

Migration in Museums: Narratives of Diversity in Europe

A Call for Conference Participation

Open to museum professionals, exhibition curators, researchers from the humanities and social sciences, representatives from immigrant communities and artists.

organized by

**Network Migration in Europe e. V.,
ICOM Europe (International Council of Museums),
Centre de Documentation sur les Migrations Humaines, Dudelange (Luxemburg)**

in cooperation with the following six Berlin-based museums

- Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen/Museum of Film and Television**
- Jüdisches Museum Berlin/Jewish Museum Berlin**
- Jugendmuseum Schöneberg/Youth Museum Schöneberg**
- Kreuzberg Museum**
- Museum Neukölln**
- Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin (Märkisches Museum)/City Museum Berlin**

Date: October 23-25, 2008

Location: Berlin (in participating museums)

The project is supported within the framework of the Berlin *Hauptstadtkultur-fonds*

Topic

Questions of immigration and integration have become key issues in contemporary European intellectual and political debates. In the wake of European societies' ongoing social and economic incorporation of millions of immigrants and refugees, questions pertaining to the cultural representation of these processes are increasingly emerging. Debates about the interconnectedness of immigration, history and memory, as well as on commemorative practices in diverse societies are gaining momentum. As a consequence, cultural institutions are challenged by rethinking and the

possibility of reconceptualizing their work. This is particularly true for (historical) museums and their narratives. Museums in Europe currently encounter a threefold challenge. First, they face a new social structure of visitors: more and more people of immigrant origin have become an important target group as European societies diversify. Second, the predominant, and often prevailing, national frameworks and the national historical narratives used in historical exhibition have been questioned by immigration and the challenge it poses to national master narratives. Third, the history of immigration itself becomes a rising field for historical reflection, research and commemoration, thus diversifying the landscape of historical studies, historical exhibitions and museums.

Scope and Goals of the Conference

The conference will bring together museum professionals, exhibition curators, researchers from the humanities and social sciences, (cultural) representatives from immigrant communities and artists. The format will transcend the traditional format of an (academic) conference. Next to a common opening and a public concluding session, participants will intensively work in six different workshops. Each workshop comprises 10 to 12 participants and will last for 1.5 days. The goal of the workshops is to initiate a European process of reflection and discussion on migration in museums in order to generate new ideas, new concepts, new narratives and new perspectives. We do not expect lengthy papers from participants, but rather short and sharp contributions for intensive discussions enabling new interpretations, which will confront established patterns of thought and practice and will enrich our imagination in the field. The minutes of the workshops will be the basis for a publication to be launched in 2009.

Framework of the Conference

The conference will be the concluding event for a research and interview project with immigrant artists (film makers and writers) in ten European cities (Amsterdam, Athens, Berlin, Istanbul, London, Luxemburg, Madrid, Oslo, Paris, Warsaw). The interviews will focus on the reflections of these intellectuals on history and historical narratives, be it their own life histories as immigrants, be it their reflection upon the history of their countries of origin/destination, be it European history, be it immigration history. These interviews will result in a webpage and a documentary. Moreover, the film footage is planned to work as intellectual stimulus for the conference and workshops, and it will be shown in the participating six museums from October 23 to 25. The interviewed artists will be invited to Berlin as participants in the conference and workshops.

Application

Applications for participation are welcome through the deadline of **May 30, 2008**. Your application should include a mini essay/sketch of ideas (a max. of 600 words), a

short biographical note (not more than two pages) and a list of (selected) publications, curated exhibitions or other relevant work in the field of immigration and/or museums. The essay should reflect upon and discuss the following question:

"How to represent and/or exhibit diversity in Europe?"

The text can be a classical mini-essay or a sketch of ideas for a cultural project in a museum or an exhibition. It can also touch upon wider questions and travel beyond the museum's walls. Versions of these essays (though not in an elaborated academic form) will serve as input statements for the workshops in order to trigger discussions.

Applications will be considered on a competitive basis. In addition to 40 invited speakers, 25 to 30 places are open to respondents to this Call for Participation. Financial support for the participants is available to subsidize travel and accommodation expenses. It can be granted upon request.

For further information, please visit the website <http://www.network-migration.org/workshop2008> or contact us via E-mail (Migration.Museums@web.de). Applications should be sent to the given email address by **May 30, 2008**. The selection committee will choose and notify the participants by the end of June 2008.