call attention to the changes taking place in the conception of museums and their objectives, and, lastly, to establish a rational sequence of future issues designed to take all the foregoing factors into account.

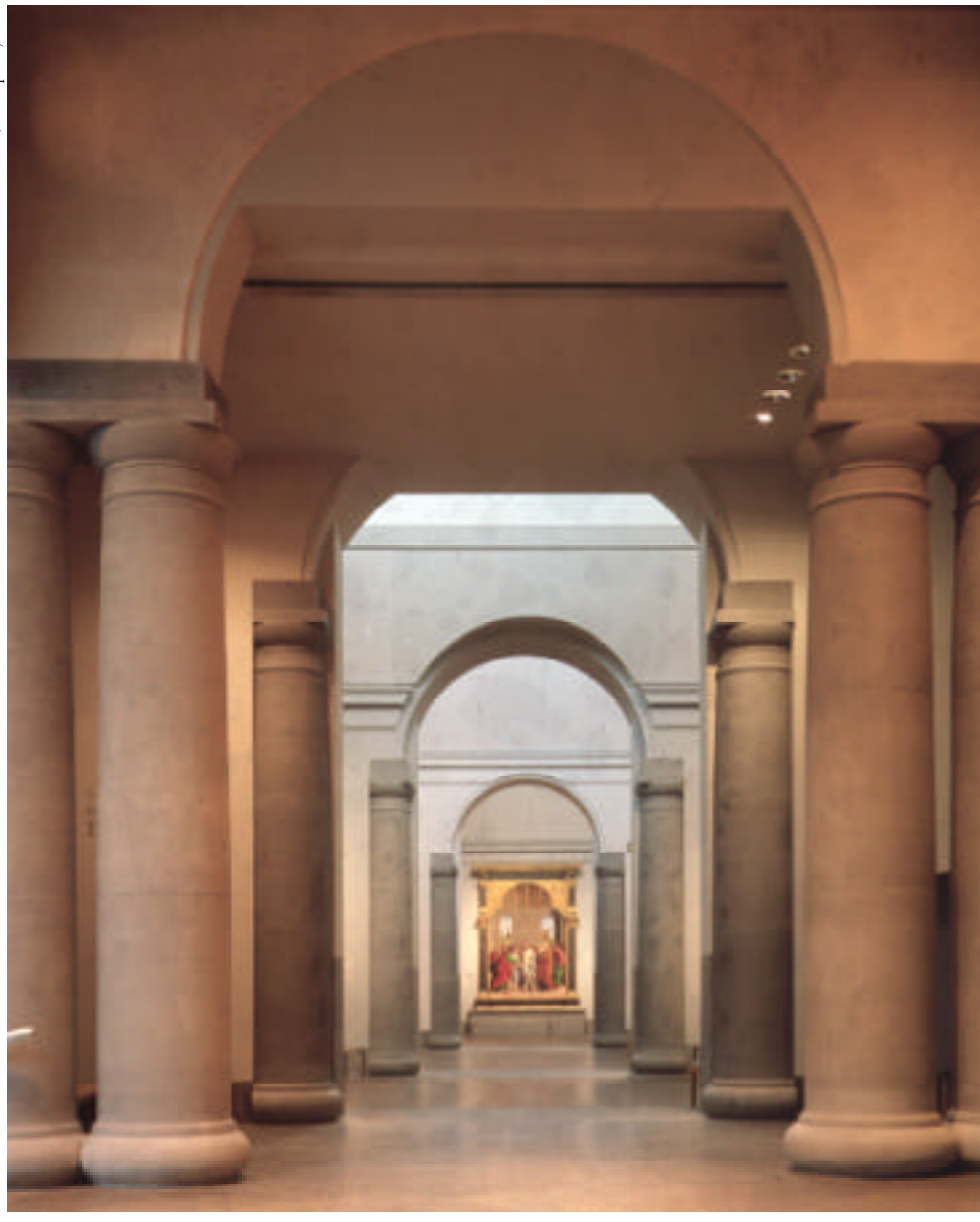
This was a wide-ranging endeavour whose various phases, even the more significant ones, cannot all be described in this brief account. The best way to throw light on these different aspects is, no doubt, to look at certain issues of the magazine as they appeared.

To begin with, what was the status of museums when the war ended? How did this long interruption affect them? To provide the necessary answers, the first two issues of Museum were devoted to French museums. First, because France had hosted the first International Conference of ICOM, and, secondly and more importantly, because France's museums were being entirely reorganized – one might even say completely renovated – and valuable lessons were to be learnt. Irreplaceable experience was being acquired concerning the way objects that had been kept in safe storage were being handled and the problems encountered in putting them back on display.

Succeeding issues emphasized the development and progress that led to the modern version of museums. They did so by drawing attention, first, to all the achievements of museums that had remained unaffected by the war, for example those in Sweden and the United States, and, second, to future prospects, with two issues being devoted to the subject of museums and education. Museums were no longer merely places of conservation but very active establishments which, through their educational programmes and exhibitions displaying objects in their re-created contexts, ensured that they played a role in everyday life, whereas before, they existed primarily in the context of the past.

New activities had to be addressed, not only education, still little practised and often unfamiliar, but also subjects ranging from the cleaning of paintings – a highly controversial area – to the problems of adapting historical monuments for use as museums, the new face of archaeological museums and the presentation of the collections of natural history museums. Special issues were devoted to all these subjects, and general issues were also published which were not limited to any specific themes but constituted an open forum designed to publicize museum trends in different countries.

The National Gallery in London with the new Sainsbury Wing, which opened in July 1991, designed by the architects Venturi, Scott & Brown Associates.



Interior view of the Sainsbury Wing showing the transition between the old and new galleries.

The passing years witnessed changes in ideas and concepts, and the succeeding issues of Museum took on a new look by emphasizing the progress of museums that had now become renowned as instruments of education. Museum highlighted the stages of this transformation and the ways in which the new ideas emerged. Thus, for example, certain issues dealt with the interdependence of cultures and the International Campaign for Museums. [5]

Some issues also concerned subjects that were more closely related to UNESCO's programmes and emphasized the absolute necessity of communication between countries. They included issues devoted to international and regional training courses. [6] They tried to draw lessons from these experiences, in particular, the great diversity of the problems encountered in various countries, which differed not only in climate and landscape but in natural history and archaeology. Museum could not but devote space to one of UNESCO's grandest adventures, the safeguarding of the monuments of Nubia, and it published an article written by Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt entitled 'The Greatest Open-air Museum in the World is about to disappear'. [7]

By providing what could be called a worldwide consultative service, the magazine has exercised a useful influence in countries that are somewhat isolated either because of their geographical position or the lack of contact between museum technical staff.

But what about Museum's present status as it prepares to celebrate its jubilee anniversary this year? Times have well and truly changed. We are now in the computer age, but while the world's major museums, proud of their prestigious collections, are able to use all the new resources to exalt the benefits of culture and attract large crowds, less wealthy countries do not have the same possibilities. None the less, they still feel the need to highlight their history and culture and sometimes need to have recourse to reproductions as well as computer technology. The idea of assuming responsibility for their museums is deeply ingrained in the minds of such communities.

From now on, Museum (now Museum International) will have the task of asking questions, stimulating objective debate, and providing the inspiration for reflection. In short, its goal will not be to try to provide solutions but, rather, to ask the basic questions, to be the organ of a world community, and be able, in this way, to redefine the function of the museum. In the capable hands of its present editor, the magazine should be able to cope with this new situation and serve a wider public whose aspirations, in those countries that are progressing apace, cannot yet be satisfied. ■

Notes

1. The choice of Paris was not fortuitous. In May 1945, France's representatives began working towards it at the San Francisco Conference at which the United Nations was founded and its Charter adopted. They asked for and obtained it in London at the end of the same year during the conference which led to the creation of UNESCO (Jean Thomas, UNESCO , Paris Gallimard, 1962).

2. Ibid.

3. Léon Blum, quoted in ibid.

4. The launching of Museum was accompanied by the creation of a Board of Editors. This body was subsequently reduced to a few members including Dr Grace Morley, who had presided over the birth of the magazine, André Léveillé, the director of the Palais de la Découverte in Paris, closely associated with the founding of ICOM and also responsible for scientific matters in museums, and Georges-Henri Rivière, the brilliant director of ICOM.

5. Sixty-one States participated in this campaign which was aimed at drawing the attention of governmental authorities to the growing importance of museums in the life of their countries.

6. The first training course took place in Brooklyn, New York (United States) in 1952. It was followed in 1954 by a training course organized in Athens (Greece) which also dealt with the subject of education in museums. They were followed by regional training courses, the first taking place in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1958, the second in Tokyo (Japan) in 1960, the third in Mexico City (Mexico) in 1964, the fourth in New Delhi (India) in 1966 and the last in Santiago (Chile) in 1972. The subject of these latter courses was the role played by the museum as a cultural centre and in the community as a whole.

7. Museum, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1960.

Museums and monuments: UNESCO's pioneering role

Hiroshi Daifuku

The early days of UNESCO's programme on behalf of museums and monuments were a challenging time of innovation, ingenuity and teamwork, which inspired international recognition of the importance of the cultural heritage and of the Organization's groundbreaking efforts in this field. The results of these achievements are still visible today – including the continued publication of Museum International . And who better to tell this story than one of UNESCO's first cultural heritage specialists, Hiroshi Daifuku, who joined the Organization in 1954, after having begun his academic and museum career in the United States, and went on to become the Chief of the Monuments and Sites Section. Author of more than fifty articles on cultural heritage, he retired from UNESCO in 1980 and works as a consultant in Washington, D.C.

At the end of the First World War the Allies decided to establish the League of Nations, an organization designed to avoid future conflicts by developing a system of arbitration, to lessen tension by reducing armaments, and to foster open rather than secret diplomacy. It had a number of affiliated organizations including the Permanent Court of International Justice located in The Hague, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and others. In May 1922, it established the last of its associated units when it created the Committee on Intellectual Relations (CIR), as a counterpart to the ILO, which was concerned particularly with workers.

That same year, the French Government, on the basis of a request of the Assembly of the League of Nations, agreed to establish the International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation (IIIC) in Paris, to work under the direction of the CIR. It also provided an annual grant of 2 million francs (about $100,000 at the then prevailing rate of exchange). One of its actions was to establish national committees to liaise between governments and the IIIC (a system later adopted by UNESCO) and by 1926 there were approximately forty. Among its bureaux was the International Museums Office (IMO), which issued a monograph series entitled 'Museographie' and a periodical, Mouseion.

The League steadily declined in importance as it was unable to limit or to end armed conflicts. The Secretariat, however, continued to work for peaceful solutions and recorded the increasing level of devastation caused by modern warfare. It requested the IIIC and the IMO to carry out a study on the problem of the protection of works of art, historic and artistic monuments and institutions devoted to science, art, education and culture. In 1936, the IMO prepared a draft international convention 'for the Protection of Historic Buildings and Works of Art in Times of War' which was presented to the Council and the Assembly of the League in 1938. The Second World War broke out while consultations were still in progress; however, some governments adopted a number of the measures advocated in the draft instrument (which was later used in drawing up the 1954 Hague Convention). The United States, for example, set up a special commission in 1943 for the protection of artistic and historic monuments, and established the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives special unit in the army to respect the cultural heritage of countries in which the Allied forces were engaged.

The beginning of the Second World War in September 1939 in effect ended the League. The IMO, however, continued to function during the war and the occupation of Paris until it finally closed in 1946 when the League officially ended its activities. The IIIC transferred its records to the newly created United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the IMO Documentation Centre provided UNESCO's Museums Division with a great deal of useful material. The first Chief of Division was Dr Grace M. Morley (on leave of absence from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art), with Raymonde Frin of France as programme specialist and editor of the periodical Museum, and Kenneth Disher of the United States as programme specialist for the Development of Museums.

Another significant event of this period was the establishment of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in November 1946, prior to the first General Conference of UNESCO. Chauncey J. Hamlin, President of ICOM, had written to Julian Huxley, the first Director-General of UNESCO, proposing its affiliation with the Organization. This was accepted and ICOM was furnished office

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Hiroshi Daifuku

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The Serralves Foundation for contemporary art in Oporto, Portugal, is housed in a 1930s mansion surrounded by 18 hectares of gardens, woods and farmland. Its designers included the architects Charles Siclis and Marques da Silva and decorators such as Brandt, Lalique, Leleu and Ruhlmann.

space and shortly afterwards given a contract for the operation of the documentation centre inherited from IMO.

In 1953 the programme was expanded and became the Museums and Monuments Division. Dr Morley was succeeded by Jan Karel van der Haagen of the Netherlands, with Pietro Gazzola of Italy as programme specialist. When he returned to his post as central inspector of historic monuments in 1955, he was succeeded by a fellow central inspector, Giorgio Rosi. I succeeded Kenneth Disher in January 1954.

Modest – and unusual – beginnings

UNESCO was then a small organization located in a former luxury hotel, the Hotel Majestic, near the Étoile on the Avenue Kléber, which had been used by German forces during the Occupation. Next door was a massive reinforced concrete building which had housed their communications equipment. The main building still bore the traces of its hotel past. Former bedrooms and bathrooms became offices decorated with coloured tiles and remnants of luxury appointments such as light fixtures, a striking contrast to the bleak appearance and utilitarian furniture found in most offices. The largest bedrooms were shared by several secretaries who stored their files in the wardrobes, while middle-grade professionals were put in disused bathrooms, using the bathtubs to store their papers. But despite the less than ideal working conditions, UNESCO's small staff all knew each other and worked together on co-operative projects.

Meanwhile, many of the projects launched by the IMO were continued and expanded by UNESCO. The programme of the Museums and Monuments Division (later known as the Division for Cultural Property and currently the Division of Cultural Heritage) included several new projects. One was the publication of the 'Museums and Monuments' series. The early numbers were printed in the same format as Museum, as, for example, The Care of Paintings, 1952, which was essentially a reprint of a special issue of the magazine. These were succeeded by manuals in a smaller format, intended for the use of small institutions and those in the developing countries. They were published in separate English and French editions, and frequently in Spanish, as well as in many other languages.

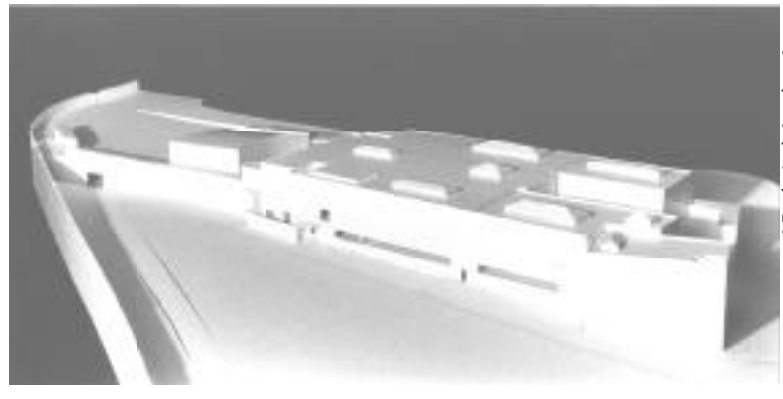
In 1954, UNESCO initiated its Participation Programme which enabled the Organization to provide short-term consultants, fellowships and travel grants, grants to aid conferences and meetings as well as books and equipment, to its Member States upon their request. The Programme began on a very small scale, with $25,000 allotted for a two-year period for the development of museums and the same amount for the preservation of monuments and sites. By the 1970s the amounts had been increased to $100,000 each.

The Constitution of UNESCO mandates the Organization, among other things, to 'maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge: by assuring the conservation of the world's inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science, and recommending to the nations concerned the necessary international conventions' (Article I, para. 2 (c)).

In meeting these goals the Secretariat needed contacts with experts and scholarly bodies in order to develop programmes that would meet the diverse needs of its Member States. International NGOs often provided these services. However, when such institutions were lacking the General Conference of UNESCO created advisory committees such as the International Advisory Committee on Monuments, Artistic and Historical Sites and Archaeological Excavations. The Committee was involved in the preparation of the first international instrument adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO, the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, otherwise known as the 1954 Hague Convention. It was also involved in the preparation of Draft Recommendations such as the Recommendation on International Principles Applicable to Archaeological Excavations, adopted in 1956, and the Recommendation concerning the most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible to Everyone, adopted in 1960.

While the recommendation on archaeology was used as the basis for several national legislations, unfortunately the one on museums, which advocated the abolition of fees, has been largely ignored. Rising costs have forced many museums to charge entrance fees or suggested 'contributions' from visitors. However, the Recommendation on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Export, Import and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, adopted in 1964, and the convention of the same name adopted in 1970, have had obvious important implications for museums as thefts, illegal excavation of archaeological sites, and illicit trade in cultural property plague museums and other owners of cultural property. Gradually, as security problems increased and traffic in stolen property crossed national boundaries, a growing number of states ratified this convention, and today they number eighty-six.

One of the possible projects discussed by the Advisory Committee was the establishment of an international fund for monuments, but it was decided that this would



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Model of the Museum of Contemporary Art, designed by architect Alvaro Siza, to be constructed in the Foundation's park.

be impractical. Instead, Dr Fritz Gysin, director of the Swiss National Museum in Zurich, suggested the establishment of an intergovernmental organization (IGO) dedicated to the co-ordination of research and improving standards in the conservation of cultural property. This recommendation was adopted by UNESCO and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property was installed in Rome in 1959. UNESCO provided a subvention of $12,000 a year for the first four years, and $10,000 annually for the following four years. The amount was not large, since, as an IGO, it would receive contributions from its Member States amounting to 1 per cent of their annual payment to UNESCO. However, the subvention was required during its formative period, as delays were inevitable in recruiting major donor states.

We were very fortunate in engaging Dr Harold J. Plenderleith, who had been keeper of the Research Laboratory of the British Museum in London, as director of the 'Rome Centre' (1959–69). His reputation, patience, and dedication were major factors in establishing the Rome Centre (later known as ICCROM) and in attracting many donor states as well as developing countries to join it. During its first ten years, in close collaboration with UNESCO, it expanded its documentation centre and library. Most important of all, it developed a series of courses for the training of specialists in the conservation of cultural property.

The growth of UNESCO's Programme, the need for adequate documentation and regular contacts with specialists in the field of conserving monuments and sites, could no longer be met by an advisory committee which met once a year. In May 1964, after detailed study, the Committee recommended the creation of a new NGO for monuments and sites. With the establishment of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1965, the work of the Advisory Committee ended, though most of its members continued to have active roles in international programmes as members of ICOM and ICOMOS.

The Nubia Campaign: a watershed

One of the most important factors in the expansion of UNESCO's programme took place when the Government of Egypt decided on the construction of the High Dam near Aswan. The lake created by the giant dam would have flooded much of the Upper Nile, beyond the First Cataract, and inundated many unexplored archaeological sites as well as such well-known monuments as Abu Simbel and Kalabsha. The island of Philae, with its complex of monuments, located between the High Dam and the Aswan Dam, would have been completely flooded. The government had originally launched an appeal for a salvage programme but found little interest.

Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, the Louvre museum's renowned Egyptologist, played an important role in persuading the Government of Egypt to apply to UNESCO for international assistance, and also influenced UNESCO to undertake the project. In 1959, at the request of the government, UNESCO organized a committee of Egyptologists, archaeologists and engineers which went from the Aswan district to the Sudanese border to review the area that would have been inundated. At a formal session of the committee and representatives of the Egyptian Government, H. E. Saroite Okacha, Minister of Culture, announced that in exchange for international assistance, the government would:

(a) surrender at least half of all the finds made, except for outstanding specimens (unique or essential to Egyptian museum collections); (b) authorize excavations on other Egyptian sites; (c) cede certain temples from Upper Nubia which could be shipped abroad; (d) give up important collections of ancient objects which were state property. As the impounded lake would have extended beyond the border into Sudan, the Sudanese Government made the same offer to participating institutions.

The General Conference authorized UNESCO to respond to the request and to launch an international campaign to preserve major monuments and carry out an extensive salvage archaeological programme. The Conference noted that this was to be an exception to the normal development of UNESCO, and that campaigns were not to be repeated.

In the twenty years until it ended in 1980, the Nubia Campaign rescued or recorded in detail the most important monuments and sites. For the two major monumental complexes, approximately $42 million had been spent to transfer Abu Simbel from the banks of the Nile to the surrounding plateau, and $30 million to transfer the monuments of Philae to the neighbouring island of Agilkia which had been landscaped to resemble Philae. (The Government of Egypt provided approximately 50 per cent of the budget required, while the balance came from international contributions.)

Prior to this period, regulations governing archaeological research in Egypt limited the work of foreign institutions. Moreover, Egyptologists were preoccupied with the imposing size and numbers of the monuments of Pharaonic Egypt. As funds were now available, universities, museums and other institutions carried out an extensive series of excavations in areas where little previous work had taken place. A great deal of new data was discovered and previously unknown cultures defined. The generous division of finds offered by both governments permitted extensive research which had not been possible in Upper Egypt for decades. Several hundred articles and scores of monographs were published long before the campaign was over, and more can be anticipated. In Egypt, after the salvage programme was over, the surplus of funds received for the Campaign has been used to design and begin the building of a new national museum to replace the old, outmoded building.

Nothing succeeds like success. In November 1966, during the General Conference of UNESCO, torrential rains flooded Italy from the Alps to Sicily, inflicting the greatest damage to the heritage of works of art and monuments in the cities of Florence and Venice. The Italian Delegation announced this dramatic event and the overwhelming need for specialists in the conservation of works of art and historic buildings, as well as for volunteers who could work under the guidance of experts. In spite of its previous injunction that the Nubia Campaign was unique and not to be repeated, the General Conference responded to the appeal and approved the International Campaign for Florence and Venice.

Other campaigns soon followed. The next one was to safeguard the great Buddhist monument of Borobudur in Indonesia, whose foundations were weak and the sculptured walls of its terraces so badly tilted that their collapse was imminent. Then there was the great Bronze Age or early urban site of Moenjodaro, on the banks of the Indus river in Pakistan. Development and neglect also threatened the loss of the architectural heritage of sites and monuments in the Kathmandu

One of the original galleries of the National Museum of Art of Catalonia in Barcelona, located in a building constructed for the 1929 Universal Exhibition; the museum houses the most important collection in the world of Roman painting from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries.

Valley of Nepal, the Cultural Triangle in Sri Lanka, and elsewhere, for which the General Conference voted to organize campaigns.

Each campaign required the advice of consultants, training, specialized equipment, etc., and creating or enlarging national services to be ultimately responsible. Each also led to multiplier effects in the countries concerned, for while the various governments had to adopt large national budgets as counterpart funds, the increase in government services and experienced staff contributed to the overall programme. Moreover, in the case of many of the major monumental complexes, and enlarged and modernized museums, government expenditure was eventually amortized through the growth of cultural tourism.

Enter UNDP

In the early post-war years the most important source of funds for extrabudgetary projects in the United Nations system was the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Initially, assistance provided by the Programme was limited to projects for 'direct' contributions to the economy. It was soon realized, however, that if the countries that received assistance were not aided in developing their own technical staff, they would be dependent on outside aid for an indefinite period. In meeting this goal, UNDP contracted the UNESCO Department of Education to aid developing countries to establish universities and technical institutes.

Cultural projects were not then eligible for United Nations assistance. However, at a General Assembly of the International Union of Official Tourist Organizations in Rome (IUOTO), UNESCO succeeded in introducing the concept of 'cultural tourism' which emphasized that tourism was an important component in many development projects, and that it made little sense to finance projects to improve infrastructure such as highways, airports, etc., and not the monuments, sites and museums that were important tourist destinations.

The resolutions adopted by IUOTO (which was later renamed the World Tourist Organization when it was reorganized as an intergovernmental organization with headquarters in Madrid) included cultural tourism as an important element in economic development. They were subsequently approved by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and, in 1973, it became possible for UNDP to finance cultural tourism projects. Preliminary studies were frequently carried out by consultants provided through UNESCO's Participation Programme and this in turn led to funds from UNDP for long-term experts, scholarships and equipment.

A later development allowed for training projects financed by Regional UNDP, in which training in conservation and

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The same gallery today, as rehabilitated by the architect Gae Aulenti.

the preparation of exhibitions was carried out under local conditions. The first pilot project took place in Nigeria. Bernard E. B. Fagg, who was then the country's Director of Antiquities, established a training centre at Jos and made it possible to expand the small site museum there into a functioning organization for trainees coming from countries south of the Sahara. Courses were given in both English and French and proved to be successful. A second centre was established at Churubusco, Mexico City, for Central and South America. Other centres were later established in Honolulu for the Pacific area, with the co-operation of the Bishop Museum and the Academy of Arts, and in Cuzco, Peru, for South America.

In Africa, where the need for skilled labour was particularly acute, graduates from Jos and other regional training centres found themselves much in demand and many received rapid promotions. Demand for slots to train additional staff was high; however, regional UNDP projects were for many years financed for only a maximum of ten years. As UNDP funding ended, some projects, such as Jos and Churubusco, became national training centres.

The jewel in the crown: the World Heritage Convention

The Museums and Monuments Division was involved in the preparation of the Convention concerning the Protection of

The Victoria and Albert Museum in London as it is today.

the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, one of the most important international instruments to be adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO. The Convention is distinguished by the fact that all ratifying states commit themselves to contribute to an international fund, to be administered by members of a committee elected by the states parties to the Convention.

UNESCO's first draft was concerned with the preservation of outstanding monuments and sites. However, the United Nations was planning a major conference on the environment to be held in Stockholm in 1972, and had charged the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) to prepare several draft international instruments, including one on the possibility of a 'World Heritage Trust' for the preservation of the natural environment. There were similarities as well as differences between the IUCN and UNESCO projects and as a result, the United Nations convoked an Intergovernmental Working Group on Conservation in September 1971.

There was initial confusion at the meeting, due in part to the fact that the UNESCO

The future 'V&A Boilerhouse' addition, designed by architect Daniel Libeskind.

draft was quite advanced, having been circulated among its Member States and revised, while the IUCN draft was still at a preliminary stage, and the United States submitted its own draft on the natural heritage which differed in some respects from the one prepared by IUCN.

In order to resolve the confusion, a drafting committee was appointed (to which I was invited to attend as an observer) to reconcile the United States and the IUCN drafts, using the IUCN project as the basic document. During the course of the review, a number of modifications were accepted which brought the IUCN draft closer to the one prepared by UNESCO. Subsequently, at a meeting with the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation and the U.S. State Department in Washington D.C., it was noted that two instruments would require two administrative bodies, separate budgets, and that it would be much more efficient and less expensive to have only one. This position was eventually endorsed by the United States and a further meeting was held at UNESCO to reconcile the two draft instruments by combining the provisions for cultural and natural heritage, as well as recognizing those areas where both elements were to be found.

The revised instrument was then submitted to the General Conference of UNESCO which adopted it on 16 November 1972. It is worth noting that the United States ratification was received in Paris on 7 December 1973, only slightly more than a year after its adoption by the General

Conference. As of this writing, the Convention has been ratified by 149 states.

In retrospect

Those of us privileged to have been in UNESCO when it was still a small organization were fortunate to have taken part in a period of growth and optimism. While the work was demanding, and some projects were not successful at first, it was frequently possible to work out alternative solutions. Ali Vrioni, the Director of the Nubian Project in the Cabinet of Director-General René Maheu, was instrumental in obtaining large-scale voluntary contributions. Later, when he and his staff were transferred to the Museums and Monuments Division, his experience and background provided an important stimulus to our growth. Much as I would like to, it is impossible to name all the staff of the early Museums and Monuments Division who shared in the development of our programme. This included not only the project officers, but also clerks and secretaries. They were of various nationalities and backgrounds, and their contributions were an essential ingredient in the growth of UNESCO's programme for the development of museums and the preservation of the cultural heritage.

Various other units in UNESCO also contributed to our programme. For example, the three conventions and ten recommendations with which we are credited required the participation of the Legal Adviser and his staff. Similarly, the Field Equipment Division placed their documentation at our disposal and advised us on the choice of equipment, manufactured in many different countries, for the execution of our 'operational' projects. Finally, there was the work of our counterparts, partners provided by Member States to work along with UNESCO staff and consultants. Errors were avoided or minimized because of their participation. Last but not least were the widespread contributions made to our projects, particularly the campaigns, but also to many other smaller activities, by so many governments, institutions and individuals. All these factors contributed to the esprit de corps that was the hallmark of this pioneering period. ■

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Recent UNESCO projects

In the past few years UNESCO has provided help in museum design and construction, interior design and layout, training of museum staff, conservation of collections, provision of museum equipment and furniture etc., to museums in nearly fifty countries. They include:

Algeria: Musée des Arts Populaires, Algiers; Musée National des Beaux-Arts; Musée des Antiquités; Musée Archéologique de Tipasa.
Benin: Musée de Cotonou; Musée Historique d'Abomey; Musée d'Histoire de Ouidah.
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Sarajevo Museum.
Cameroon: Musée du Palais du Sultan, Foumban.
Chile: Salvador Allende Museum, Santiago.
Comoros: Musée de la Marine.
Czech Republic: UNESCO chair in museology at Masaryk University, Brno.
Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire): Musée d'Art et d'Ethnologie, Lisala.
Ecuador: Museo Arqueológico y Galerías de Arte del Banco Central.
Egypt: Nubia Museum, Aswan; Egypt Museum and Islamic Museum, Cairo.
Georgia: Chubinishvili Georgian Art History Institute and the Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts, Tbilisi.
Jordan: Islamic Art and Architecture Museum.
Kuwait: Islamic Museum.
Lebanon: Musée Rural du Mont Liban.
Madagascar: Musée du Palais de la Reine.
Nigeria: Jos Museum.
Oman: Museum of Muscat.
Russian Federation: Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.
South Africa: People's Museum of University of Fort Hare.
Tunisia: Musée de Carthage; Musée du Sahara, Douz.
Uganda: Uganda Museum, Kampala.
United Arab Emirates: Archaeological Museum, Sharjah.

Other National Museums include those in Albania, Bahrain, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Ethiopia, Gabon, Iceland, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Niger, Qatar, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Togo, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen and the former Zaire.

Museum acquisitions policies and the 1970 UNESCO Convention

Patrick J. O'Keefe

One of UNESCO's major functions in the preservation of the world cultural heritage is the adoption of appropriate legislation defining the nature and scope of the protection to be provided. In laying down the rules that govern international relations in this field, the Organization has set out principles and standards that have, over time, modified the attitudes and behaviour of heritage professionals and the general public alike. Nowhere is this more evident than in the implementation of the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which has had a major impact on the way museums acquire their holdings. Patrick J. O'Keefe is an author and consultant on cultural heritage law and management. Previously an Australian Government official and then an academic, he is co-author of the five-volume publication Law and the Cultural Heritage as well as of numerous articles and papers. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

The international museum community began to study the problems of theft and unlawful export of cultural property during the 1930s. Mouseion, predecessor of Museum International and the official journal of the International Museums Office (IMO), published some forty-six articles during this period dealing with protection of sites and monuments. IMO also sponsored a draft Convention – overtaken by the Second World War – in an attempt to deal with the legal issues surrounding return of material. There was no mention of acquisitions policies in this context.

The contrast today is striking. Conditions surrounding the acquisition of objects are routinely stated in official museum policies. In particular, many museums deny themselves the collection of anything associated with unlawful export – much less theft. Much of this emphasis is due to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (the 'Convention') and the soul-searching that accompanied its preparation.

Negotiation of the Convention took place from 1960 onwards. Many of the major market states were, to say the least, unenthusiastic. For example, the United States took an active role only at the diplomatic conference in 1970 and did not become a party till 1983, even then imposing many restrictions on its membership. Some of the major states involved in the trade in cultural property – Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom – are still not parties. Nevertheless, the impact of the Convention is much broader than the makeup of states parties would suggest. In large part this is due to the effect it has had on museums.

The Convention came at a time when public appreciation of the damage caused by unlawful trade was beginning to emerge. For example, Coggins had begun her exposé of the market for pre-Columbian antiquities; Meyer was to publish his seminal work, The Plundered Past: The Traffic in Art Treasures, a few years later. Colonialism was disappearing and the newly independent states of Africa and Asia were experiencing destruction of sites and monuments through clandestine excavation and subsequent export of what was found. Museums, and dedicated professionals within them, realized that they had not only an obligation not to benefit from unlawful trade but also to set a standard in their acquisitions. The Convention gave them a public means of doing this even when governments did nothing.

A matter of principles

In the United Kingdom, the Leicester County Council in 1977, only five years after the Convention came into force, formulated the following policy:

> The Authority supports the principles of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970, and declares that notwithstanding the fact that the Convention has not yet been enacted or ratified by the United Kingdom Government, the County Council will comply with the terms and ethical principles of the Convention so far as these are applicable to an individual Museum Authority.

The use of the phrase 'ethical principles' is significant. It appears also in Article 5(e) of the Convention whereby states parties are to set up administrative services whose

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functions include 'establishing, for the benefit of those concerned (curators, collectors, antique dealers, etc.) rules in conformity with the ethical principles set forth in this Convention; and taking steps to ensure the observance of those rules'. No guidance was offered as to what those ethical principles were. Nevertheless, similar provisions can be found in the acquisitions policies of many museums. A common one is 'supports the principle of'. Also found are 'in the spirit of', 'be guided by the policies of', and 'adhere to the principles of'. The question immediately arises as to what museums mean by such phrases.

The drafting history of the Convention is complex. For reasons beyond the scope of this article, it is susceptible to a broad or narrow interpretation. Some say that states parties are only required to prohibit the import and to return objects stolen from 'a museum or a religious or secular public monument or similar institution' within the terms of Article 7. Others look to Article 3, which says that the import, export or transfer of ownership of cultural property shall be illicit if effected contrary to provisions adopted by a state party.

Assuming that museums using the phrases above intend to do more than just say they will not collect stolen cultural property, it must mean that they see the Convention as incorporating an injunction against acquisition of unlawfully exported material. This would accord with those provisions of the Convention which do refer to this. For example, Article 7 requires states parties 'to take the necessary measures, consistent with national legislation, to prevent museums and similar institutions within their territories' from acquiring illegally exported cultural property. The United States has taken this to mean it need apply the provision only to those museums whose acquisitions policies are state controlled – a very small number in that country. Consequently, museums in the United States, using phrases such as those listed above, have incorporated the Convention to provide moral backing for refusing to collect unlawfully exported cultural property, even though the government itself did not pursue this objective.

Some museums have acquisitions policies that detail the objects they collect but have no mention of the way in which this is to be done; other matters are sometimes dealt with in their code of ethics. This should not bring about a different outcome. The code of ethics should govern how the acquisitions policy is implemented.

Many museums are members of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) whose current code of ethics dates from 1986. It also refers to the Convention but in guarded terms, reflecting the differing interests at play during its drafting:

> If a museum should come into possession of an object that can be demonstrated to have been exported or otherwise transferred in violation of the principles of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970) and the country of origin seeks its return and demonstrates that it is part of the country's cultural heritage, the museum should, if legally free to do so, take responsible steps to co-operate in the return of the object to the country of origin.

ICOM had from its very first meeting in Mexico City in 1947 expressed its concern with 'illegal excavation and exportation'. It had carefully followed the debate within UNESCO and, in 1970, began an international campaign on the professional level

for ethics of museum acquisition. The 1986 code of ethics thus should be seen as the culmination of a long process of debate and study of desirable practice. However, the paragraph quoted above is very legalistic in tone and content. This has implications for those museums that have adopted it verbatim into their acquisitions policies. It raises the fundamental question of how a code of ethics should be viewed – as a document subject to quasi-legal interpretation or as part of an educational process.

Beyond the museum

Museums that qualified their acquisitions policies to reflect what they saw as the principles of the Convention were concerned with their own ethical position. However, such action has effects beyond the museum itself. One is that it should reduce the attractiveness of cultural property without adequate provenance, including export documentation, to collectors and investors who wish to donate it to a museum and claim valuable taxation concessions – not to say public recognition. If museums are vigilant – the donation could occur many years after the original purchase by the collector – and follow their acquisitions policies incorporating the Convention they will have to refuse such donations.

A second effect of such acquisitions policies is that, by reducing the object's value, a defect is established in the title acquired by the buyer. Much depends on the legal system concerned but many of them contain a concept known as 'merchantability', which means, very broadly, that the object must be fit for the purposes for which it is sold. The fact that it could not be resold or donated to a museum might have an effect on this and allow the buyer to set aside the original sale, thus making it unprofitable for persons to deal in such material. So far there do not appear to be any court cases directly raising this issue, though several have touched on it. Nevertheless, the possibility does show the broad effect that the Convention, coupled with museum acquisitions policies which reflect that Convention, could have on unlawful trade in cultural property.

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New York's Guggenheim Museum, designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright in 1943.

The Guggenheim Museum as it is today, with the tower designed by Wright in 1952 and later built by Gwathmey Siegel & Associates.

The impact of the Convention in the context of acquisitions policies depends also on the regard paid those policies within their parent museum. Much more is involved than merely preparing such a document. It must be explained and be kept constantly before staff responsible for acquisitions and, indeed, the controlling body itself. The natural tendency to regard the work as complete when the document is finalized must be actively countered. For example, the author had the experience of searching for such a statement by a major museum only to find that it had been stored away in the archives, forgotten by almost everyone. There have also been recent examples of museums refusing to disclose their acquisitions policy. While this may be justifiable in the case of one that is privately owned and takes no public funds or advantage, it is otherwise not so.

Finally, directors and curators may succumb to the temptation to acquire an object that appears to have been unlawfully traded. As Thomas Hoving, former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, once said: 'The chase and the capture of a great work of art is one of the most exciting endeavors in life – as dramatic, emotional, and fulfilling as a love affair.' [1]

It is indeed hard to give up a highly desirable object for a point of principle and it appears that some may have failed to do so. The Secretary-General of ICOM has recently stated that the organization has had occasion to remind a number of museums of the principles of its code. [2] The Editorial in the autumn 1995 issue of African Arts queried how major named American museums could have collected Nok terracottas in light of policies adopted by the major professional associations in that country.

For years it has been commonplace for commentators to dismiss the Convention as having failed to achieve its aims. In doing so, they have ignored its long-term effect. For twenty-five years it has given concerned professionals in museums an international standard justifying refusal to collect unlawfully exported cultural heritage and validating the inclusion of such refusal in acquisitions policies. At the same time, it has played a large role in educating those professionals and the general public in the view that unlawful export is wrong and should not be supported. That education at last is bearing fruit. There are now 86 states parties to the Convention. France has recently joined and Switzerland has intimated that it will join too. The Convention can no longer be dismissed. It will have an even greater effect on acquisitions policies in the years ahead. Those who have not yet made reference to it will have to seriously consider doing so. ■

Notes

1. T. Hoving, 'The Chase, the Capture', The Chase, the Capture: Collecting at the Metropolitan, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975.

2. E. des Portes, 'ICOM and the Battle Against Illicit Traffic of Cultural Property', Museum International, Vol. XLVIII, No. 3, 1996, pp. 51–8.

The family album

François Mairesse

How have the concerns and ideas of the international museum community evolved over the past fifty years? Taking this question as his point of departure for a doctoral thesis, François Mairesse examined all the issues of the review Mouseion , published by the International Museums Office from 1927 to 1946, and its successor, Museum (now Museum International), published by UNESCO since 1948. The overview which follows highlights the areas of continuity and change and raises some pertinent questions about future directions. The author is an art historian with a Master's degree in business economics, and is a fellow of the National Fund for Scientific Research at the Université Libre in Brussels. Specialized in museology, his research activities focus on the definition of museum missions and the methods used to evaluate museum activities.

The emotions we feel when leafing through a family album are strange, alternating between amused nostalgia and somewhat more mixed feelings. Our perception has difficulty in finding its bearings. These yellowing, dog-eared photographs often seem rather dreary to us and the history that unfolds as we look at them – so tranquil compared with the hectic pace of our lives today – seems to have stood still in the monotony of bygone days. We are familiar with this sense of the fullness of time that museums convey – an enduring span of time that lets the hours and seconds of our everyday lives tick by as if they did not exist. Except that when the album we are about to browse through is one that tells the story of museums, the impression we have is somewhat different. For all their abiding qualities, museums, too, have changed, as can be seen from the great book which retraces the chronicle of the world of museums and the museums of the world – a great book gradually being compiled by each successive slim copy of the review that you have in your hands. Over the years, Museum (now Museum International) has inventoried in words and pictures what no other earlier national reviews (Museums Journal, United Kingdom, founded in 1902, Museumskunde, Germany, 1905, and Museum Work, United States, 1919) covered so exhaustively, that is to say the life of museums throughout the world. Yet Museum is the heir to a more ancient tradition, i.e. the review Mouseion that was published from 1927 to 1946 by the International Museums Office.

Browsing through these two reviews initially produces the same impression as any other family album. Photographic reproductions conjure up an image of a bygone age, with now obsolete display techniques and what were regarded as the 'revolutionary' inventions of the time (cinematography, broadcasting, use of infra-red rays to analyse works of art, etc.), today so commonplace that it is hard to imagine how novel they must have seemed then. What strikes us at first glance are the technical features, but what about the ideas? Have the ideas underlying the world of museums at that time changed? With Mouseion and Museum, we can go back in time and try to reply to this question.

Many noble ideas emerged during the interwar period. In the wake of the League of Nations, the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation was established to foster closer relations and lasting understanding between peoples. During the initial meetings of the Subcommission on Literature and the Arts in 1925, the great art historian, Henri Focillon, mooted the idea of an International Museums Office (IMO). The forging of links between all the museums of the world, the organization of exchanges, congresses and the standardization of catalogues were some of the tasks devolved on IMO from the outset. The founding of a periodical to report on that work and transmit museographical techniques was naturally part of that programme.

The review Mouseion, which was published for fifteen years (it was discontinued during the war), focused almost solely on art and history museums. In accordance with the wishes of IMO, the review was intended to be international in scope. Today, this intention prompts some reservations. During the period between the wars, colonial Europe still largely held sway over the rest of the world in matters of culture. Nearly two-thirds of the articles came from five large countries – France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy and the United States, with France and Italy at the top of the list. Was this a sign of Latin hegemony over museology during the interwar

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period? It is significant that the sole language used in the review was French – a far cry from the five language versions of Museum International. There was also evidence of intensive museological activity in other countries, namely Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the new Soviet republics, and then Greece, Poland and Switzerland. These once great European states – and the United States – clearly dominated the cultural field. Together, they accounted for four-fifths of the contributions to the review.

Does this mean, then, that the rest of the world, outside the hegemony of the old continent, was a museological wilderness? Not entirely. Despite linguistic and cultural barriers, nearly forty countries contributed to the review, including Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Estonia, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Norway and Romania. There was clearly some measure of internationalism, despite the eloquent silence from almost all the nations that were still under colonial rule.

The Egyptian gallery of the British Museum in 1930.

Plus ça change ...

With a few exceptions, all the subjects that still concern museologists today were to be found in Mouseion: the role of the museum in society, education, the functions of research, acquisition, conservation and communication, the problems of constructing and fitting out buildings and of inventorying and cataloguing collections, and even advertising campaigns.

But the 'revolution' that took place over those years was mainly technological, as could be seen from the voluminous work Museographie, which was published by IMO following its congress in Madrid in 1934. It was on these advances, whether they were external to the institution (architecture, display techniques) or internal (conservation, research methods), that Mouseion reported, with strong emphasis on conservation. The context of the period may to some extent have accounted for this. In the interwar period, marked by the sequels of the First World War and the mounting threat of the Second, the idea of heritage protection, conservation and preventive measures was a prime concern throughout the fifteen years of the review's publication. Nearly a third of the contributions dealt with conservation – or more strictly speaking with restoration – sometimes as a result of war damage, and all the legal procedures involved in safeguarding the heritage of each country. All fields were covered – sculpture, wall or easel painting, ancient, medieval and modern monuments – especially as regards preventive conservation (air-conditioning). The concept of the heritage of humanity, including both historic monuments and works of art, grew out of this body of work.

From 1936 onwards, with the first devastating effects of the Spanish Civil War, many specialists began to discuss measures for

the protection or even defence of the historical heritage and museums. As the threats loomed larger, so the articles became more explicit. In 1939, a 200-page issue was published on the protection of monuments and works of art in wartime. The first issue in 1940 spoke of measures to be taken in the context of the present war, then the review lapsed into silence for five years. The 1946 articles subsequently assessed the conservation and protective measures taken in each of the belligerent countries.

This trend coincided with developments in scientific techniques connected with the analysis of works of art and excavation methods. Several museums were now equipped with laboratories for analysing works as the approach adopted became more scientific. Berlin and Paris (in 1930 and 1932) reported on the work of their newly established laboratories. There were references to micro-chemical analysis and the potential of X-ray and ultraviolet-ray techniques. Descriptions of new excavation methods came in from Egypt, Greece, Mexico and especially Italy.

The interwar period also witnessed the development of museums throughout the world. Contributions came in from all countries on the founding, or the activities, of national museum associations and on the organization and functioning of new institutions. From Hamburg to Tokyo, from Toledo to the Vatican, from Sarajevo to New York, a plethora of articles hailed the new boom in museum development, in which every country had its share. This new interest calls for some explanation. Why museums? One of the reasons that gradually emerged was their social role. Emanating from the United States at the beginning of the century, the idea of a 'democratic' museum, open to everyone, found support in socialist circles, but it was not until after the First World War that the idea really crossed the Atlantic. Meanwhile, there was increasing emphasis on the museum's educational role as the years went by, for education and educational services were needed for it to fulfil its social role.

But by and large these new ideas received far less coverage than the museum's conservation and scientific research functions, the new principles of museum construction, architecture (Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum or Le Corbusier's horizontally expandable museum) and interior design and display techniques. The emphasis was still on comparing museums 'before' and 'after' the introduction of these new rational and progressive techniques rather than on (increasingly difficult) international understanding or education. The Second World War abruptly put off the use of these marvellous techniques indefinitely.

© François Mairesse

The Egyptian gallery of the British Museum today.

Postwar preoccupations

The dream of intellectual co-operation, launched by the League of Nations and shattered by six long years of world conflict, sprang to life again with UNESCO and the International Council of Museums. Was there a difference between the museum world of the past and that of the postwar period whose history has been retraced by Museum? The change was not a matter of greater momentum, for there was no dearth of museum activity in the prewar years, or of a technological revolution or the greater sophistication of new museographical methods. For change there was. Both Mouseion and Museum sought to be international in scope, but in the latter the term took on another dimension. Partly because Museum was interested in museums of all kinds, whether dedicated to science or sport, but mainly because the map of the world that was gradually taking shape was becoming less Eurocentric. No longer forty-odd countries but nearly ninety were brought into contact, from Chile to Ethiopia, Mali to Peru, Uganda to Chad, Yemen to Viet Nam, not to mention Algeria, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Nepal, Niger, Zaire, etc. That superficial headcount should not, however, mask the real picture. Although there were contributions from around the world, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Soviet Union and the United States still accounted for the bulk of contributions to Museum. There was one difference and that was that contributions from the English-speaking world took the lead, ahead of France and Italy. Some countries whose voices had not been heard at the time of Mouseion, namely Brazil, Canada, India and Mexico, asserted themselves on the international scene. Others, however, put in no more than a token appearance, as if to prove that the concept of the museum was alive throughout the world.

The order of priority of ideas – the subject-matter of the articles – also changed. The first twenty-five years of the review's publication (1948–73) confirmed a major new trend in the history of museums which had begun during the interwar period but now

The new wing of the Kunstmuseum Winterthur in Switzerland, built in 1995 and designed by architects Gigon and Guyer, was added to the original edifice constructed in 1915 by Rittmeyer and Furrer.

rapidly gained momentum throughout the world – educational activities and exhibitions. Conservation or research issues were less in evidence. Was this because those techniques were too specialized to continue to be an integral part of a wide-ranging review like Museum? Whatever the case may be, priority was given to presentation, architecture, the organization of museums and educational work. These were the topics most frequently covered, ahead of research and professional training. Museums in education and museums for everyone were recurring themes from the review's inception, engendering a debate that was to take Museum into its second phase. For debate there was, highlighting a number of problems (problems of the contemporary art museum in the West, problems of the history museum) and redefining the museum's role in facing those new challenges: its impact on development (the Santiago Declaration) and its impact on the environment. The new essays published in the review laid the foundations for a new culture.

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Interior of the new wing of the Kunstmuseum Winterthur.

A 'new museology' emerges

The short phase that followed was marked by a new awareness. It was short because it came at a time of economic crisis and gradually allowed itself to become submerged. It lasted roughly from 1972 to 1985. There was still (and indeed primarily) talk of temporary exhibitions, presentation and architecture. But there was also a new, and persistent, interest in illicit traffic and the restitution of cultural property, and in museums and developing countries. Something changed with the decolonization movement and something also changed in the industrialized countries. New concepts emerged, such as community participation and cultural identity. Against a background of recent experiments (the Anacostia neighbourhood museum in Washington, D.C., the Casa del Museo in Mexico and the integrated museum project, the Le Creusot fragmented museum in France, etc.), a new line of thinking took shape and developed which questioned the museum, its place in society and its relation to the general public and the environment, but at the same time offered some answers. This was the 'new museology' (and its new tool, the eco-museum), one of whose highlights was perhaps the 1985 issue dedicated to the memory of Georges-Henri Rivière, former director of ICOM and an enthusiastic actor in that renewal.

But the history of the museum world, which Museum so eloquently chronicles, is far from being as straightforward as it

seems. From the early 1970s, the special issues on museums and computers were published to remind us that the museum was also a matter of technology. In the mid-1980s, contributions on museological practice revealed revolutionary new approaches to communication and profitability, to cataloguing and archiving methods. Topics such as professional training, 'museconomics' and 'econo-museums' illustrated the changes gradually taking place in the museum world as the emphasis shifted from questions about the museum's ultimate goal to its very survival, which is contingent upon its efficiency. This third phase (very roughly from 1985 to the present day) has seen a growing concern with issues relating to museum funding, such as friends of the museum, marketing, patronage and privatization. How to survive, or rather how to survive by making greater use of computerization, modernizing research laboratories, enlarging reserves and improving visitor services, has meant studying visitor profiles. The improvement of techniques, far from being halted, is proceeding on an ongoing basis. Museums, too, are expanding, both geographically (from the far north to cyberspace) and in terms of their subject-matter (art nouveau, sports, film, cities, hunger, to take just a few of the special themes of some recent issues of Museum and Museum International).

A strange feeling comes over me every time I look through the closing pages of the great family album constituted by Museum International and Mouseion. For it is very much a family, with its illustrious ancestors, its rich heirs and country cousins, its uncles who have made good in the United States and its nephews miles from anywhere. IMO and ICOM have unquestionably succeeded in forging strong bonds between the different members of the museum family. Browsing through successive issues of these journals, we have a strong sense of their shared history. With some amusement we can compare the seemingly paltry means that our forefathers had at their disposal with those we have today. But these external signs of wealth or advanced technology should not obscure the main issue, which is the family spirit. It seems to me that this spirit, so much in evidence in the 1970s, is all too often forgotten today. And yet it is by this spirit of togetherness and the ideas it cherishes that a family identifies itself and survives. External features, technology or working methods are insignificant in comparison. What has become of you, Anacostia, Casa del Museo and Le Creusot? ■

African museums: the challenge of change

Emmanuel Nnakenyi Arinze

UNESCO's efforts to foster the development and improvement of museums in Africa have followed an uneven path, reflecting the unprecedented changes that have marked every aspect of African life over the past fifty years. The result is that today many Africans are calling into question the very notion of the museum itself, posing a challenge to received ideas that could have profound implications for museums the world over. For this reason we asked Emmanuel Nnakenyi Arinze, chairman of the West African Museums Programme (WAMP), to take stock of the situation and share his views on future directions. He has worked in Nigerian museums for twenty years and was the federal director of Museums and Monuments until 1991. In addition to his work at WAMP, he is also the director of the Heritage Consultancy Bureau and president of the Commonwealth Association of Museums. A member of ICOM and several other professional museum organizations, he is a consultant to ICCROM-PREMA in Africa. He has published articles in various international museum journals and co-authored the book, Museums and their Communities in West Africa , while another publication, Museums and History , is currently in press.

The majority of museums in Africa share a common heritage in their history as national institutions: they are products of the colonial era and are essentially twentieth-century creations. Across the continent, the same format and approach can be observed in the way museums are organized and the methods adopted in the collection and presentation of materials. Apart from slight variations, the legislative acts that established museums in Africa in the colonial period are basically the same today.

The passion of expatriates in colonial Africa for collecting indigenous traditional art and studying the cultural history of traditional societies, which helped them in their governance, informed the development of museums in Africa. This means in essence that African museums were not established for the same reasons as Western museums, which encouraged scholarship and provided educational enjoyment for their public and were seen as agents of change for national growth and development. In contrast, African museums were created to house the curios of a 'tribal' people and to satisfy the curiosity of the élite citizenry almost to the total exclusion of the local people who produced the objects and materials.

Another critical factor in the development of African museums was religion, both Christianity and Islam. Both religions frontally attacked the cultures of Africans and challenged traditional values, rites and belief systems. On conversion to either Christianity or Islam, people and, indeed, communities discarded objects associated with their traditions; these objects were either destroyed or collected by clergymen and in most cases, deposited in museums with scant information. This assault contributed substantially to the building of collections in the early museums of Africa.

It is not surprising, therefore, to observe that at the outset African museums were mainly museums of antiquity, archaeology, ethnography and material culture, with little deviation into the realms of natural history – and this in countries where the fauna and flora were so beautiful and so abundant that they could not be ignored. Such museums were located in eastern and southern African countries such as Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, among others. Again, another common denominator was that museums were not established to serve the needs and interests of the African people. Rather, they stood out as institutions dedicated to the interests of the colonial power, the national élite and highly educated foreigners, all of whom formed the bulk of the visiting public. This situation has not altered much in the past fifty years in spite of the many political, cultural and socio-economic changes that have marked African countries.

In the beginning, Africans were not given solid professional training that would empower them, nor were they encouraged to make the museum profession their career. What generally emerged was a situation where Africans served as attendants and cleaners who had to accompany expatriates during fieldwork to help collect materials and clean excavated archaeological objects. A few were taught how to operate a camera and move objects within the museum and in the field, but were denied the hard-core professional training essential for the profession.

This scenario, by and large, created a dilemma for the museums by ensuring that they could not develop a vision or a mission consistent with national goals and objectives. The scenario also entrenched the Western model stereotype of

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Photo by courtesy of the author

Crafts Village, National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria.

the museum, thus creating a contradiction that has continued to plague African museums over the years. How this dilemma is to be resolved has today become an issue in practically all museums in Africa.

Post-independence vigour and vision

A striking phenomenon emerged in African museums in the immediate post-independence years: they became active and effective vehicles for nationalism and for fostering national consciousness and political unity. They became tools for reaching out to the population and forging greater national understanding and a feeling of belonging and togetherness. In a sense, they became the symbol of uhuru (freedom) and change.

As cultural institutions, the museums were used to redress and rewrite the history of the nation by projecting its various rich cultures and the great civilizations that flourished over the years, thereby highlighting the contribution of Africa in the global march of civilization. In Nigeria, for example, a specific plan was put in place to establish National Museums of Unity in all the states (regions) of the federation, with a view to highlighting the various cultures that make up the heritage of the people of Nigeria. This policy has continued as efforts are being made to establish more museums both at national and local levels. In Ghana, after independence in 1957, the National Museum and Monuments Board in Accra became a focal point for fostering African nationalism and projecting what Kwame Nkrumah called the African personality. The museum in Accra became both a cultural and political beacon for Africa, while in Senegal the National Museum in Dakar epitomized in a unique manner the principles of the philosophy of négritude propagated by President Léopold Sédar Senghor. In eastern, central and southern Africa, this principle was also in vogue and efforts were made by governments to give museums a profile of national importance and relevance. Governments, as a matter of policy, took responsibility for museum funding, thus making them effective government institutions under the supervision of parent ministries.

Commendable efforts were made to train Africans to work in museums and this led to the establishment by UNESCO of a bilingual Regional Training Centre in Jos, Nigeria, in 1963. The centre, over the years, trained many professionals who today hold important positions in museums across Africa. In the late 1970s, another training centre was also established by UNESCO in Niamey, Niger, to train French-speaking museum professionals when the Jos centre ceased to be a bilingual institution.

The results of this well-defined training policy, which continued up to the mid-1980s, contributed largely to the evolution of a corps of skilled museum professionals who helped in reshaping a new focus for museums across the continent. It would appear that this was the glorious era for African museums as they

enjoyed patronage both from government and the population; they were inspired to run progressive and challenging programmes of activities and they developed the capacity to challenge the stereotyped Western models that they had inherited. Furthermore, they provided the appropriate national platform for launching the heritage of Africa to a global audience in a manner that brought pride and dignity to Africans. This was achieved in part through involvement in important national and international exhibitions. Between 1980 and 1985, for instance, Nigeria put together the now famous exhibition 2,000 Years of Nigerian Art: Legacy of a Nation, which toured the world for five years. This was an epoch-making international exhibition for African countries and it effectively destroyed the argument that African history is colonial history and that African civilization was 'dark' all through. Today, African art is respected and accorded its rightful place of honour and pride in the global art world, thanks to the Nigerian exhibition. Generally, this period was an active era for the museums; there were bold steps to Africanize them, and new structures and programmes were evolved to reflect the national ethos. It was a period of change, development and transformation.

However, this era, which saw the dependence of museums on government for all their funds, created a situation that today has become counter-productive and negative for African museums, preventing them from being independent and autonomous, with the attendant serious consequences for development and professionalism. It is noticeable that the problem has persisted, even as a new struggle has emerged in African museums for their independence and autonomy since the late 1980s.

Stagnation sets in

In fifty years, African museums have come a long way and have tried to come of age. However, since they form part of the current political, economic and social realities and problems of Africa, they too have become victims of the African crisis. Certainly, they have developed and tried to change their image; however, since the late 1980s, with few exceptions, they have ceased to evolve and have become stagnant and confused. An era of decay has set in and this is the current reality.

Lack of public interest in museums is evident and questions are being raised at various levels about their continued relevance. Africa has been experiencing momentous developments – famine, poverty, political upheavals, and cultural crisis, to name but a few – and yet the museums seem oblivious to these critical events which touch on the lives and the very existence of the citizenry. Rather than promote new ideas and strategies to meet these changes, they cling to the past, showing little motivation and no clear vision of what they are expected to be doing nor how to respond to contemporary society. They still contain and exhibit objects that no longer bear any relevance

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The reserves of the National Museum of Uganda in Kampala, renovated in 1984 after having undergone severe damage in the 1979 war.

A renovated gallery in the National Museum of Uganda.

to the living culture, and continue to remain foreign institutions with little significance to the national communities. In today's Africa, museums are in a condition of constant flux and endless crisis, subject to destructive political interference in their daily activities. This has generated a crisis of confidence and a very low morale, which in turn affect their ability to perform effectively and to be innovative in generating ideas and programmes. A critical analysis of the situation, informed by many years of constant close contact and study, will identify some key problem areas.

Training

There still remains an acute shortage of qualified and well-trained personnel to manage and staff African museums. In the past, most professional museum training was done abroad while the Jos and Niamey centres provided some local training. However, overseas training has almost stopped due to lack of funds, while the Jos and Niamey centres have ceased to be effective international training centres since UNESCO ended its funding and technical support. Today, neither centre has the experts, resources, funds, equipment and know-how to provide any meaningful expert museum training which will have universal appeal and acceptance. Apart from the University of Botswana, which offers a certificate course in museology (which has yet to attain international recognition in the African museum community), there are no well-equipped training institutions or universities that offer courses for museum professionals in sub-Saharan Africa.

It is, however, significant that the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) in Rome has, since 1986, run training courses at various levels to address the specific problem of Preventive Conservation in African Museums (PREMA). This programme, which offers a nine-month international university course, and a three-month national course, has proved to be very successful and effective in addressing the problems of dust, rot and decay in the various storerooms and exhibition galleries of African museums. The PREMA programme, since 1993, has continued to run the university course in Africa (Jos, Nigeria, 1993; Accra, Ghana, 1995; and Porto Novo, Benin, 1997), while the national course has been run in the Central African Republic, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Benin, Zambia and

Zimbabwe. In addition, it has run special workshops for museum directors in both English- and French-speaking African countries. This positive approach by ICCROM has provided a respite for the museums whose collections have been ravaged by insects and the elements owing to poor storage and management conditions. [1] A well-articulated strategy for enhanced training for museum professionals at all levels is thus a real and pressing problem.

Funding

Museums in Africa today are generally not well funded and are unable to function effectively because government funds are drying up by the day. What they have is barely enough to pay staff salaries and nothing more, and so most of the museums have begun experiencing deterioration and decay. Apart from a few museums in Kenya and South Africa, it is doubtful that the others can sustain themselves if government grants cease. This situation has arisen because of the nearly total dependence on government funding. It is thus of utmost importance that new strategies be developed for sourcing funds to instill some independence and autonomy.

Museum security

The question of security in African museums has assumed an important dimension over the years because of the high incidence of theft of museum objects. This calls for a comprehensive study of the causes of a situation that has now been extended to archaeological and ethnographic objects in the field, and threatens to engulf the entire African museum community. Generally, museum security in Africa is porous and scant attention is being paid to it. In the last fifty years, most African societies have become more urban and complex with all the attendant social changes. Museums, which hitherto enjoyed a certain quiet and immunity, have become possible targets for urban terrorism, making effective security mechanisms ever more urgent. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has held several workshops on this issue, both in Africa and elsewhere. By publishing its now-famous One Hundred Missing Objects: Looting in Africa, ICOM has highlighted and called attention to the problem of theft in African museums.

Poor leadership

As a result of political interference in museum affairs, unqualified and untrained staff have been imposed whose poor and uninformed leadership has seriously compromised professionalism. They are unable to generate ideas and lack the vision to make their museums functional, a problem that is compounded by the absence of a defined museum policy and a capacity-building potential that would ensure sustainable growth and development. As one interacts with museum professionals across the continent, one cannot fail to notice the frustration and inertia that have developed over the years; the poverty of professional relevance of museum staff is so depressing and discouraging that it has become a major issue. This is a sad commentary on African museums which needs to be frontally challenged in the overall interest of the survival of museums on the continent.

Lack of equipment, materials and patronage

A common feature in African museums is that objects on display have remained in the same places for more than twenty years because the museums simply lack the

basic equipment and materials to work with. Most equipment is either inherited from the colonial period or was purchased in the immediate post-independence era. This has led to a lack of patronage, for exhibits and programmes have not changed and there is nothing exciting or challenging to motivate regular visits. Only a few museums have tried to vary their programmes by introducing positive and educationally valuable activities. A good example is the Mobile Museum (Zebra-on-the-Wheel) programme of the National Museum and Art Gallery in Gaborone, Botswana, which attracts the public to the museum by taking the museum to remote communities that otherwise would never have had the opportunity of visiting the capital. However, the reality in most museums today is that they are flat and uninspiring as the objects on public display continue to accumulate dust and cobwebs. Such museums do not strike the right chord nor do they send the correct signals to the public. If these problems are not addressed, with time, the museum's staff will be its only visitors.

The way forward

After fifty years, museums in Africa cannot be said to be uninformed about proper practice, nor can they be seen as infants in the museum community. To move forward, African museums will have to carry out an honest, incisive and in-depth self-evaluation and critique to confront a number of issues. First and foremost is the need for African museums to redefine their mission, their role and themselves. They need to break away from their colonial vestiges to create African-based museums that will be responsive to their communities. Issues such as health, urbanization, environmental problems and political evolution should be as important as the traditional questions of collecting, presenting, protecting and safeguarding the cultural heritage. The new African museum should use its collections to enrich knowledge and integrate urban cultures and contemporary events into its sphere of activities. This means that the traditional definition of the museum is no longer relevant in Africa. A new definition with a strong African flavour is now necessary and Africans expect museums to develop appropriate methods and strategies for interacting with the public, and to create innovative programmes that will involve it. The African museum should have a new orientation and be capable of having an impact on public life and national development. Having learned from the experiences of the last fifty years, museums, in order to survive the next fifty years, must discard the classical Western model, which has tended to make them too cold and rigid.

To do so means that African museums must develop a curatorial vision for it is no longer realistic to think that museums are created simply for the purpose of rescuing and preserving objects from the past. They must propose new possibilities of change, rather than remain as passive collectors of material culture, and must develop the ability to use limited resources to achieve maximum results. The curatorial vision demands that museums define their mission statements and mandate to the community and the nation very clearly and firmly. It also demands that the training we give to African museum professionals must be a combination of scholarship and practical hands-on work so as to produce a complete museum person who can manage and organize the museum professionally. The curatorial vision aims at making African museums open their doors and windows wide enough to enable fresh air and sunshine to come in freely, and it empowers the museums to challenge the

unchanging model and be able to liberate themselves from the present state of inactivity, timid impulses and fear of change.

The museum should have a well thought-out strategic development plan which incorporates a continuous training policy and fund-raising strategy. It should aim at becoming autonomous in many areas and should formulate workable collection, exhibition and conservation policies which will serve as the basis of its varied programmes.

Despite their serious problems, museums in Africa have evolved, developed and changed significantly in the last fifty years. In West Africa, the West African Museums Programme (WAMP), which was established in 1982, has continued to play a positive role. It has enhanced and encouraged an intellectual approach to museum work, stimulated the creation of more representative collections and exhibitions, the establishment of local museums and helped in developing an active professional network and working links in West Africa. In addition, it has assisted in introducing more dynamic and efficient educational activities and the development of staff resources through training. In the last five years, it has successfully organized workshops on 'Museums and Archaeology' (1993, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire), 'Museums and History' (1995, Quidah, Benin), and 'Museums and Urban Culture' (1996, Accra, Ghana).

To stimulate practical activities in museums, WAMP introduced Small Grants Programmes whereby museums are encouraged to carry out practical activities with small grants which will have an impact on the museum and its public. Many museums in West Africa have benefited from this programme, which has proved to be popular and successful.

Photo by courtesy of the author

An exhibition of basketry in the National Museum of Art, Gaborone, Botswana.

In the southern African region, the Southern African Development Community Association of Museums and Monuments (SADCAMM) is organizing itself along the lines of the West African Museums Programme. These programmes and efforts are good for museums in Africa, for as they approach the twenty-first century they need to begin to plan ahead for the next fifty years.

By and large, I see Africa as a catalyst in museum development as we enter the new millennium, for she remains the virgin who can still give birth to ideas that will lead to the development of new museum models which will be both challenging and exciting. The experiences of the last fifty years in Africa will lead to changes, research and experimentation which will further narrow the gap of our cultural vision of the changing global museum world. We have implicit faith in the future of museums in Africa for the signs are that they will survive in spite of the obvious problems they are experiencing today. ■

Note

1. See 'New Directions in Africa', Museum International, No. 188 (Vol. 47, No. 4, 1995) – Ed.

Rescue in Kuwait: a United Nations success story

Sheikha Hussah al-Sabah

UNESCO's efforts in favour of museums have taken many forms over the past fifty years but rarely has the Organization been called upon to react to such dramatic circumstances as those arising from the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. In reply to the appeal of the Government of Kuwait to restore the treasures of the Kuwait National Museum and the world-famous Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah collection, which had been removed to Iraq, the United Nations system marshalled an immediate response that resulted in the return of some 20,000 objects and the refurbishing of a new home for the collection. Sheikha Hussah al-Sabah is director of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah and executive editor of its newsletter, Hadeeth al-Dar . She is on the steering committee of the Islamic Research Centre for History, Arts and Culture in Istanbul, and a member of the cultural advisory committee of the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris. Together with her husband, Sheikh Nasser al-Sabah, she is co-owner of the Dar al-Athar collection.

The Al Sabah collection is an extensive and comprehensive body of Islamic art ranging from Early Islam to the eighteenth century, and including works from Egypt, India, Persia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and Spain . It was first put on display to the public in Kuwait in 1983 at the opening of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah (House of Islamic Antiquities) inside the Kuwait National Museum compound. It was a landmark development in Kuwaiti cultural history, for now Kuwait was the home of one of the best collections of Islamic art in the world, and it could boast that it was housed in a museum of international calibre.

The museums of Europe, such as the Victoria and Albert, the British Museum, the Prado, and the Hermitage were all initially based on private collections. The Dar has this in common with them, but with the exception that it is based upon a single collection. Sheikh Nasser Sabah Ahmad al-Sabah, the person who formed it, never planned on founding a collection, much less a museum or any of the cultural activities that revolve around it. For him it was a case of love at first sight. Perhaps it was a single object, a Mamluk bottle, which was to become the first piece in the collection, that was the beginning of the enchantment. It filled him with an unexpected feeling of astonishment. After he acquired it from a London art gallery in 1975, he began to become curious about its history. He sought to find out more about it and, in doing so, began to discover more objects that interested him. Each had its own history, and the element of astonishment continued to provoke him to seek other objects and learn as much about them as possible. It impelled him to visit museums and to constantly buy books on the subject.

The love of the objects themselves developed into a deep commitment to Islamic art and culture. It expanded into an organized, catalogued collection of art objects that became the focal point for a wide range of cultural activities of interest to specialized scholars and the general public alike. And yet, the element of astonishment is still in the heart of its founder.

When the collection was housed in the Kuwait National Museum in 1983, by a loan agreement signed by the owner and the Ministry of Information, it was organized according to both historical period and geographical region. There are, of course, gaps in the collection, and the acquisition plan of Sheikh Nasser has been to try to amend this situation. The aim is to produce, as much as possible, a balanced collection, which would be educationally instrumental.

The variety of scholarly and artistic activities that revolved around the Al Sabah collection were the concern of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah. The reference library and the publications of the Dar were closely related to the collection. The Dar, through a grant from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science, had sponsored archaeological excavations in Upper Egypt which date to the Fatimid period. The art school that was associated with the Dar promoted skills in the various artistic genres that are represented in the collection. The yearly lecture series was a focal point for historians and other specialists, since it featured talks by prominent international scholars on various topics of Islamic history, culture, and art.

Objects in exile

The day of 2 August 1990 was a watershed for the Dar, for on that fateful day almost seven years after Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah had opened, the collection disappeared from the country. Iraq had invaded Kuwait

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Photo by courtesy of the author

The interior of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah before its destruction.

and shortly afterwards its troops broke into the museum, pillaged the whole body of its contents, crammed the 20,000 pieces of the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah's collection into open lorries and took them hurriedly to Baghdad. The museum buildings themselves were set ablaze.

Ironically, it was during this terrible period that the Dar's longest and most successful exhibition was travelling abroad. Despite the particularly difficult circumstances being experienced by Kuwait as a result of the aggression, the exhibition, Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait, which had left Kuwait only a week prior to the Iraqi invasion, opened at the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg (then Leningrad) on 6 August, and stayed on as foreseen for the whole month, facilitated by the support of the staff of the Hermitage. This exhibition had been originally planned to reciprocate an exhibition of 120 Islamic art objects from the State Hermitage Museum in the Russian Federation, staged at the Dar in Kuwait in May 1990.

After the Russian venue a tour of the United States arranged by the Trust for Museum Exhibitions in Washington, D.C., commenced. Opening at the Walters Gallery in Baltimore, Maryland, in December 1990, the exhibition moved on to Fort Worth, Texas, to the Campbell Museum for Art, followed by a succession of shows in the Emory Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, the Virginia Museum for Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, the Scottsdale Cultural Center in Scottsdale, Arizona, the St Louis Museum, St Louis, Missouri, the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec, and, finally, to the New Orleans Museum of Art in Louisiana.

After its success in North America, Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait began its European tour in Paris at the Institut du Monde Arabe in February 1993, followed by an opening in the Netherlands at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague in June of the same year. The exhibition extended into October 1993, when it was moved to the historic Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, from March to May 1994 before going on to the United Kingdom, where it opened at the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge University on 10 April 1995, and then to Frankfurt on 21 May 1996, sponsored by the Hauck Bank in Frankfurt.

The theme of Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait derives from the

Photo by courtesy of the author

A United Nations vehicle parked outside the Iraq National Museum storage facility in Baghdad.

The restitution of property of the Kuwait National Museum and Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah under the supervision of the United Nations.

link between art and patronage. Building a collection is an art form in itself, since a patron's interest and knowledge are reflected in the worth and importance of the pieces collected. The Muslim patrons who, throughout the ages, have encouraged the production of the kind of objects found in the collection have been the unsung heroes of an enlightened age. The Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah collection contains some of the rarest and most important examples in the world. The exhibition extends the meaning of patronage to include those who sponsored, organized and invited it to the various museums where it was hosted.

The amalgam of different schools of Islamic art represented in this exhibition not only illustrates the variety within Islamic art itself, but also projects the variety in the flux of civilizations that formed Islamic art in the first place. These objects have been depicted and discussed by prominent scholars in the field of Islamic art. Studies have been published in a distinctive volume produced to accompany the exhibition and printed in English, French, Italian, German and Dutch. Throughout this international tour, it has become clear that the greatest asset of the Dar is its friends. The collection of dedicated people, in museums, universities, art galleries, and auction houses, who had interacted with the Dar since its inception have proved themselves to be more precious than a mere collection of beautiful objects. The efforts of friends, together with years of systematic cataloguing, made it impossible for the stolen objects to be sold.

Photo by courtesy of the author

A heritage recovered

The return of the collection from Iraq to Kuwait was supervised by the United Nations. A good many people believe that the United Nations commitment to the liberation of Kuwait was solely confined to the political and military aspects of the tragic invasion. Indeed, the United Nations execution of its responsibility for peace and justice, brought almost to perfection in this situation, has overshadowed its significant efforts made in yet another field. For the United Nations has in fact been as committed to the liberation of the Kuwaiti artistic and cultural heritage as it has been to that of the Kuwaiti soil and identity. No sooner had the war of liberation been won than a new, peaceful, battle, this time on a cultural field, commenced for the restoration of the Kuwait National Museum and the Al Sabah objects in Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah.

The United Nations response to the Kuwaiti request to restore all stolen property, including the art treasures, was immediate. Former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, Richard Foran, visited Baghdad in May 1991 to investigate the issue. From May to August, negotiations were

conducted between United Nations and Kuwaiti envoys and this restoration process has ever since been sponsored efficiently by the United Nations. In September 1991, a United Nations envoy supervised the laborious task of restitution as specified under United Nations Resolution 687. Representatives of Kuwait sat at a large table opposite the Iraqi delegation, with the United Nations intermediaries between them. The procedure of identifying, inspecting, and assessing the damage was minutely monitored by the United Nations officials who were responsible for recording each object. Every few days a consignment of packed objects would be taken by truck and United Nations escort to al-Habanieh airport near Baghdad to be flown back to Kuwait by United Nations planes. Sixteen such flights were necessary before the entire collection, with the exception of the fifty-eight still missing pieces, was finally transported. The work had been difficult and persistent, starting usually at 9 a.m. and continuing until 9 p.m..

The United Nations contribution on the cultural level was not over. After the restoration of the objects, experts were appointed, through the good offices of the UNDP and UNESCO, to preserve and repair the damaged pieces and restore them as much as possible to their original form. Glass, ceramic, parchment, and wood had to undergo extensive conservation, and the overall execution was admirable. The United Nations also provided a specialized photographer who, for the purpose of documentation, produced standardized photos of each item, and these were catalogued for the archives to replace the lost ones.

This is not, however, a totally happy story. The famous pair of Moroccan doors that dominated the centre of the museum were too large to be carted off as 'guests' of the National Museum in Baghdad. They were burned to ashes in the fire that gutted the museum just before the troops retreated. In addition, the three emeralds that were displayed in the Mughal Hall of the Dar are still missing. They are the 'Bibi' Emerald, the kidney-shaped stone, and the engraved emerald. These three stones are of considerable historical importance, for far from being esoteric, highly decorative objects, they are, in fact, central object lessons that explain the reigns of the Mughal rulers in India, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb.

It is natural to assume that the United Nations concern for this purely cultural issue would come to a halt when restoration and conservation were accomplished. This, however, was not the case. The 20,000 retrieved objects that make up the Dar collection were still homeless, even though they were back in Kuwait. Their original abode had been completely destroyed by the occupying army and an appropriate temporary location for them was imperative. The Kuwaiti Government responded with the offer of an historic site as the new home for Dar al-Athar

Photo by courtesy of the author

The collection of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah 'stored' in the Assyrian Room of the Iraq National Museum.

Photo by courtesy of the author

The fourteenth-century Moroccan doors from Fez, too large to be carted off, were burned to ashes before the invading troops retreated.

al-Islamiyyah, that of the old American Mission Hospital compound on Gulf Street. This hospital had been Kuwait's first and had rendered vital medical services to the population before the government had created its own network of hospitals and other health services. The compound contained buildings of architectural significance which were dangerously close to collapse unless conservation was immediately carried out. Once more, the United Nations extended a helping hand. Specialists from UNESCO, after consultations with the UNDP, were appointed to form an integral part of the work team. They have provided substantial experience and expertise as well as effective participation in the transformation process. Included among these experts are a restorer of historic buildings, a gallery designer, an exhibit designer, an audiovisual specialist, a librarian, a library designer, and an archivist/historian.

The United Nations credibility is profound. Throughout Kuwait's predicament, it was the driving force behind the restoration and reparation of the Kuwaiti art objects. Indeed, it has been a truly inspiring experience. But the task is not yet completed and there is much to be done today and in the years to come. The Kuwait Ministry of Information has made it possible, through its continuous support, to revive the lecture series and to repair objects that were damaged. At the time of the invasion, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah was in the process of producing an audiovisual presentation about Kuwait featuring film and live traditional Kuwaiti music. The project, Aziza ya Kuwait, has been successfully completed and is popular with audiences. Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah's newsletter, Hadeeth al-Dar, continues to be published with the support of the Burgan Bank in Kuwait. New acquisitions have been made by the owner of the Al Sabah collection. The travelling exhibition is still in demand, and after it concludes its European tour in Lisbon and London, it will begin its route to South-East Asia and Australia. ■

The museum refuses to stand still

Kenneth Hudson

Kenneth Hudson is the doyen of the international museum community, a recognized trend spotter and iconoclast. As director of the European Museum Forum, with responsibilities for the European Museum of the Year Award, the Forum Workshops and the European Museum Forum magazine, he may be said to be a one-man museum watch; his book Museums for the 1980s – A Survey of World Trends , published by UNESCO in 1977, broke new ground in describing and explaining the great changes in theory and practice that were sweeping through the museum world. For this anniversary issue, we asked him to take a close look at how museums have evolved over the past fifty years and to speculate on what the future might have in store.

Over the past fifty years ICOM has tried to define a museum in a way that might be found reasonably satisfactory from Canada to the Congo. It has been an unenviable task – ICOM has always had its fair ration of nitpickers – and inevitably the official definition has had to be modified from time to time, with a diplomatic phrase added here and a word capable of provoking an international incident removed there.

But, in attempting to analyse what has been happening to museums since ICOM was set up in 1946, one has to have some point of reference and the law as laid down by ICOM is as likely to receive general agreement as any other. According to the latest version of its statutes, approved by the sixteenth General Assembly of ICOM in 1989 and amended by the eighteenth General Assembly in 1995, a museum is 'a non-profit-making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment'.

An earlier definition, drawn up in 1971, spoke of 'the community', not of 'society'. This soon ran into difficulties. Who was to decide whether a museum is serving the community or not? What proportion of the community does it have to serve in order to justify its existence? What limits were to be set to such a vague concept as the community? On the whole, 'society' was felt to be a safer word than 'community', partly, no doubt, because it is even vaguer.

But, whichever word or phrase one uses, one can assert with confidence that the most fundamental change that has affected museums during the half-century since ICOM was set up is the now almost universal conviction that they exist in order to serve the public. The old-style museum felt itself to be under no such obligation. It existed, it had a building, it had collections and a staff to look after them, it was reasonably adequately financed, and its visitors, usually not numerous, came to look, to wonder and to admire what was set before them. They were in no sense partners in the enterprise. The museum's prime responsibility was to its collections, not to its visitors.

It is worth remembering that since the end of the Second World War the number of museums in the world has increased enormously. Three-quarters of the museums we have today were not there in 1945. This massive growth has been accompanied by a remarkable broadening of the types of museum available and by the creation of a completely different kind of public. During the past thirty years especially, the museum-going public has changed a great deal. Its range of interests has widened, it is far less reverent and respectful in its attitudes, it expects electronics and other modern technical facilities to be available as a matter of course, it distinguishes less and less between a museum and an exhibition, and it sees no reason to pay attention to the subject-boundaries so dear to academically minded people. Its basic question is always, 'Does it interest me or not?' People are no longer content to have their lives and their thoughts controlled by an élite of powerful and privileged groups and individuals. They are increasingly demanding a say in the planning and organization of what they choose to do and especially of the way in which they spend their leisure time.

This means, inevitably, that phrases like 'serving the community' and 'in the service of the community' bring problems of their own. Any institution that sets out consciously and deliberately to do these things

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The Grand Gallery of the Louvre in 1819/20, as depicted in a watercolour sketch by Frederik Nash.

will find itself compelled to find ways of measuring its success. It will have to discover, as a continuous process, what its customers think about the goods that are offered to them. The use of the word 'customer' in connection with museums would have been unthinkable fifty years ago but it causes little or no surprise today. Museums are competing in a leisure market and every market has customers.

The successful exploitation of markets involves market research, but merely to monitor the results of what one has already done is inadequate and uncreative. The true skill of any form of market research, and that practised by museums is no exception, lies, first, in asking the right questions and, second, in using the results to produce something which is closer to what the customer really wants. The process has to be continuous and, in those museums which rely on a system of continuous assessment by the public, the traditional distinction between permanent and temporary exhibitions is breaking down. The concept of a 'permanent exhibition' has become increasingly obsolete. Social attitudes, educational standards and methods of communication are constantly changing and in their displays and assumptions museums have to keep pace or lose customers. A museum exhibition that remains unaltered for as long as five years and still retains its power to attract and stimulate is remarkably fortunate.

Forces for change

Fifty years ago no museum was considered to be a business in the commercial sense, and the notion that museum directors and curators should possess management skills would have been considered absurd. Working in a museum was, quite justifiably, regarded as a quiet, sheltered occupation for men and women with scholarly tastes. It was, like working in a bank or in the Civil Service, a safe job in which one could expect to remain until retirement. Museums were run either by municipalities or by the state, and those in charge of them were usually under no pressure to produce results, either in the form of a steadily increasing number of visitors or of a more efficient use of funds; the modern practice of obtaining commercial sponsorship for new projects was almost completely unknown. Money was not part of the museum atmosphere, as it has since become.

Local authorities, like the state, regarded it as part of their duty to run museums and libraries. Very few museums charged for entry and amenities like museum shops, cafés and restaurants were a great rarity. It was generally accepted that museums should be peaceful places in which visitors of all ages were free to roam about, to look at what interested them and to ignore what did not. Attendance figures were, by modern standards, very low, but nobody seemed greatly bothered by this. What is now known as 'museum education' hardly existed in any organized form. Teachers took groups of their pupils to the larger museums and took

responsibility for their behaviour during the visit. Museums, with very few exceptions, did not have 'education departments' and 'education officers'.

Why have these changes taken place? What social forces or historical accidents have brought them about? There seem to have been four main causes. The first is the rise in people's social expectations and consequently in what they expect their governments to provide for them. These governments in turn have to balance the various financial demands that are made on them and to look for every possible saving that can be effected without causing serious political trouble. The second cause, at least in the Western world, is the increase in the amount of disposable income. This has led to a demand for more, and more expensive, leisure activities and to an unwillingness to be satisfied with simple pleasures. The third is the development of professionalism among those who work in museums and a corresponding inclination to say, 'There must be a better way', defining 'better' in terms that will be approved both by other museum people and by the authorities that have to meet the costs. And the fourth cause is the remarkable increase in the number and proportion of what are often known, somewhat misleadingly, as 'independent museums', that is, museums that do not derive their income mainly from public funds. Most of the museums in this category have to think very carefully about getting and spending money from the time they are born and their unavoidable attention to the business aspect of their work has influenced the atmosphere of the museum world as a whole.

Generalizations are as dangerous in talking about museums as in discussing any other field of human activity, but it is, even so, possible to distinguish certain broad trends and movements which have crossed national boundaries and made themselves evident in each of the five continents. What one should never do is to invent an imaginary phenomenon called 'the museum'. It is a meaningless abstraction. The reality is that the world contains hundreds of thousands of establishments called museums and each of them has its special characteristics, its own problems, its own opportunities and its own pace of growth and decline.

Even so, it is fair to say that fifty years ago there was much more common agreement as to what a museum should be than there is today. A speaker at a conference in the United States two years ago said, 'When I was a boy, I knew a museum when I saw one. Now I'm not always sure.' It is not difficult to understand what he meant.

ICOM itself has not helped very much to produce an answer to a question that is heard more and more with every year that passes, 'Is it a museum?' The following, it has decreed, qualify as museums for the purposes of definition:

> (i) natural, archaeological and ethnographic monuments and sites and historical monuments and sites of a museum nature that acquire, conserve and communicate material evidence of people and their environment; (ii) institutions holding collections of and displaying live specimens of plants and animals, such as botanical and zoological gardens, aquaria and vivaria; (iii) science centres and planetaria; (iv) conservation institutes and exhibition galleries permanently maintained by libraries and archive centres; (v) nature reserves; (vi) international or national or regional or local museum organizations, ministries or departments of public agencies responsible for museums as

> per the definition given under this article; (vii) non-profit institutions or organizations undertaking research, education, training, documentation and other activities relating to museums and museology; …

Not everyone connected with museums appears to have the same liberal views as ICOM itself and there are certainly plenty of people today who find it difficult to accept that either a zoo or a science centre is entitled to be called a museum. After fifty years of definition-broadening, it is probably still true to say, however, that museums are essentially places in which objects – 'real things' – are used as the principal means of communication. But is it reasonable, without straining ordinary language too much, to call a living plant, fish or animal an object? Does it have to be dead in order to be an object and, if so, why? Is it carrying empire-building too far to call a zoo, a botanical garden or an aquarium a museum? Is a library a museum? It certainly contains objects and it might perhaps be described as a museum of books, but somehow it seems more sensible to continue to call it a library.

It has been said that theologians thrive best when people cease to believe in God. For 'God' read 'museum'. Fifty years ago museums were in a strong position because everyone knew what a museum was, but today, after decades of wrangling, there is increasing uncertainty. If there is no consensus of opinion as to the nature of what one is defending, how can one defend it? But, for want of a better cause, 'objects are a must' seems to be a battle worth fighting. To insist that an institution without a collection of objects is not a museum is not the same as saying that a museum must be object-centred. A very important feature of the majority of museums today, in contrast to what characterized them in the mid-1940s, is the extent to which they have become visitor-centred. This amounts to saying that, as good shopkeepers, museum directors are slowly coming to think of the customers first and of the goods on sale second.

Marketing the museum

This takes us back to the major causes of changes which were outlined above. Since the end of the Second World War, many of the traditional class distinctions have faded or disappeared, the lives of those who are conventionally referred to as 'ordinary people' have become more complicated and social expectations have risen to levels that would have seemed ludicrously impossible in the 1930s. Luxuries formerly out of the reach of all but a small section of society have become necessities demanded by everyone as a right. Pleasures have become more sophisticated and more expensive, and inexpensive satisfactions are almost a thing of the past. Governments are expected to provide more for their citizens and to be more concerned with their everyday welfare, without raising taxes, though quite how this economic miracle is to be achieved is never made clear.

Within this new atmosphere museums have increasingly been forced, however unwillingly, to market and sell themselves. This had been the case for a long time in the United States, where the tradition of public provision is not so deeply rooted, where people have expected to pay for a large part of their social amenities and where the salesman has always enjoyed much higher prestige than he has in Europe. The idea of a museum having to sell itself and to discover its own sources of finance is relatively new outside North America and has met with a good deal of reluctance and hostility, especially in Europe. The

museum curators of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s were prepared to allow the customers to enter the shop, provided they observed acceptable standards of behaviour, but they were not inclined to go out and look for them or to persuade them to return.

In some respects the task of those who were anxious to promote museums was more difficult in the 1970s and 1980s, when the museum revolution really began, than it would have been in the 1930s, when there were fewer alternative ways of spending one's leisure time and much less spare cash after the cost of necessities had been met. What might be termed the centre section of society, the upper working class and the lower middle class, was becoming prosperous to an extent that would have been hard to imagine before the war. Commercial interests were quick to exploit this new and highly profitable situation and, as a consequence, museums found themselves in the wholly unaccustomed and unwelcome position of having to compete for the leisure hours of what ICOM thought of as 'society' or 'the community'.

This led to the rapid growth of what is, often flatteringly, called 'professionalism' among museum employees. A professional, in any occupation, might perhaps be defined as a person who has followed a recognized course of specialized training and who accepts a recognized pattern of working practices and agreed ethical standards. Such people did not exist in the museum world until the 1970s. Before that time, those who worked in museums had found their way into their jobs largely by accident. They might have become teachers or craftsmen/artists or civil servants or, in some cases, university professors, but fate and an inclination towards the quiet life led them into museums. During the 1980s and 1990s, museum training courses, like museums themselves, have proliferated all over the world, producing more qualified students than museums can employ. These courses fall into two categories: those that provide instruction of a technical nature and those that aim at producing more competent curators and managers. Whether they and other innovations have succeeded in creating anything that could be accurately described as a 'museum profession' remains an open question.

ICOM exists primarily in order to serve the interests of 'museum professionals', but defining a museum professional is almost as difficult as defining a museum. A major part of the problem is that there is no simple word to describe someone who works in a museum at the responsibility-bearing level. A person who plays or composes music is a musician, someone who practises the law is a lawyer, someone who is trained to fight wars is a soldier, but the only museum equivalent we have so far managed to invent is 'museum professional', which is clumsy and slightly ludicrous. 'Museologist' certainly will not do, because a museologist is essentially a builder of theories, not a practitioner. Perhaps 'museumist' is usable. 'Curator' is certainly not adequate, because, like 'conservator', it does not reflect the complex

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Work on the Grand Gallery in 1946 completed the skylight created in 1856.

pattern of administrative, financial and political duties that anyone in charge of a museum has to perform today. Twenty years ago the director of a large and well-respected art museum in France, when announcing her early retirement, told the press and the museum world that she had been 'trained to look after pictures', not to 'persuade people with money to give it to the museum', and her predicament illustrated a major change in the international museum situation, a change that has hit museum directors in the former socialist countries particularly hard, as they have struggled to adjust themselves to the economic realities of the capitalist world.

The Grand Gallery as it was for the 1952 exhibit Léonard de Vinci.

Small, specialized and successful

A very high proportion of the museums that have been created since the 1940s have had to face hard financial truths from the beginning. They have had to create and sustain a market for themselves in order to exist. Their names often provide a guide to their problems and opportunities. Traditional museums had such titles as the Montreal Museum of Fine Art, Rochdale Museum, the Municipal Museum of Natural History, the National Ethnographical Museum, the Museum of Transport and Technology of New Zealand, and the Indian Museum. The new, post-1950 crop is rich in museums with names like The Irish Whiskey Corner Museum, The Museum of Immigration, The Hall of Champions, The German Carburettor Museum, the Gas Museum, the London Toy and Model Museum, The Museum of the Olive, The House of Wheat and Bread, and the European Museum of Asparagus.

Most of the pre-1950 museums everywhere in the world had a very limited range of exhibits. They were concerned, for the most part, with art, broadly interpreted, archaeology, ethnology, natural history and, within limits, local history. With few exceptions, they depended entirely on public finance, they operated on what would nowadays be considered ridiculously low budgets, they paid very little attention to the attractiveness of an exhibit and they tended to feel that once objects had been put on display, the arrangement should last more or less for ever. What has happened since amounts to a revolution – the word is not an exaggeration – in museum philosophy and in its practical applications. Some, but not many, of the new museums have been relatively large, employing 100 to 200 people, but the vast majority have a total staff of not more than ten or so. Reliable figures are at

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The Grand Gallery today displays the Louvre's collection of Italian painting in chronological order.

the moment impossible to obtain, but those, like the members of the jury of the European Museum of the Year Award, who travel regularly and extensively have the impression that three-quarters of the museums in Europe provide a living for fewer than ten people, and there is no reason to suppose that the same is not true on a world scale. The large municipal and state museums are completely untypical, an important truth which is obscured by the fact that the people who appear at international museum conferences are nearly always representatives of large museums. Anybody who was in a position to take a bird's-eye view of the museum world as it was in 1947 would have been able to perceive a very thin scattering of museums in what are known as the 'developed countries' and only a tiny number in the poorer or, to use today's preferred term, 'developing' countries. The museums in these developing countries had nearly all been established by the foreign ruling power in colonial times, and they were of the traditional European type. A similarly privileged observer-from-above today would find a much more widespread distribution of museums in all countries and it would soon become clear to him or her that the average size of a museum today is considerably smaller than it was fifty years ago.

There is plenty of evidence to show that visitors like small museums, museums that one can look round satisfactorily in a couple of hours or less, especially if they are concerned with a single subject or a single person. Most people have experienced the psychological condition known as museum hopelessness, the feeling that is almost normal in a very large museum, where the complexity and sheer size of the place present a series of impossible and discouraging challenges. The proliferation of small, single-subject museums is due partly to the lower financial investment and risk that is involved, but also to a realization that many interesting types of collection were previously not represented in museums at all. Where, in the 1940s, could one have gone to find a museum wholly devoted to the story of pasta, the gas industry or the development of the umbrella? It is possible, but difficult to prove, that Petrarch is more significant than pasta and that Whistler or Wagner are more important than wine or Wurlitzers, but the fact that we now have thriving wine, Wurlitzer and pasta museums is sufficient evidence of the extent to which the academic walls around museums have been broken down during our lifetime.

There are those who believe, and say, that more inevitably means worse, those who lament the passing of the old type of scholarly curator, those who feel that sponsorship is necessarily a vulgarizing and corrupting influence, those who long for the old days where museums were adult-centred places of peace and quiet, in which children knew their place. But looking at the situation from a world point of view, as both ICOM and UNESCO must, there can be no harm in suggesting that the most important change of all is one that is only just beginning, an attempt to make museums a part of the living culture of their time, and in this way to cease to regard members of the public as passive observers of exhibitions that have been supposedly created for their benefit. Such a change of attitude

involves regarding what have hitherto been thought of as museums much less as treasure-houses and much more as centres of activity and discussion, where the past and the present are inextricably mixed. This kind of development is taking place throughout the 'developing' countries, in which museums on the Western model have increasingly come to be seen both as irrelevant and as impossibly expensive. It could be that the ideas that will characterize and inspire the museum revolution of the next fifty years will arise from poverty, not riches. There is nothing automatically right about the Western type of museum and it may well be that the well-endowed countries of the world will find their museum road to sanity and satisfaction by studying what is happening in Africa and South America, regions in which, in cultural matters, everyone is both an amateur and a professional at the same time. ■

The new breed

Over the past twenty years, Kenneth Hudson, the director of the European Museum Forum, which includes the European Museum of the Year Award among its responsibilities, has watched the development of a new type of museum director across the continent. The men and women who have been gradually taking control of all but the large museums, which he calls museum-dinosaurs, show similar characteristics, irrespective of the countries in which they work.

They are well educated, but not primarily scholars. They are not much given to carrying out research or writing books and learned articles. They are essentially communicators and organizers whose main interest lies in making their collections and exhibitions attractive and interesting to the general public and in widening that public and studying its needs and wishes.

They are super-energetic, enterprising, sociable, friendly people, with wide interests, who spend a lot of time on the shop floor with their customers. They have a well-developed political and public-relations sense and they realize that their museum has to be regarded as a business to be run in an efficient manner. They know that the economic conditions of our time compel them to take money wherever it is to be found and they enjoy and take a pride in discovering new sources of funding.

They guide and control their staff in a democratic way and they are sensitive to the fact that high productivity demands good leadership and motivation. Above all, they are likeable, optimistic people, who obviously take great pleasure in their work. They have an in-built and instinctive contempt for bureaucracy, but they have become skilled in handling and defeating it.

Kenneth Hudson has written a series of profiles of this new type of director, under the general title of The New Breed, and would welcome suggestions from readers of Museum International as to directors who fit this description.

The museums of the French Riviera: on the trail of the great artists

Maïté Roux

The two words 'French Riviera' suggest leisurely bathes and strolls in the sunshine, the flapping sails of a two-masted yacht on the blue waves of the Mediterranean, a place of dreams. But for tourists willing, between sunbathing and cocktails, to explore its many charms, the Riviera has much else to offer. Far off the beaten track they will find a completely different Riviera, following the footsteps of the great artists who made the dazzling 'season' of the Riviera a time for painting. Maïté Roux, a French freelance journalist, leads us on this voyage of discovery.

The fabled French Riviera, long known as a playground of the gods, is also a land of culture. No other region of France has a greater concentration of museums each entirely devoted to a single painter. In Nice we can follow in the footsteps of Henri Matisse and Marc Chagall, at Villefranche-sur-Mer in those of Jean Cocteau. At Cagnes-sur-Mer, we find Auguste Renoir, at Biot, Fernand Léger, and at Mougins, Vallauris and Antibes, Pablo Picasso. Further inland we find the painter Fragonard at Grasse, his home town, and at Vence, Matisse once again. All these artists had in common their creativity and their appreciation of the light and tranquillity of the south that enabled them to sink heart and soul into their painting.

The Matisse Museum receives visitors on the hill of Cimiez, surrounded by 36,000 m^2 of olive groves. Not far from the Gallo-Roman remains and a few steps away from a Franciscan monastery, this seventeenth-century villa with protected trompe-l'oeil façades, colonnaded staircases and Genoese terraces has, since 1963, housed the collections bequeathed by Matisse and his heirs to the city of Nice and the state. 'Matisse never lived in this house, which was built in the second half of the seventeenth century … and became a museum only in 1963,' explains Xavier Girard, curator of the Matisse Museum. 'The house was bought by the city of Nice from a real-estate company that wanted to build an estate taking up the

The Chapel of the Rosary at Vence, decorated by Matisse.

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whole of the Cimiez park. It was finally purchased by the city in 1953, one year before Matisse's death. The museum opened in 1963 and, in the summer of 1993, it was inaugurated as it now stands, with a new reception wing, temporary exhibitions, an auditorium, a bookshop and a children's workshop.'

The architect Jean-François Bodin, who designed the new premises, showed respect for the old building while meeting the need to enlarge it. The annexes are two-storeyed and are connected to the villa by an internal passage, thus providing the museum with a large reception area, a bookshop, an auditorium, temporary exhibition rooms, storerooms, educational areas, a restaurant and a 500 m^2 terrace. The additional 1,500 m^2 or more make for a more efficient, modern museum, at an overall cost of 51,890,000 francs ($8,300,000).

The baroque villa has lost none of its charm and intimacy. Pieces of furniture and objects that belonged to Matisse make a particularly warm and welcoming atmosphere. In all, 187 items owned by the painter, including his painting table and palette, are on view, in addition to ceramics, tapestries, silk prints, stained glass and documents. Xavier Girard says, 'The old villa, which houses the permanent collections, has been most carefully preserved to give people the impression that they are really going into a baroque villa. … The extension, on the other hand, had to fulfil a different function – and it fulfils it very well, in my opinion – which is to host temporary exhibitions in order to draw the visitor's attention afresh to Matisse and his posterity.' The museum thus blends space, clarity and sobriety with a tranquillity that is most pleasantly evocative of the artist himself.

Constantly bridging past and future, all the periods of the artist's creative work are represented: paintings, etchings, sketches, illustrated books, sculpture (the largest collection of Matisse's sculptures) make a visit to this museum a truly educational experience. Only the artist's original works are to be found here. Two major items stand out, however, among the works of his last period, and they are the studies for The Dance and the Chapel at Vence. The Blue Nude series and the Creole Dancer of 1950, painted by this exponent of volume and 'pure colour', also attract great attention. All these works – 68 cut-out gouaches and paintings, 236 sketches, 218 etchings, 57 sculptures and 14 books decorated by Matisse – make the Matisse Museum the most popular on the French Riviera.

In the summer of 1997, all the museums on the Riviera were brought together in a great networking exhibition, launched by the Matisse Museum and its curator, on the theme The French Riviera and Modernity – 1918-58, the first ever of its kind in the region.

A 'message of love' from Chagall

Closer to the centre of the city, on another hill, the Oliveto, against a backdrop of lavender, olive trees and agapanthus, nestles the Marc Chagall National Museum of the Bible Message. Although the painter lived for a long time inland from Nice, facing the medieval fortifications of Vence, it is in Nice that his shadow follows us and where we feel his presence most clearly. Chagall was fascinated by the Bible from his early youth and always regarded it as the greatest collection of poetry of all time, constantly seeking biblical associations in his life and in his art. This spiritual conception of art finds its fullest expression in the Marc Chagall National Museum of the Bible Message.

This museum was built in accordance with the artist's wishes to house the key series of seventeen canvases on the Bible Message. This inspired initiative was supported by André Malraux, then Minister of Culture, who was also a friend of the painter, and work began in 1966. The purity of the design by the architect André Hermant (1908-78) appealed to Chagall, who asked him to be responsible for erecting the building. Inside all is a sober white. The surfaces on which the canvases are hung seem to form a huge screen. The structure itself is unobtrusive, allowing all the visitor's attention to focus on the work, in which 'function alone determines shape' to use an expression dear to André Hermant. Chagall's non-linear approach to the Bible is reflected in the museum's layout, decided on by him.

In July 1966, Marc and Valentina Chagall made a gift to the state of the seventeen paintings based on themes from Genesis, Exodus and the Song of Songs. In 1972, another donation, this time of the preparatory sketches for the Bible Message, was added to the collection, together with a mosaic, a tapestry and three large stained-glass windows specially designed for the museum by Chagall. On 7 July 1973, the painter's 86th birthday, the National Museum of the Bible Message was opened in the presence of André Malraux. After the artist's death in 1985 the collection of his works was further enlarged by a donation of thirty-nine gouaches of Exodus and ten magnificent canvases on religious subjects, in which the crucified Christ, who featured frequently in Chagall's later work, symbolizes ancestral persecution. The collection is spread over an area of 900 m^2. The two rooms housing the Bible Message contain the permanent collection, and new acquisitions and temporary exhibitions can be viewed in the other rooms.

The museum is a 'house', a spiritual centre, as Chagall wished, but also a cultural centre, as the donors wished, where concerts, conferences and symposia are organized. Chagall loved music and wanted an auditorium to be an integral part of the museum. He designed three stained-glass windows depicting the Creation of the World specially for this auditorium, where everything is blue, and in 1980 decorated a harpsichord for the stage. It was Chagall's dream that the young at heart would come to this museum as to a place in which experience could be shared in brotherhood and love, inspired by the colours and shapes of his paintings. He hoped that these visitors would express in words the love which he felt for all humankind. This museum is a message of love for future generations.

Two chapels and a farmhouse

Moving up the coast, after Nice, Villefranche-sur-Mer takes us on the trail of Jean Cocteau, which leads up to St Peter's Chapel. Decorated entirely by Cocteau and listed as a historic monument, this chapel was first and foremost a tribute to the young ladies of Villefranche and the gypsies of Les Saintes Maries de la Mer. It depicts the village dear to the artist in his childhood but above all it is dedicated to the fishermen of this little town with whom he was so friendly. 'I have decorated St Peter's Chapel for my friends the fishermen,' Jean Cocteau wrote in 1958. He designed everything down to the last detail, devoting months of inspired work to the project from 1956 to 1957. On 30 June 1957 Mass was celebrated there for the first time. Since then Mass has always been said on St Peter's Day and the sailors put out to sea to drop wreaths in memory of those who have perished at sea.

Collettes Farm, home of the Renoir Museum.

Further inland, away from the coast, lies Vence. There we find Matisse again and another chapel: the Chapel of the Rosary, a small whitewashed building with a blue tiled roof. It was his 'masterpiece', his 'crowning glory' as he liked to say. The great preparatory studies of this last 'painter's symphony', including those for his St Dominic, are to be found in the Matisse Museum. 'Hundreds of preparatory drawings, countless fresh starts, the anguish of sleepless nights.' He designed everything, from the architecture, the interior decoration, the chairs, the kneelers and the confessional of "Moucharaby" Moorish inspiration – from his Tangiers period – to the chasubles and the altar of Rogne stone. Matisse worked on the design and completion of this chapel from 1947 to 1951. Three years later he died peacefully in Nice. Above all, Matisse wanted it to be a place of prayer, and forty years on Mass is said there every morning.

Not far away is Cagnes-sur-Mer, where Pierre-Auguste Renoir resided in a large comfortable house called the Maison des Collettes. Nestling at the heart of an olive grove, looking out over the old part of Cagnes and the blue fringe of the Mediterranean, the farmhouse had many visitors. Famous people, close friends, the painter's models and relatives; throughout his Cagnes period, those walls resounded with laughter. What more could the master wish for whose painting 'made the walls sing for joy'?

Auguste Renoir discovered Cagnes in 1898 and visited it again in 1899. After many travels, he returned in 1903 and decided to settle there, first of all renting the post house. In 1907, he had the house of his dreams built on the enchanting site of Collettes (small hills). The property then extended well beyond the Collettes road, with the surrounding countryside, the kitchen garden, the flower garden and the grove of ancient olive trees, the whole property covering more than 3 hectares.

At Cagnes, in the restful atmosphere of the Collettes, Renoir painted. He painted for pleasure, free from all financial constraints and instructions of patrons. 'Of all the Impressionists, he is the one who earned the most money, the most quickly at any rate,' says Georges Dussaule, honorary museum curator of Cagnes-sur-Mer. In spite of the disease gnawing away at him, Renoir lived happily at the Collettes, surrounded by his family and familiar models. He painted untiringly, despite his rheumatism, and the bodies of his models became free and untrammelled in his paintings. At Cagnes, Dussaule tells us, 'he sometimes stopped being an Impressionist and practically became a herald of Fauvism. He became liberated in Cagnes. … He was the painter of women par excellence.'

Renoir was 78 years old when he died at the Collettes. After his death his three sons Pierre (1885-52), Jean (1894-79) and Claude,

nicknamed Coco (1901-69), managed to preserve the property until Claude became the sole owner. Hounded by developers, he decided to sell it. After much negotiation, the town of Cagnes-sur-Mer purchased the Collettes in 1960 with financial assistance from the Committee for the Purchase and Artistic Utilization of the Renoir Property, set up in 1957, and the department of Alpes Maritimes (for part of the olive grove).

In the Maison des Collettes, which has become the Renoir Museum, many everyday objects recall the presence of the master: his riding coat and scarf, his canes, wheelchair and armchair for moving about outside, the signature brush, his porcelain palette, etc. There are also family photographs, documents and souvenirs donated by his heirs. Inside, the furniture has been left as it was during Renoir's lifetime; the house awaits the master as if he were to return from a walk, as if he had just gone out for a few moments.

After it had been purchased, Renoir's house was opened to the public on 26 July 1960. But there was not a single painting by Renoir in it. The problem thus arose of procuring some of his works. The first two original works, paintings obtained for the museum on deposit from the state, were *Landscapes at Collettes* and *Allée Sousbois*. Later on, the town secured the transfer of seven of Renoir's works from the Museum of Fine Arts in Nice, where they had been deposited, to the Maison des Collettes, where most of them had been painted. In 1984, Cagnes purchased another very characteristic canvas of the painter's Cagnes period, namely *Collettes Farm*. The latest, very recent, acquisition was a small painting entitled *Coco Writing*. In all, eleven Renoir paintings now adorn the walls of the house where the artist lived, among them *The Caryatids*, *The Bathers*, *The Young Woman at the Well*, the portraits of Madame Pichon and Madame Colonna Romano, the *Seated Nude* and the *Still Life with Apples and Almonds*. In addition to the paintings, twelve Renoir-Guino sculptures also grace the museum. Guino, to whom we owe the casting of the bronze *Venus-Victrix* (1915/16), was the master's hands while Renoir was his pupil's eyes.

The artist's home is a little museum, with neither the scope nor the collection of a great museum. Steps are thus being taken by Fréderique Verlinden, who has recently been appointed curator of the Renoir Museum and of the Château Museum of Cagnes-sur-Mer. She defines her role herself, with regard to the inadequacy of the collection. After three inspections of the museum, requested earlier by the town of

Collettes Farm, oil on canvas, painted by Renoir in 1915.

© Service Communication, Ville de Cagnes-sur-Mer

Cagnes-sur-Mer, 'The fourth inspection is going to be very important. It is to be a museographical inspection. My job today is to organize these collections, to put Renoir centre stage, to evoke the presence of the man. And while being sensitive to the atmosphere and life of the house, to use its potential and make this municipal museum – which is rated as a Category I museum – the equal of the other museums in the department.'

Fredérique Verlinden wants to work first of all on the garden and ground floor of the house, focal areas of Renoir's life, and to breathe life into the studio on the first floor. Secondly, she wants to 'make works that are in store at the moment accessible to the public, ensuring the best possible presentation and also optimum conditions for their preservation … and', she adds, 'the little farm needs to be reorganized.' As the person responsible for the management of the two museums with an affinity for the fine arts, Fréderique Verlinden considers that the 'Renoir Museum must be the fine arts museum for Cagnes-sur-Mer'.

This is a wide-ranging programme, but it does not for the moment cater to the expectations of the mainly foreign visitors, frustrated because they cannot admire more of the artist's original works. To make good this 'deficiency' the curator's first objective is to approach collections such as the Barnes Foundation through the Alliance Française in the United States, which felt it natural to seek help in that direction. The project is being set in place, step by step, by the curator and involves the creation of an association of friends of the Renoir Museum, a scientific committee, a clearing-house for collectors and other Renoir sites – all this for transmission to future generations.

Léger, Picasso and Fragonard

Not far from Cagnes, Biot invites us to visit the National Museum on Fernand Léger, who continually sang its praises. His Walking Flowers, on the lawns of the park, are like a bouquet offered to passers-by. If any painter has glorified modern life, progress, machines and factories, it is indeed Fernand Léger. His energetic palette of incisive, contrasting colours magnifies a world on the move, as in The Builders of 1950. He worked on shapes and movement, using simple colours – blue, red and green – and adopting cubism's deconstructionist approach to shapes.

Nadia Léger, the artist's wife, wished to have a museum built to reflect Léger's spirit and to exhibit his work. The first stone was laid on 27 February 1957. Svetchine, the architect, placed the building on a wooded hillock in the middle of the property. The design of the interior, the simple arrangement of volumes and natural lighting, creates a spacious, airy setting for the magnificent works. Sobriety, light, efficiency are the keywords of this museum. Outside, on the pediment of the museum, there is a monumental fresco produced on the basis of a model by Léger for the stadium in Hanover. It was made in ceramic and mosaic by two former pupils of the Fernand Léger studio in Paris. The entrance hall greets the visitor with a stained-glass window made by master craftsmen from a drawing by the artist.

On 13 May 1960 the privately owned museum was opened as the Fernand Léger Museum. The museum remained in private hands for seven years. In 1967, the founders – Nadia Léger and Georges Bauquier – donated the building, the park and 348 of Léger's works (paintings, drawings, tapestries and ceramics) to the French state, on condition

The staircase of the Fragonard House-Museum, thought to be decorated by Fragonard's son Alexandre in 1791.

that it would create a National Fernand Léger Museum to house all the works donated. It was inaugurated on 4 February 1969 by André Malraux, Minister of Culture, and a new extension, financed by the Directorate of the Museums of France, was opened in 1990. It was designed, in accordance with the two donors' wishes, to accommodate works of monumental proportions. In 1993, Georges Bauquier retired and the management of the museum was taken over by the Directorate of the Museums of France and the Union of National Museums (RMN).

The museum's collection includes major works such as the magnificent Joconde aux Clefs, The Four Cyclists, Still Life and ABC. One room on the ground floor is taken up by Léger's ceramics, which were made between 1950 and 1955 at Biot in the workshop of Roland Brice (a former pupil). Other works include a model of Kindergarten, a huge sculpture that was created in the museum's gardens in 1960. The first storey is devoted to paintings, retracing Léger's progression as a painter from 1905 to 1955 on the basis of works left in his studio at Gif-sur-Yvette, where he died on 17 August 1955. Other rooms are used for temporary exhibitions. The museum also organizes school visits, guided tours and workshops for young children. The children are shown a selection of works on a particular theme and are then allowed to make little objects themselves.

Leaving Biot, we follow the traces of Pablo Picasso (1881–1976) to the castle museum at Antibes, exposed to the angry wind and beating waves. The castle of Antibes stands on a prehistoric site. The old Roman camp on the site of the acropolis of Antipolis and then the Grimaldi castle from 1384 to 1608 served as a barracks for army engineers during the First World War. It was bought by the town of Antibes in 1925 and turned into a local history museum before later becoming the Picasso Museum. In 1946 the curator of the museum, Romuald Dor de la Souchère, a man with an innovative turn of mind, offered Picasso, who was on holiday in neighbouring Golfe-Juan, the second floor of the Grimaldi castle as a studio. The artist seized enthusiastically on this inspired idea and stayed there from July to December 1946, working day and night on the Antipolis series.

In those months of intense production after the war Picasso was happy, enthusiastically using artistic media that were unusual at that time. After the wartime restrictions, the desire for renewal can be seen in such paintings as Joie de Vivre. Then he began to focus more on mythology. Fauns,

centaurs and other mythical figures kept him in an enchanted world, a paradise regained to which his love and much cherished freedom could be confidently entrusted. In December, he made a donation to the museum which now bore his name, the first of many. From 1947 to 1950, paintings, drawings, ceramics and sculptures were added to the initial collection. He left the museum a treasure: twenty-five huge canvases, drawings, sketches, and eighty ceramics, forming the nucleus of the museum's collections. The museum subsequently received other works not only from Picasso himself but also from other outstanding painters and sculptors of the postwar generation, including Miró, Picabia, Hans Hartung, Germaine Richier and Nicolas de Staël.

In 1946 Pablo Picasso and Dor de la Souchère had, perhaps unknowingly, defined the functions of a modern museum as a place to preserve, study and create works of art but also a place where people are welcome and can meet and exchange their views in a friendly atmosphere. Maurice Fréchuret, curator of the Picasso Museum, reminds us that it is also a museum with a place in history. Remaining faithful to this definition, it has continued both to help young creative artists and to make the postwar period better known. To mark the fiftieth anniversary of Picasso's stay in Antibes, the Picasso Museum paid tribute in the summer of 1996 to the man who confided to the newspaper Le Patriote on 30 October 1961: 'All I have done in my life is to love. If everyone else in the world disappeared, I would fall in love with a plant or a door knob. I cannot imagine life without love.'

A trip back to the eighteenth century takes us to Grasse, capital of perfumes, where we meet another painter, Jean Honoré Fragonard. The painter's name is to be seen all over his home town. From the perfume factory that bears his name to the Fragonard House-Museum, these three syllables pervade the town, like the fragrances of a perfume. The museum is in the house where he found refuge during the Revolution. On the ground floor, the middle room exhibits copies of the stages in the conquest of the loved one: The Meeting, The Pursuit, Love Letters and The Triumphant Lover. These pictures, painted in 1771 at the request of the Countess du Barry, Louis XV's mistress, were intended for her house at Louveciennes. But after having commissioned them, she rejected them. In 1827, this series was valued at 600 francs! It became the property of the Frick Collection in New York in 1915 for the sum of 1,250,000 gold francs. Unfortunately, only the copies made by Auguste La Brely (1838–1906) before the originals were sent off to the United States remain.

The staircase decorated with Masonic signs, painted in tempera and trompe-l'oeil, is thought to be the work of Fragonard's son. It was listed as a historic monument in 1957.

All along our route, it seems that the great artists associated with the Riviera produced the works of their last years, the most magnificent of all their artistic creations, on this coast. We could come back, again and again, to meet these princes of light who have left their mark on the Riviera. Our stroll under the midday sun could go on for ever. ■

The 1997 European Museum of the Year Award

Kenneth Hudson

The European Museum of the Year Award recognizes above all 'the public virtues' of a museum and is restricted to new museums and to museums that have recently been completely reorganized. First granted in 1977, it functions under the auspices of the Council of Europe and is administered by an independent authority, the European Museum Forum, a non-profit-making body registered in the United Kingdom. Jurors are drawn from a broad spectrum of European countries and they visit from fifty to sixty museums each year. Kenneth Hudson has been director of the award since its inception.

There were sixty-six candidates for the 1997 European Museum of the Year Award, from twenty countries, and the judges who visited and assessed them were in full agreement on two points: many of the museums concerned, they discovered, were seriously underfunded and understaffed and the people who were working in them consequently felt frustrated and unable to realize the full potential either of themselves or of the public they served. This feeling was most marked in state and municipal msueums, where income is traditionally obtained entirely from public funds. Dissatisfaction was particularly noticeable among younger directors or curators, who tended to be outspokenly critical of bureaucratic limitations and controls.

The situation is not, of course, peculiar to candidates for the European Award. All types and sizes of public museums throughout Europe and experiencing painful cuts in their budgets and, not unnaturally, fear that

The Bonnefanten Museum at Maastricht, selected not only for 'its impressive and workable Aldo Rossi building', but primarily for the way it has introduced the museum-going habit to a new public.

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there may be worse to come as government after government trims its annual grants to cultural organizations, apparently in the belief that they are luxuries that should be increasingly supported by the private sector.

But the poverty does not necessarily mean loss of morale and lack of initiative. The two members of the EMYA Committee who spent a week visiting candidates in Romania were deeply impressed by the warm welcome they received everywhere and by the enthusiastic way in which museum employees at all levels approached their work. They wete going beyond the bounds of duty under conditions that few of their colleagues in the more favoured countries would be prepared to tolerate for more than a week. Where there is very little money, a museum can be based only on talent and devotion. We cannot recommend poverty, but it can bring real advantages.

In country after country, we are frequently struck by the failure to put museums into a meaningful social context. In art museums, for example, we often long to know how much the painter or sculptor received for the original commission and what kind of people have bought or owned the work, generation by generation. In costume museums we are practically never told how much a particular hat, dress or pair of shoes cost and we are kept equally in the dark about the price of the tanks and guns in military museums, where all the objects on show had to be paid by the citizens of the country in the form of taxes.

During the judging process, we were impressed by the number of museums that had resulted from the enthusiasm of a single person, in one or two cases with the assistance of an equally devoted partner. In at least six instances this year, it is fair to say that the museum would never have appeared, at least in its present form, without the vision, energy and unceasing hard work of exceptional individuals who saw an opportunity and seized it, disregarding what appeared to be insuperable difficulties.

Six of the very strong 1997 list were thought to have deserved a Special Commendation. Aboa Vetus and Ars Nova at Turku in Finland had succeeded in combining exceptionally interesting and well-interpreted collections of modern art and archaeological material discovered during excavations on the museum site, in a way that proved very attractive to local people of all ages. The Historical Museum at Bielefeld in Germany had used real care and imagination to convert a former linen-spinning mill into a museum where the history of local industries was presented within the context of social development. The Museum of Prehistory at Landau in Bavaria had succeeded in creating a convincing picture of the life of the former inhabitants of the region, based on a careful and fairly ruthless selection of archaeological material.

We felt that the Historical and Ethnological Museum at Nea Karvali in Greece deserved great praise for its successful efforts to combine the separate but closely integrated aspects of its work – persuading Greek Cappadocians and Cappadocian refugees from Asia Minor to give objects which form the basis of the museum's collections; for creating an association that organizes most of the museum's activities, including a very popular dance group; and in amalgamating its exhibitions and its cultural ventures in a highly effective way. The Bonnefanten Museum at Maastricht

interested us partly for its impressive and workable Aldo Rossi building, but even more for the manner in which it was introducing the museum-going habit to a part of the Netherlands that had previously had little opportunity to engage in this type of leisure-time activity. The Old Royal Observatory at Greenwich, near London, earned its Special Commendation for its wonderful collection of scientific instruments and for the ways in which it displays and interprets them, with excellent audio-visual programmes, recreated milieux and an excellent range of activities for both adults and children.

The Council of Europe Award went to the Children's Museum, which forms part of the Tropical Museum in Amsterdam. By means of exciting changing exhibitions and a well-integrated programme of activities, it aims at 'dispelling myths and stereotypes relating to people who live in tropical and sub-tropical countries'.

The Micheletti Prize for a technical or industrial museum was awarded to the Municipal Museum at Idrija in Slovenia, which had been established in order to tell the story of the town's great mercury mine and of the community that had grown up around it.

After a lengthy and often passionate discussion in Strasbourg, the judges eventually chose the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara as the recipient of the European Museum of the Year Award for 1997. Four qualities especially brought the museum this distinction: its great sense of style, its admirable restraint in choosing only the choicest and most significant items from its vast collections for display, its work on archaeological sites associated with the museum, and its refusal to lower its standards of presentation in order to go for a large number of visitors at all costs. We felt that its annual and growing attendance figure of more than half a million was a justification of its policy in all these respects.

EMYA's Annual Meeting and Presentation Ceremony in April 1997 took place under ideal conditions at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne. The award was presented by Her Majesty Queen Fabiola of Belgium, Patron of the European Museum Forum, which is responsible for the award scheme. ■

The EMYA prize-winner, the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara; the gallery shown is a successful conversion of a former covered market and uses a boutique-style arrangement to present objects.

Professional news

Russian/Dutch Rembrandt restoration project

More than 640 Rembrandt etchings are being sent from the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam where they will be restored by a team of experts from the two institutions, owners of the largest collections of works in the world by the seventeenth-century Dutch master. The Government of the Netherlands has provided the funding for this six-month restoration-and-research programme, the most ambitious single restoration effort of etchings by Rembrandt. The project is organized by the Hermitage/UNESCO Project within the framework of UNESCO's Programme for Central and Eastern European Development (PROCEED). While the collection of Rembrandt etchings bequeathed by nineteenth-century Russian lawyer and collector Dmitri Rovinski to the Hermitage is in the Rijksmuseum, seven curators and researchers from the Russian museum will work with their Dutch colleagues to restore and make X-ray photographs of the works. The programme will also enable experts to re-examine the Rovinski Catalogue, the first comprehensive and fully-illustrated record of Rembrandt's etchings in all their stages. Discussions are underway about a possible exhibition of the Rovinski Collection, the bulk of which has never been seen by the public.

The Hermitage/UNESCO Project is a broad-based co-operative programme concerned with the restoration of the Hermitage buildings, the computerization of the inventory of its 3 million art works and the improvement of its financial operations. Moreover, the project involves expertise exchange for museum staff-members in areas including fund-raising, exhibition management, storage-facility management, etc. It has been made possible largely thanks to a $1.2 million contribution from the Government of the Netherlands.

New museums

The Getty Center, a 45-hectare arts and cultural campus in Los Angeles, will open to the public on 16 December 1997. The six-building centre (which expects to cater to 1.3 million annual visitors) was designed by architect Richard Meier to unite the Getty Museum, institutes and grant programme on one site. It features a new J. Paul Getty Museum and specialized facilities housing the Conservation Institute; Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities; Education Institute for the Arts; Information Institute; and Grant Program. The complex also includes extensive formal and informal gardens, including the 1.2 hectare Central Garden, a living work of art by artist Robert Irwin which changes with the seasons and is set amidst 146 surrounding hectares of land preserved in its natural state. Visitors to the Getty Center will have an opportunity to view the J. Paul Getty Museum's permanent collection of paintings, drawings, illuminated manuscripts, photographs, sculpture and French decorative arts, as well as to enjoy temporary exhibitions. Other public aspects of the Getty Center include the Research Institute's exhibition gallery, resource collections, and reading area within its 750,000-volume research library; a 450-seat multipurpose auditorium; a restaurant and two cafés, and a museum bookshop. The centre's major opening exhibition, Beyond Beauty: Antiquities as Evidence (13 December 1997 to 18 October 1998), will explore not only the beauty of ancient works of art but also the historical, cultural and technological information embedded in these works. Including masterpieces from the museum's Greek and Roman antiquities collection as well as loans of ancient Indian, Peruvian and Chinese works from museums in Los Angeles, Paris and Rome, Beyond Beauty will examine ancient art from the perspective of new ideas in archaeology, conservation, scholarship, education and digital technology.

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A new 30,000 m² national museum is scheduled to open in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in December 1998. It will be planned by a team of Canadian experts which includes the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), Moriyama & Teshima Architects and Lord Cultural Resources Planning & Management Inc., museum consultants. This international private/public sector collaboration is part of the first phase of the redevelopment of Riyadh's central area, undertaken by the Arriyadh Development Authority (ADA) to coincide with the centenary of the capture of the Masmak Fortress by King Abd al-Aziz, which began reunification leading to the founding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The project marks the first time the Royal Ontario Museum has embarked on an international project of this scope. ROM Chairperson Elizabeth Samuel stated that winning the commission 'is an effective response to the provincial government's directive that the ROM become more fiscally independent. The investment in the ROM's collections and research by the people of Ontario has created a valuable resource for Ontarians and Canadians over the decades, which is respected internationally. ROM expertise solicited by other institutions is usually acknowledged through donations to the museum's collections. This is the first time that the leadership provided by ROM staff will be reimbursed with funds, which will support the museum's core operation.' The ADA, which awarded the commission based upon the recommendation of a review committee of international architects, planners and museologists, praised the consortium's proposal for its union of innovation and vision with historical and cultural sensitivity and also cited ROM's suggestions for multimedia as one of the strengths of the proposal.

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Louvre opens web site in Japanese

More than 4,000 visitors consult the Louvre Museum's web site each day, making it one of the most frequently 'hit' museums on the Internet, well ahead of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the British Museum in London or the Prado in Madrid. Since April 1997, a mirror site in Japan has added a fifth language to the site, which already includes English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Conceived as an introduction to the museum, the site is designed for potential visitors as well as those who wish to familiarize themselves with specific aspects of the museum's activities. The 'collections' category is by far the most consulted and includes a selection of works from each of the museum's seven departments. The Japanese site is a copy of the French-based server with additional information of specific interest to Japan, for example, a forthcoming exhibit of seventy-seven masterpieces of eighteenth-century French painting to be held in Tokyo and Kyoto in collaboration with the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper.

For further information:
Web site France: http://www.louvre.fr
Web site Japan: http://www.louvre.or.jp

New publications

Looting in Angkor. One Hundred Missing Objects (new edition). A publication of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in co-operation with the École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris, 1997, 128 pp. (ISBN 92-9012-034-4). Bilingual: English/French. Available from ICOM, UNESCO, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15 (France).

This updated and expanded version of the 1993 edition provides concrete results of the first publication: six of the items shown in the previous edition have been located, allowing ICOM to trace the different steps in the illicit traffic network. Two institutions in the United States, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Honolulu Academy of Arts in Hawaii, were able to identify two items in their collections thanks to the publication; the Metropolitan Museum has returned the early tenth-century head removed from a statue of Shiva in the Phnom Krom temple to the Cambodian authorities in compliance with ICOM's Code of Professional Ethics while negotiations have begun for the return of Honolulu's twelfth-century head of Shiva from the Temple of Bayon, which was initially sold by Sotheby's in London in 1985. Two items have been handed over by art dealers in Paris and London, and negotiations are underway for two items that appeared on the market in the United States. This new edition should lead to further finds and the return of additional works of Khmer art to their rightful places.

museum international

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