

Proposal for the International Museum Day 2011:

MUSEUMS AND MEMORY

ICOM - in cooperation with the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

Museums keep in their collections numerous documents that are basic to the memory of the communities we live in. Many of them are fragile, some endangered. In any case, they need special care and conservation - and sometimes more money for attending to both. The International Museum Day 2011 should direct public attention to these basics of our collective memory, to the fragility of its carriers, and heed the importance and meaning of their contents.

So visitors may come to better understand the value of documents and they may be willing to help care about their contents and their conservation and the significance these have for both communities and individuals. Museums should rouse awareness in visitors about the necessities when dealing with documents (conservation, mediation, exhibitions, digitization, etc.). Students, young people generally, artists, could react to the documents in very different ways as museums do keep, as material evidence of our memory, a great variety of documents. Correspondingly, the subject would have to be mediated in different ways respecting the diversity of museums and of regional and local traditions.

To improve this worldwide action, it might be sensible to cooperate with the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme (World Documentary Heritage), for its mission comes very close to the tasks just outlined. Thus, ICOM would follow "Our Global Vision", i.e. Strategic Objective 2: "Provide leadership in advocating the value of heritage". On the one hand, this might offer a very good opportunity for all ICOM bodies and members to join in and concentrate efforts on one goal, on the other hand it would help make the International Museum Day not just a joint venture involving museums but one with UNESCO as well: for the benefit of the International Museum Day as an outstanding ICOM activity and for the views, tasks and visions the International Council of Museums shares with UNESCO concerning the heritage and the memory of peoples and cultures around the world.

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