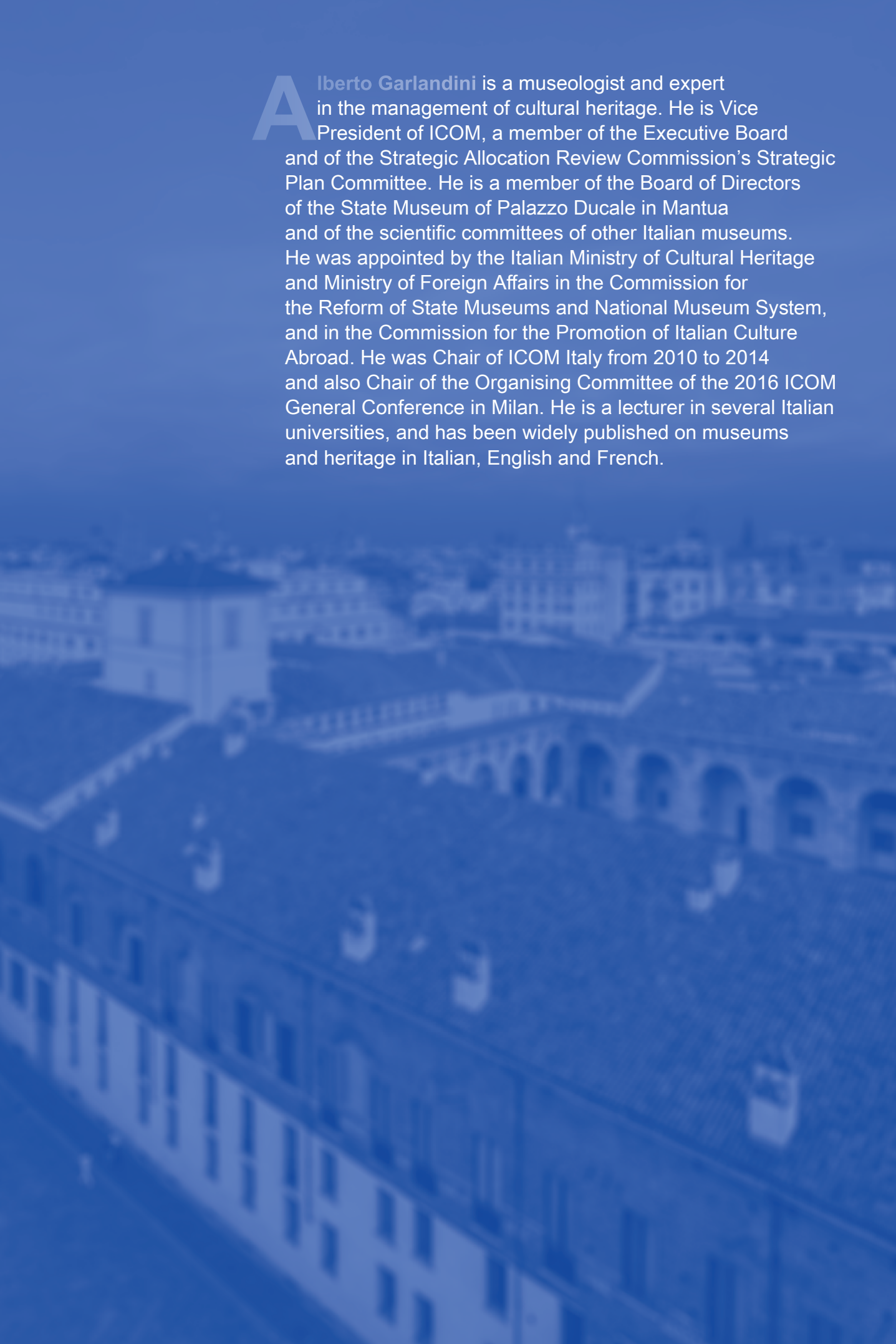




**ICOM Milan**  
**2016:**  
**The New Responsibilities**  
**of Museums towards**  
**Landscapes**

**by Alberto Garlandini**



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An ICOM Triennial General Conference is a unique experience, both professionally and personally, and the occasion for thousands of colleagues working in the museum sector from around the world to come together, exchange ideas and practices, build projects and collaboration networks, and weave new relationships. International museology can teach us new concepts and solutions; its impact can reach diverse audience types around the world.

This text describes the discussions and results of the 24th ICOM General Conference, held in Milan from 3 to 9 July 2016. The first part describes the Conference attendance and programme. The second section presents the issues addressed by keynote speakers and panellists. The third part explains the theme of the Conference, *Museums and Cultural Landscapes*, and the discussion that developed before and during the Conference, both in Italy and within ICOM's international network. The last part deals with the resolutions and ICOM strategic plan for 2016-2022 approved at the end of the Conference, and the results of the election of the ICOM governing bodies for the 2016-2019 mandate.

## Participation and programme of the ICOM 24th General Conference

The ICOM triennial General Conference had been held in Italy once before: in 1953, from 6 to 12 July, in Milan, Bergamo and Genoa. The Third General Conference discussed the museums outside main urban centres and in developing countries, and museum architecture in modern urban design.

On 5 June 2012, ICOM Italy's candidacy to host the 24th General Conference in Milan at MICO (Milan's Congress Centre and one of the largest conference centres in Europe) was overwhelmingly approved by the ICOM Advisory Council and confirmed unanimously by the Executive Council Board<sup>1</sup>. Before deciding on the host city, ICOM had already chosen K.I.T. Group as the Professional Conference Organiser that would be entrusted with the conference organisation and its budget.<sup>2</sup> In November 2012, the conference's Italian Organising Committee was formed. Under the presidency of Alberto Garlandini, the Committee consisted of ICOM Italy, the Italian Ministry of Culture the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Lombardy Region, the Municipality of Milan, the Italian Permanent Delegation for UNESCO, the Lombardy Regional University Committee, the Milan Chamber of Commerce, the Fiera Milano Congressi, and the Intesa San Paolo banking group.

On 4 August 2013, ICOM President Hans-Martin Hinz and Alberto Garlandini as Chair of the Italian Organising Committee and Chair of ICOM Italy, signed the Framework Agreement that articulated the mutual commitments for the organisation of ICOM 2016, adhering to contractual relations previously established between ICOM and K.I.T. Group. The final Conference budget was balanced: 30 per cent of the expenses were covered by subsidies from the Italian national and regional governments, 44 per cent by participant registration fees, and 26 per cent by the support of the Professional Museum Fair private sponsors and exhibitors.

ICOM Milan 2016 was the most attended conference in the history of ICOM. It counted about 3,450 registered participants, who were joined by 300 volunteers and several hundred colleagues who participated in the events that were held outside the conference centre, such as the Forum of Ecomuseums and Community Museums. Given all the registered and unregistered participants, it is fair to estimate that the conference was attended by over 4,000 participants. Registered participants came from 130 countries, with the largest number of participants from Italy (745 registrations), followed by China, Germany, France, USA, UK, Japan, Russia, the Netherlands and Switzerland.<sup>3</sup> Sixty-five per cent of the participants came from Europe, 20 per cent from Asia, six per cent from North America, eight per cent from Latin America and the Caribbean countries, three and a half per cent from Africa and 0.5 per cent from Oceania.

The Organising Committee, ICOM and Getty Foundation secured 140 travel grants for participants wishing to attend the Conference. Other international grants were given by a number of ICOM International and National Committees. More than 100 additional grants for Italian participants were offered by the Italian Ministry of Culture, the Lombardy region, and the Emilia Romagna region. Over 300 polyglot volunteers worked for ICOM Milan 2016. Their passion and commitment was a significant factor in the success of the Conference.<sup>4</sup>

The Conference programme was available in print, and continuously updated on the Conference website. It was also made available interactively through the online session planner and the mobile application.<sup>5</sup> The first day of the Conference was dedicated to the sessions of ICOM's Advisory Council and the meetings of the Chairs of National and International Committees. Four thousand people attended the opening ceremony in the MICO conference centre, which included speeches by then ICOM President Hans-Martin Hinz; Dario Franceschini, the Italian Minister of Culture; Beppe Sala, Mayor of Milan; Francesco Bandarin, UNESCO Assistant Director General for Culture; Alberto Garlandini, Chair of the ICOM Milan 2016 Organising Committee; Cristina Cappellini, Assessor for Culture, Identity and Autonomy for the Lombardy Region; and Daniele Jalla, then Chair of ICOM Italy. The Ceremony finished with two speeches dedicated to ICOM's 70th anniversary: François Mairesse, Chair of ICOM's International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM), presented the



Fig. 1. A visit of the Castle Sforzesco for the opening party. ©ICOM

multimedia exhibition *Where ICOM From*, and Bernice Murphy presented the publication entitled *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*.<sup>6</sup> The exhibition *Where ICOM from* was inaugurated after the Ceremony. ICOM's Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assemblies, Advisory Council and Executive Board sessions took place during the last day of the Conference, and in the evening the closing ceremony and party was attended by 1,500 people.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the hundreds of meetings organised in the MICO Conference Centre, on Thursday 7 July, ICOM's International Committees held off-site meetings, hosted by museums, universities and cultural institutions in Milan, the Lombardy region and adjacent regions. On Friday 8 July, participants were offered 40 free excursions.<sup>8</sup> With the support of local partners, participants could attend 48 high-quality pre- and post-conference tours (from one to six days) in Italy and two in Slovenia.

Thanks to the Italian Ministry of Culture, on 3 July (the first day of the Conference), free access to Italian museums was granted to celebrate ICOM Milan 2016. The special event *Festa dei musei* (Museum Day) was the Italian way of welcoming conference participants and meet with locals. Each night during the conference was animated by dozens of events and special openings in Milan were organised by museums, private and public cultural institutions and universities. The first main event was the opening party at Castello Sforzesco on the evening of 4 July: more than 3,000 participants attended a welcome dinner, a concert, a show and visited the 10 museums and cultural institutions in the Castle (Fig. 1). On 5 July, the Open Night at the National Museum of Science and Technology welcomed 1,000 people for a free special night event. On the evening of 6 July, the Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo gave a concert in Milan's cathedral, the Duomo, to more than 3,000 participants (Fig. 2). On 7 July, participants were offered two special night openings of the 17th century Palazzo di Brera and

of the Gallerie d'Italia. Leonardo's *Last Supper* was free to access all week. Over 100 participants booked an opera and a ballet offered at a special discount price by the Teatro Alla Scala.

One of these major events during the conference was the Professional Museum Fair, which hosted 111 exhibitors from around the world in an exhibition space of 1,218 sq metres, known as the MICO. The conference was sponsored by 19 private sponsors.<sup>9</sup> A tremendous effort was made to ensure online visibility: the use of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter enabled the organising committee to reach out to a wider audience.<sup>10</sup> The conference website was available in all three official ICOM languages, as well as Italian. According to participant feedback, the conference was mostly seen as a success.<sup>11</sup>



Fig. 2. A unique experience: the Duomo rooftops. © ICOM

## Keynote speakers and panellists

The conference included five keynote speeches, three panel discussions and the ICOM 2016 Memorial Lectures were held. Galina Alekseeva, Chair of the ICOM International Committee for Literary Museums (ICLM) presented the Turkish Nobel Prize winner in Literature, Orhan Pamuk, who—in a video message from his Istanbul-based Museum of Innocence—evoked his 2008 novel, *The Museum of Innocence*.<sup>12</sup> Both were inspired by the Bagatti Valsecchi Museum in Milan.<sup>13</sup> His museum received the 2014 European Museum of the Year Award. In his speech, he voiced his hopes that museums would ‘get closer to people and show the individuality of each person. The aim of museums must be to recreate a world of single human beings, the same human beings who anguished under tyrannical oppression for centuries’.

US artist Christo was introduced by Luigi Di Corato, Director of Fondazione Brescia Musei.<sup>14</sup> Christo spoke of several Land Art projects that he and his partner Jeanne-Claude realised, from *The Umbrellas* set in Japan and the US, and *The Pont Neuf Wrapped* in Paris, to his latest work, *The Floating Piers on Lake Iseo* in Lombardy. A lively discussion between Christo and the audience ensued, with questions on the nature of his art, his creative process and the freedom of his approach to art. He stated that ‘[u]nlike much of contemporary art, ours is allergic to propaganda. The innocence of our art lies in the fact that it is sponsored by no one’. He explained the primary tenets of his vision: ‘Why wrap? To make the details disappear and just show the structure of the building, interacting with the natural elements’.

Italian architect Michele De Lucchi, a prominent figure in movements such as Cavart, Alchimia and Memphis, was introduced by Claudio Salsi, Director of the City of Milan’s museums.<sup>15</sup> De Lucchi spoke about his role as designer and scenographer for a number of museums, such as the Triennale Design Museum in Milan, the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome, the Neues Museum in Berlin and the recent Museo della Pietà Rondanini in Milan. He explained that ‘[e]ach scenography requires a continuous dialogue with the museum. Michelangelo’s *Pietà* is displayed alone in a room whose entrance led visitors to directly encounter the back of the statue, inviting them to walk around to the front’, and also highlighted the importance of taking care of our environment, for ‘the most important museum we have is the natural landscape of our world’.

ICOM President Hans-Martin Hinz presented Nkandu Luo, Minister for Gender and Child Development of Zambia.<sup>16</sup> Luo declared: 'History's first museum was in Africa, in Alexandria. Africa, nevertheless, has not kept pace with the role of museums and the protection of its heritage. Negative interpretations of the role and significance of museums have inhibited their growth in most developing countries. Museums are essential for both social and economic development. Museums represent the soul and the cultural richness of a country.' She then recalled several cases of African cultural goods that are now in European museums, and insisted on the need to return them to their countries of origin.

## Panel discussions

The first panel discussion focused on the following question: What does the new UNESCO Recommendation on the Promotion and Protection of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society mean for museums?<sup>18</sup> Francesco Bandarin, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture, and François Mairesse, Professor at the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris, explained the genesis of the Recommendation: a close cooperation between ICOM and UNESCO led to its drafting. They also highlighted the importance of the UNESCO High Level Forum on Museums that was held in November 2016 in Shenzhen, China, to discuss the implementation of the Recommendation. Paola Marini, Director of the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, Italy, and Tereza Scheiner, a professor working at UNIRIO, one of the largest universities in Brazil and, at the time, the Vice President of ICOM, highlighted the positive impact that the Recommendation will have on the management of museums and the development of museology.

The second panel focused on the ways in which museums can contribute to countering illicit traffic in cultural goods. France Desmarais, from the ICOM Secretariat, and Ieng Srong, Chief of UNESCO's Section for Movable Heritage and Museums, emphasised the importance of international cooperation against the trafficking of antiquities, which also provides financial resources for terrorist groups. Eric Dorfman, Director of the Carnegie Museum of

Australian economist David Throsby, theorist of cultural economics and capital, was introduced by ICOM Vice-President, George Abungu.<sup>17</sup> Throsby pointed out that 'the value of a museum cannot be only measurable in terms of economics, as the principal characteristic of a museum is its non-use value. Museums are economic institutions too, and are true cultural industries, whose value can be estimated on the basis of the impact on local economies. If we want to assess the public value of art and culture we have to sum up two terms: the embodied economic value and the immaterial cultural value.'

Natural History in Pittsburgh, US, and Markus Hilgert, Director of the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, Germany, highlighted how important it was, in that matter, for museums to be vigilant on provenance issues. Both also emphasised the need to respect the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* and the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Natural History Museums*.

The theme of the third panel was 'The Social Role of Museums: New Migrations, New Challenges.' The panel was moderated by BBC journalist Brenda Emmanus. One of the participants, Giusi Nicolini, Mayor of Lampedusa and Linosa, said: 'Lampedusa is well known for tragic stories of shipwrecks. To enhance the value of integration and welcoming we founded the Archeological Museum of Lampedusa, which shows how our island has always been a bridge between continents.' David Fleming, President of the Federation of International Human Rights Museums, spoke of social justice in museums and museums as new social communication channels. Robin Hirst, Director of the Museums Victoria in Australia, highlighted that 'the people of Australia are all immigrants or descended from immigrants, except for three per cent, who are Aboriginals. We have transformed our museums, which are moving from observers to participants, from immigration to cultural diversity'. The Chair of ICOM's International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (CAMOC), Marlen Moulou,

described museums as a place where we curate human relationships, trace current social changes, discuss diversity and share experiences and knowledge'.

The 2016 ICOM Memorial Lectures were dedicated to the memory of two Syrian museum colleagues who were killed by terrorists while on duty: Qassem Abdallah Yehya (1978–2015) and Khaled al Asaad (1934–2015). The ICOM 70 Years' Jubilee Lecture on 'An Ethical Vision of Nature, Culture, Heritage, and Museums' continuing social mission' was given by Bernice L. Murphy, who offered a historic overview of ICOM's core vision and purposes. Pointing at today's fast-moving world of change, she called for the greater effectiveness of museums in their humanitarian agenda. Nowadays, she concluded, the international museum community faces the challenge of generating innovative energies to the ethical vision that was at the heart of ICOM's constitutional foundation in 1946. The 4th Alma S. Wittlin Lecture on 'Museums and Changing Cultural Landscapes' was delivered by René Rivard, and the 11th Stephen E. Weil Lecture on 'Revisiting Weil's Cabinet of Curiosity', by Cristina Vannini.

## Museums and Cultural Landscapes

### Discussions in Italy

Italian museologists have been exploring the theme that ICOM Italy proposed for the Conference for decades. In the 1970s, Andrea Emiliani (1974) wrote with foresight about the relationships between museums and communities and the territorial context from which their collections originate. In 1980, André Chastel (1980) called Italy 'a museum of museums'—brilliantly capturing a unique characteristic of our country, where 'thanks to an exemplary interlocking mechanism, the collection is housed in a building set in a city, and all three forms of museum dialogue harmoniously together' (Chastel 1980, p. 4). This system of tangible and intangible interrelations is the lifeblood of Italian museums.

In 2013, ICOM Italy organised the first national seminar in Nuoro, in collaboration with the Higher Ethnographic Institute of Sardinia. In 2014, it held the International Conference on Cultural Landscapes in Siena, organised by the Tuscany Region and Fondazione Musei Senesi (Siena Museum Foundation). This conference was attended by leading representatives of ICOM and UNESCO and produced the Siena Charter—a document that summarises the ideas and opinions articulated by Italian museum professionals: 'The Italian landscape is the country where we live and it is an inalienable part of our identity.'<sup>19</sup>

In 2015, ICOM Italy organised an international meeting on 'Museums, Territorial Systems and Urban Landscapes' in Brescia, in collaboration with Fondazione Brescia Musei and Lombardy Region, with more than 150 participants and 60 papers from 17 nations. In 2015, ICOM Italy, the Italian UNESCO National Commission and local and regional authorities organised a conference on 'Museums and UNESCO World Heritage Sites' in Catania, Sicily. ICOM Italy has promoted a national census of the best museum initiatives involving landscape, and the most interesting experiments were presented and awarded during the Conference.

### Theoretical backdrop to the ICOM debate

For ICOM, discussing museums and cultural landscapes was tantamount to facing the great challenges of the contemporary world. It was a scientific and cultural commitment, but also an institutional and political one. It was a museological challenge because it proposed new roles for museums, but also because it imposed new forms of interpretation and heritage exhibition. In addition, it was an ethical challenge because it defined new responsibilities for museum professionals and increased the universal value of the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*.

ICOM refers to the concept of landscape expressed by UNESCO's World Heritage Cultural Landscapes (see Mitchell, Roessler and Ticaud 2009) and to the European Landscape Convention.<sup>20</sup> ICOM shares the UNESCO guidelines for the recognition of World Heritage Cultural Landscapes, in particular the two following definitions: '[l]andscape is designed and created intentionally by man' and '[l]andscape can evolve from an initial social, economic, administrative, religious imperative to its present form by association with and in response to its natural environment. It can retain an active social role associated with the traditional way of life. Landscape can have religious, artistic or cultural associations with the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent. Landscape, whether of aesthetic value or not, provides the setting for our daily lives.'

Even the European Conference on Landscape contains definitions that correspond to the philosophy of ICOM: 'Landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures and it is a basic component of European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and consolidation of the European identity'. 'Landscape' thus designates an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. 'Landscape quality objective' means, for a specific landscape, the formulation of the aspirations of the public with regard to the landscape features of their surroundings by competent public authorities. 'Landscape protection' refers to actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity'.



Fig. 3. Conference participants gathering for the closing ceremony at the Palazzo dell'Arte-Triennale. © ICOM

### Cultural landscape from the ICOM perspective

For ICOM, landscape is a complex network of relationships, a polysemic concept that integrates the physical, natural and geographic aspects of a territory with the anthropological, social, economic and cultural aspects. Landscapes are material—urban and rural, maritime and mountain, industrial and agricultural—and they are also abstract—sensory and mental, of memory and conflict, intercultural and intergenerational.

ICOM respects diversity and promotes a holistic concept of landscape, inclusive of the different cultural approaches. It refers to 'landscapes' in the plural because diversity is their primary feature, and their perception and conception changes from one country to another and from one language to another. The meaning that people assign to landscape depends on their diverse traditions: lifestyle, religious beliefs, socio-economic and political organisation. The adjective 'cultural' was added because landscapes are a creation of man, the result of his constant interaction with nature. According to ICOM, a cultural landscape surrenders its purely aesthetic value and—beyond its traditional representations—becomes the physical, social and symbolic context in which humans live. Landscape is the indissoluble result of nature and culture, past and present, and part of the cultural and natural heritage, to be preserved, interpreted and managed.





Fig. 4. After the closing ceremony, visitors enjoy the ongoing exhibitions at the Palazzo dell'Arte-Triennale. © ICOM

### Landscape in ICOM's strategy

Before the conference, I was lucky enough to participate in debates throughout the world, in Europe and in Asia, Africa, Latin and North America. I had the opportunity to listen to ideas and experiences of colleagues with different backgrounds and, in turn, I presented the Italian point of view. The keyword of the international debate was 'diversity': the diversity of museums, cultural identities, and landscapes. Museums stem from landscapes, of which they form an expression and an important part. Museum collections cannot be explained and interpreted without considering the landscapes in which they are located and, conversely, landscapes cannot be recognised and valued without the help of museum collections. Museums, like landscapes, are made up of relations between place and space, objects and people, physical evidence and symbols that should undergo interdisciplinary studies. Around the world, communities are steadily undergoing rapid transformations: economic, social, and cultural. Museums are a part of these transformations. They continue to preserve and promote their collections, but have new responsibilities to the communities they represent, to the territory from which their collections originate and to the landscapes surrounding them. Contemporary museums use new digital languages and address new audiences, offer new interpretations and new presentations of their collections. They travel far and wide to manage tangible and intangible heritage spread over vast areas. They engage in intercultural dialogue and the construction of new

cultural identities, they promote participation and inclusion, they help citizens and communities to open up to what is new and different.

The *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* requires that '[m]useums preserve, interpret and promote the natural and cultural inheritance of humanity' (Key Principle 1) and that '[m]useum collections reflect the cultural and natural heritage of the communities from which they have been derived. As such, they have a character [...], which may include strong affinities with national, regional, local, ethnic, religious or political identity. It is important therefore that museum policy is responsive to this situation' (Key Principle 6).

**Museums, like landscapes, are made up of relations between place and space, objects and people, physical evidence and symbols that should undergo interdisciplinary studies.**

How can museums become centres of interpretation of the places and communities from which they originate? How can museums help communities to preserve the landscape, promote sustainable development, and increase tourism without endangering the cultural and natural heritage? What bodies can be invested with the responsibility of the cultural and environmental heritage spread throughout the territory? Which actors can provide adequate and reliable knowledge, preservation, and communication? Society must take care of cultural landscapes; cultural institutions and museums must also play an important role. A vital reference is the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, approved in Faro in 2005.<sup>21</sup> This Convention has proposed the establishment of 'heritage communities', consisting of 'people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations' (Art. 2b of the Convention). In alignment with the Faro Convention, museums should encourage the establishment of 'landscape communities' and involve public institutions, citizens and associations in the enhancement of landscapes.

## ICOM International Committees discussions

Besides the separate meetings and conferences in their specialised domains, all ICOM International Committees addressed the theme 'Museums and Cultural Landscapes'. For example, ICOFOM, CAMOC and the International Movement for a New Museology (MINOM) organised a symposium on museums and urban landscapes with ten speakers who focused on the most important challenges that cities and museums could face around the concept of landscape. ICOM's International Committee for Museums of Fine Arts (ICFA) and its International Committee for Collecting (COMCOL) focused on collecting fine arts outside the museums and the meaning of heritage in public spaces. Art in the public space, such as statues in squares and parks, accumulates social significance that is not usually related to its historical significance. Museums should promote the preservation of art in public spaces in collaboration with communities and stakeholders. ICOM's International Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC), its International Committee for Museum Security (ICMS) and the Disaster Risk Management Committee (DRMC) discussed disaster risk reduction for museums and gave examples of how they can provide advice and assistance in emergency situations. Museum professionals should take responsibility for saving cultural objects during conflicts and contact the national Blue Shield.<sup>22</sup> ICOM's International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography (ICME) discussed 'Curating and Engaging: Peoples, Places and Entanglements in an Age of Migrations', and focused on how ethnographic museums can overcome cultural divides, facilitate mutual understanding and social cohesion, and represent multiple cultures in contemporary societies.

## The contribution of ecomuseums and community museums

The Milan Conference was also attended by the International Network of Ecomuseums and Community Museums, which organised a seminar with ICME at the Congress Centre and a Forum at the Milan Polytechnic.

Ecomuseums emerged out of the opposition to 'traditional' museums, much like New Museology emerged out of from the opposition to 'traditional' museology. The point of departure of the ecomuseum stance was a criticism of the theory and practice of museums, which were understood as closed institutions, run by experts extraneous to the context around them, focused on collections of material items. Diagonally opposed to the latter concept, ecomuseums are designed as an alternative tool to engage communities in activities that heighten their awareness of the value of their intangible cultural heritage and the development of new community identities that serve local development.

The 1972 Santiago de Chile Roundtable on the Development and the Role of Museums in the Contemporary World brought attention to the social role of museums and the need for a 'democratisation of culture' (see do Nascimento, Trampe and Asunção dos Santos 2012).<sup>23</sup> It proposed the idea of a new holistic museum integrated with a multidisciplinary approach, a 'society-serving museum' capable of showing visitors 'their place in the world and make them aware of their problems, as individuals and as members of the society'.

The Santiago Conference defined the museum under a new light, that is, as an institution in close cooperation with local communities, committed to promote their development and improve their quality of life. Since then, ecomuseums, community museums and ethnographic museums around the world have promoted material culture and anthropological disciplines, and contributed to the definition and practice of the new social role of museums. Today, to consider museums solely as conservation institutions is a mistake. What characterises many contemporary museums is the strong link with cities, regions and communities. Social and community activities are a fertile breeding ground for meetings between museums and ecomuseums.

The Ecomuseums and Community Museums Forum in ICOM Milan 2016 addressed new development prospects for global ecomuseology. At the end of the Forum, ecomuseums approved a document that contributed to the ICOM discussion on cultural landscapes. In this document, ecomuseums and community museums remind us that:

*[e]comuseums and community museums are the landscape. They have always been the landscape, since they were born, because they deal with the tangible and intangible, living diffused heritage. Since they were born, they have chosen a transdisciplinary approach, experimented and tested in real life. This innovative approach has inspired more traditional museums and institutions at any level. Ecomuseums exist all over the world. They are willing to cooperate with museums at local, national and global levels to engage with the new challenges emerging from the debates of the 24th General Conference, on Museums and Cultural Landscapes.<sup>24</sup>*

The Ecomuseums Forum tightened the relationship between ecomuseology and museology and promoted greater cooperation between museums and ecomuseums. In this scenario, there is a convergence, ideally and operationally, between the UNESCO Recommendations on Museums in 1960 and 2015, the Declaration of Santiago de Chile in 1972, and the ethical principles and strategies of ICOM. It is now up to ICOM and the network of ecomuseums to give substance to these commitments to cooperate, locally, nationally and internationally.

## ICOM General Assembly decisions

### The Resolution on the responsibility of museums regarding landscape

At the end of the Conference, the 31st ICOM General Assembly adopted a Resolution on the Responsibility of Museums Towards Landscape.<sup>25</sup> The resolution begins with the statement that '[m]useums and landscapes are an essential element of humanity's physical, natural, social and symbolic environment. Landscape is a highly complex network, defined by relationships between social and natural elements. The richness of landscape arises from its diversity.'

Museums are part of the landscape and collect material and intangible evidences connected to the environment in which they are located. Museum collections cannot be understood and interpreted without reference to landscape. Museums have a responsibility to the landscape around them and this implies a dual commitment: on the one hand, it requires the *sustainable* management of cultural and natural heritage. On the other hand, it requires museums to be attentive to the images and representations of the landscape. The resolution points out that the concept of 'cultural landscape' incorporates not only the physical size of a territory, but also a broad spectrum of intangible factors, from languages to lifestyles, from religion to different forms of social life, from technologies to forms of production, from various power relations to intergenerational exchange. This concept of landscape also includes soundscapes as well as the olfactory, sensory and mental dimensions to landscape. Landscapes of memory and armed conflict are also included.

Thanks to the skills of museum professionals, museums help to increase the awareness of the communities and make decisions about landscape transformations. Bearing in mind the importance of the UNESCO Conventions, the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* and the *ICOM-NATHIST Code of Ethics for Natural History Museums*, the ICOM General Assembly recommended that: *Museums should extend their mission from a legal and operational point of view and manage buildings and sites of cultural landscape as 'extended museums', offering protection and accessibility to such heritage in close relationship with communities. Museums contribute to the knowledge of the values of landscapes, but also to the development of symbolic frameworks that determine them, so that the notion of cultural landscape becomes an instrument for the assessment of what needs to be protected and handed on to future generations, and what will go instead questioned and modified* (31st General Assembly of ICOM. Milan, Italy, 2016, Resolution No. 1: The Responsibility of Museums Towards Landscape).

ICOM is committed to prioritising cultural landscapes in its own key instruments, such as the ICOM museum definition and Statutes, as well as the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*. Besides the Landscape Resolution, the ICOM General Assembly approved three other resolutions: Resolution No. 2 on Inclusion, Intersectionality and Gender Mainstreaming in Museums; Resolution No. 3, on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage During and After Armed Conflict, Acts of Terrorism, Revolutions and Civil Strife, and Resolution No. 4 on the Promotion and Protection of Cultural Objects on International Loan.

### The ICOM Strategic Plan for 2016-2020

At the end of the Conference, the ICOM General Assemblies approved the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and changes to the ICOM Statutes. The new Strategic Plan updates ICOM's mission and commits the association to strengthening solidarity with colleagues around the world, to promote democracy, defend cultural heritage from criminal and terrorist attacks, ensure better operation and develop more effective international action. The three key words that describe what ICOM's commitment will be over the next six years are *independence, integrity* and *professionalism*. Independence is the true protection of ICOM members who act in difficult situations, in fighting illicit trafficking of cultural goods, or protecting heritage against terrorist attacks. ICOM is a non-governmental organisation that works with governments and intergovernmental organisations, but acts independently from governments and without any political interest. ICOM operates on the principle of integrity, in accordance with its Code of Ethics and according to scientific standards of professionalism. With the new Strategic Plan, ICOM makes a commitment to enhance and promote museums and strengthen ICOM's international commitment to defend the profession.

At the end of the Conference the governing bodies of ICOM were elected for the three-year period from 2016 to 2019.<sup>26</sup> Suay Aksoy was elected President of ICOM; An Laishun and Alberto Garlandini were elected Vice Presidents, and Regine Schultz was elected new Chair of the ICOM Advisory Board. The Closing Ceremony took place at the Palazzo dell'Arte-Triennale on the evening of 9 of July (Figs. 3 and 4). It was the occasion for the Italian organisers to hand over the ICOM flag to their Japanese counterparts, who will organise the next General Conference in Kyoto in 2019, thus continuing a long-standing ICOM tradition. The theme of the 2019 conference will be 'Museums as Cultural Hubs: The Future of Tradition'.

## NOTES

1 Apart from Milan, the cities of Moscow (Russian Federation) and Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) had applied to be host cities for ICOM 2016.

2 K.I.T. Group is an international Professional Conference Organiser (PCO) based in Berlin, with headquarters in many countries.

3 Registered participants received a free weekly pass for the public transport system in Milan, from the City of Milan, a free weekly pass to use bicycles by BIKEME, offered by Clear Channel, a conference bag that included five books published for the conference: France Desmarais, (ed). 2015. *Countering Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods. The Global Challenge of Protecting the World's Heritage*. Paris: ICOM; Bernice L. Murphy, (ed). 2016. *Museum, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*. London: Routledge; Salvatore Sutura, (ed). 2016. *ICOM Italy. Dalla nascita al 2016*, Sienna: Cantagalli Valentina Galloni and Margherita Sani, (eds). *Musei e Paesaggi Culturali. Museums and Cultural Landscapes in Emilia-Romagna*, IBC – Istituto per i Beni Artistici, Culturali e Naturali – Regione Emilia Romagna, ICOM Italy, Polo Museale Emilia Romagna MIBACT, in collaboration with Cineca and Mode, 2016; *Capire L'Italia, I Musei. L'Italia Museo Dei Musei*. ICOM Italy: Touring editore.

4 Among these contributors are Salvatore Sutura and Giovanni Cella of ICOM Italy, the Conference Project Managers Barbara Landi and Paolo Galli Zugaro, ICOM Italy Secretary Valeria Arrabito, with the assistance of Chiara Elli and two interns, Nunzia Ferrante and Francesca Belardinelli

5 Half of the participants downloaded and used the mobile application that had 39,000 visits, 1,400 push recipients and an average usage time of two minutes and three seconds.

6 The exhibition was financed by the ICOM Endowment Fund, with students from the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. It shows how ICOM has grown into an international organisation from 1946 to date. ICOM's main activities and upcoming challenges were addressed in stories from ICOM members.

7 After the closing ceremony, participants visited the Triennale Design Museum, the 21st International Triennial Exhibitions for architecture, visual and decorative arts, design, fashion and audio/video production and attended a party at the Triennale gardens.

8 The organisers offered 15 free excursions in Milan, nine in Lombardy, six in Piedmont, four in Emilia Romagna and in Tuscany and two in Veneto.

9 The eleven Bronze Sponsors were Arteria, Artis Vivendi, Capitale Cultura S.A.S., ETT S.P.A., Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, Fulldome.pro, Meyvaerty, Museum Manufactory, Rsf, Soyo Technology Development Co. Ltd., YXLON International GmbH plus two other sponsors Haroutunian Foundation and GO Company.

10 The Facebook page reached 4,231 likes on July 20 and had an average daily number of 1,500 users, with peaks of 10,000 from 50 countries during the conference. A Twitter account was created and Milano 2016 was the trend topic on 4 July.

11 At the end of the Conference, 1,500 people completed a satisfaction questionnaire. They were asked to evaluate the conference programme, the Social Events Programme, networking opportunities, keynote speaker selection the opening and closing ceremony, and the excursions. The answer choice was either 'Excellent', 'Very Good', 'Good' or 'Adequate', 'Poor' and 'Unsatisfactory'. Up to 95 per cent of the answers were 'Excellent', 'Very Good' or 'Good' with a great majority of the first two.

12 The full video of the Pamuk speech is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCdWsbEPnS> [accessed 13 March 2017].

13 The Museum of Innocence is both a novel by Orhan Pamuk (published in 2008) and a museum he created, which opened in Spring 2012. The novel describes life in Istanbul between 1950 and 2000 through memories and flashbacks centred around two families. The museum presents what the novel's characters used, wore, heard, saw, collected and dreamt of.

14 The full video of the Christo speech is available here : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGnORLIwbAM> [accessed 13 March 2017].

15 The full video of the De Lucchi speech is available here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c\\_cSb3VuQ7E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_cSb3VuQ7E) [accessed 16 March 2017].

16 The full video of the Luo speech is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utnVDpWXfpw> [accessed 13 March 2017].

17 The full video of the Throsby speech is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RlVW7VumGE> [accessed 13 March 2016].

18 The Recommendation is available on the UNESCO website:<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/museums/recommendation-on-the-protection-and-promotion-of-museums-and-collections/> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/museums/recommendation-on-the-protection-and-promotion-of-museums-and-collections/> [accessed 16 January 2016].

19 The Siena Charter is published on the ICOM Italy website. Available at: [http://icom.museum/uploads/media/Carta\\_di\\_Siena\\_EN\\_final.pdf](http://icom.museum/uploads/media/Carta_di_Siena_EN_final.pdf) [accessed 16 January 2016].

20 The complete text of the European Convention approved in 2000 in Florence is available at: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680080621https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680080621> [accessed 16 January 2016].

21 For the text of the Convention see:[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Identities/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Identities/default_en.asp) [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Identities/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Identities/default_en.asp) [accessed 16 January 2016].

22 The International Committee of the Blue Shield ICBS was founded by ICOM with ICOMOS and other international cultural organisations to protect world cultural heritage. It bears the name of the symbol used to identify cultural heritage protected by the UNESCO Hague Convention (1954), the international treaty to protect cultural assets in armed conflicts.

23 The text of the Recommendation is published on the UNESCO website and available at: [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13063&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13063&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13063&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13063&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) [accessed 16 January 2017].

24 See [ecomusei.eu](http://ecomusei.eu); International cooperation, Ecomuseums and Community Museums Forum ICOM Milan 2016, Cooperation Charter, p. 5.

25 The Resolutions approved by ICOM's General Assembly are published on the ICOM. Available at: <http://icom.museum/the-governance/general-assembly/resolutions-adopted-by-icom-general-assemblies-1946-to-date/milan-2016/> [accessed 16 January 2016].

26 The new ICOM Executive Board for the 2016-2019 three-year period is as follows: Suay Aksoy (Turkey), President, An Laishun (China) and Alberto Garlandini (Italy), Vice Presidents, Carina Jaatinen (Finland), Diana Pardue (USA), Inkyung Chang (Republic of Korea), Leontine Meijer-Van Mensch (Germany), Maria de Lourdes Monges Santos (Mexico), Terry Simioti Nyambe (Zambia), Hilda Abreu de Utermohlen (Dominican Republic), Emma Nardi (Italy), Carlos Roberto Ferreira Brandão (Brazil), Vinod Daniel (Australia) and Carol Scott (UK) ordinary members. Regine Schulz (Germany) was elected Chair of the Advisory Council, while Gustavo Adolfo Ortiz (Colombia) was Elected Vice-Chair.

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