

**International Conference “Postmodern University Museums
and the Digital Era”**



**Online and Hosted by Ionian University in Corfu
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Programme

10.30 Welcome and Intro (Ionian University Rector, President ICOM's Committee for University Museums and Collections (UMAC), Director of the University Research Center of the Ionian University, Director of the Museum Collections of the Ionian University)

Postmodern University Museums and the Digital Era

Chair Georgios Papaioannou (Ionian University, Greece)

11.00 Sébastien Soubiran (European University Heritage Network UNIVERSEUM): “How much digital tools impact University museums”

11.30 Jaanika Anderson (University of Tartu, Estonia): “Perfect look and feel of the museum. Is it complicated or easy? But certainly multifaceted.”

12.00 Coffee Break

University Museums and Interdisciplinarity

Chair Georgios Papaioannou (Ionian University, Greece)

12.20 Miia-Leena Tiili (University of Helsinki, Finland): “A Museum in Transition: Renewing the Helsinki University Museum’s mission, vision and concept”

12.50 Ioannis Tsiaousis (University of Crete, Greece): “The interdisciplinary initiatives and actions of the Museum of Medicine of Crete”

13.20 Marta Brunelli (University of Macerata, Italy): “Interdisciplinary approaches to support innovation in university museums: insights and practices from the University of Macerata”

14.00 Lunch Break

Innovative and Participatory Approaches towards Society

Chair Gonul Bozoglu (Newcastle University, United Kingdom)

16.30 Antje Nagel (University of Hamburg, Germany): “Opening Inward, Opening Outward: The Potential of the University Museum in Hamburg as a Cultural Studies Site for Representation, Tradition, Mediation, Participation, and Current Museum Discourse.”

17.00 Stavros Vlzos, Elena Vasilaki (Ionian University, Greece): “Bridge the gap, museum edition: art healing educational programs for mixed aged groups, focusing on elderly and youth participation and inclusion”

17.30 Coffee Break

17.40 Penelope Theologi-Gouti (University of Patras, Greece): “The changing role of the University Museum: the example of the Science and Technology Museum (STM) of the University of Patras, Greece”

18.10 Anastasia Christophilopoulou (University of Cambridge, UK): “Museums belong to their public: Demystifying engagement in the University Museum”

18.40 Break

Managing University Museums

Chair Stavros Vlzos (Ionian University, Greece)

18.50 Ivana Mitrovic (University of Belgrade, Serbia.): “Dual management: between the national cultural heritage laws and University practice”

19.20 Stelios Lekakis (Researcher, Newcastle University, UK): Conference wrap-up - Discussion

List of participants

1. Jaanika Anderson, Acting Director, University of Tartu Museum, Estonia.
2. Dr Gonul Bozoglu, Lecturer in Museum, Gallery and Heritage Studies, Newcastle University, United Kingdom.
3. Marta Brunelli, Debuty Director "Paolo & Ornella Ricca" Museum of School History, Italy.
4. Dr Anastasia Christophilopoulou, Senior Assistant Keeper (Greece, Rome and Cyprus) Acting Head of Antiquities Department, The Fitzwilliam Museum, United Kingdom.
5. Stelios Lekakis, Researcher, Newcastle University, UK.
6. Ivana Mitrovic, Curator/archaeologist Museum of Faculty of Sport and Physical education, University of Belgrade, Serbia.
7. Dr. Antje Nagel, Director, Universitätsmuseum, Universität Hamburg, Germany.
8. Georgios Papaioannou, Associate Professor in Museology and Digital Cultural Heritage and Director of the Museology Lab at the Ionian University, Corfu, Greece.
9. Dr. Sébastien Soubiran, President of European University Heritage Network UNIVERSEUM.
10. Penelope Theologi-Gouti, Patras University Science and Technology Museum, Greece.
11. Dr. Miia-Leena Tiili, Director, Helsinki University Museum, Finland.
12. Assoc. Prof. Ioannis Tsiaousis, Director of Medicine Museum, University of Crete, Greece.
13. Elena Vasilaki, Museum Collections of the Ionian University, Greece.
14. Assoc. Prof. Stavros Vlivos, Director, Museum Collections of the Ionian University, Greece.

Abstracts

How much digital tools impact University museums?

Sébastien Soubiran

Digital tools have been part of the curatorial activity of museums for over 50 years. Initially, the focus was on creating databases to improve the accessibility of collections, especially for study and research purposes. Of course, the Internet and the development of new communication tools and practices have had a considerable impact on our own practices as museum professionals. The use of digital tools has become widespread and is now part of our various activities, be it animation, virtual exhibitions, participatory science, object-based education to name but a few. In this presentation, I would like to look at the impact of digital tools on university museums, but also at how they can contribute to improving our visibility and enhancing our dialogue with the scientific community, students, and the general public.

Perfect look and feel of the museum. Is it complicated or easy? But certainly multifaceted.

Jaanika Anderson

The beginnings of the University of Tartu Museum go back to the year when was established the second¹ museum in Estonia – University of Tartu Art museum in 1803. Today has museum exhibition spaces in three buildings. All of these are important buildings for the University of Tartu as the part of historical campus and symbols of higher education and science in city of Tartu. Three houses and many themes based on the university, science, the Estonian people make the museum a complex organism within a large organization of university.

The paper examines the management of the university museum in the changing world brought in part by Covid-19 with, including the decline of the visitors and uncertainty about the next day. In addition, there are other challenges and innovative

opportunities that should be used for museum`s own benefit: demographic factors such as aging population, and needs of society, digitalisation and innovative perspectives on understanding the world, interdisciplinarity and different layers of education. Expectations for the museum have grown significantly (see discussions around the ICOM definition). Could there be a danger that the essence of the museum being dissolved in all of this? Or is it a new type of museum, the nature of which is also suitable for a university museum?

A Museum in Transition: Renewing the Helsinki University Museum`s mission, vision and concept

Miia-Leena Tiili

The 21st century museums are no longer merely preservers, but also experts, partners, enablers, and agents in the experience industry. Their changing operational environment challenges museums to scrutinize and outline their functions and adopt new strategic approaches to enhance their viability and impact.

The Helsinki University Museum is currently undertaking a development project that aims to renew the museum`s exhibitions, but also its mission, vision, concept, and profile. A key outcome is to find new means of communicating university heritage and the history of Finnish research to a broader audience by combining the interdisciplinary content and services of three sites: the permanent and temporary exhibitions in the University Main Building, the Helsinki Observatory and the Art Room. This presentation portrays a university museum`s endeavor to create a dynamic museum concept and become a proactive and identifiable actor within the academic community and society.

The interdisciplinary initiatives and actions of the Museum of Medicine of Crete **John Tsiaoussis**

The Museum of Medicine of Crete hosts important exhibits from the history of Medicine in the island, approximately from the last two centuries. The necessity for the Museum to expose its unique character through the internet is becoming more

important today, when immersive virtual environments such as the metaverse are emerging, and the pandemic differentiates the ways people socialize and work. Our Museum is on the road to digitize its exhibits, record their characteristics, deploy digital services to manage the digitized content, expose selected pieces and apply the necessary digital interfaces in order to register with the national and international cultural content integrators and databases. The new infrastructures of our Museum are studied to comply with the good practices and specifications for interoperability and quality for the disposal of digital content online issued by the National Documentation Centre.

Interdisciplinary approaches to support innovation in university museums: insights and practices from the University of Macerata

Marta Brunelli

The relation illustrates some practices which have been implemented in the last years by the “Paolo and Ornella Ricca” Museum of School History based at the Department of Education sciences, Heritage and Tourism of the University of Macerata (Italy). The aim is to present the design methodology that has been applied. The museum is focused on the historical-educational heritage, which – due to its highly specialised nature – has usually been considered a minor heritage, and difficult to exploit to offer educational products or even to accomplish the University’s Third Mission. Despite these premises, the results achieved have confirmed how applying an interdisciplinary approach – both in terms of bringing together experts in different disciplines, and in terms of interdisciplinary contents – actually allows to foster the intrinsic potential that the university museum has: i.e. to work as a laboratory for training, for innovating academic teaching, and for transforming the knowledge produced by universities to generate social and educational value.

Opening Inward, Opening Outward: The Potential of the University Museum in Hamburg as a Cultural Studies Site for Representation, Tradition, Mediation, Participation, and Current Museum Discourse.

Antje Nagel

Taking Universität Hamburg's University Museum as an example, this presentation will address the following questions: What can and should a university museum in the twenty-first century be and do? And what distinguishes a university museum from any other public museum? The presentation will also illuminate the positive and negative aspects of having a museum in a university and the effectiveness and potential of such an institution, both within the university itself and in society at large. Further questions ask how the museum can be shaped by society and how participation can be fostered. The University Museum was established in 2019 to honor Universität Hamburg's centenary. It is housed in the historical and protected Main Building. There are 500 square meters for the permanent exhibition and events. The Center for Collections and Museums Unit, which also coordinates the University's collections, is responsible for the academic stewardship of the museum.

Bridge the gap, museum edition: art healing educational programs for mixed aged groups, focusing on elderly and youth participation and inclusion.

Stavros Vlizon, Elena Vasilakis

During the profound times that communities are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social groups appear to have more intense psychological transitions like occurrence of loneliness, anxiety, and depression, due to both overwhelming events and disruption of their routine. Museums and culture organizations in general not only provide educational or informative awareness, but they are also healing traumas through psychotherapeutic objects dynamic, or by addressing concerns for mental and/or physical health awareness through the exhibitions and programs that they offer to the public. At the Museum Collections of the Ionian University, we developed an educational program to assist our visitors in their healing process. This ongoing project (currently in implementation phase), called Bridge the gap brings together our most involving group (students) with a group that we would like to support more, namely the elderly. Having as a guide an award-winning learning scenario, we designed hybrid activities for the Collection of School History and Education, focusing amongst others on connecting (online and offline) artifacts in learning activities, providing new tools to participators who are amateur users of technology,

helping them to develop their skills and knowledge, to reconnect to their experience and memories and to co create art with others. Our objective is to underline the need of art, supporting its healing effect, assisting culture awareness, empathy, stress relief and community empowerment.

The changing role of the University Museum: the example of the Science and Technology Museum (STM) of the University of Patras, Greece

Penelope Theologi-Gouti

This paper describes the changing role of the University Museum through a case study: the Science and Technology Museum of the University of Patras, Greece. The museum was founded in 2001 with the core goals to connect the University of Patras with society and the scientific and technological literacy of university students, schoolteachers and students and the society. From one hand the museum has gathered several existing collections in the University and became a repository of important scientific and technological material. From the other it experiments in different ways of what the museum should be, using collections as facilitators of engagement with university departments and students and society, especially educational institutions. STM strives to open the dialogue with different parts of the University and Society through activities and thematic networks. Thus, a multidirectional dialogue has been developed that offers new museum activities in the service of science, technology, and the arts.

Museums belong to their public: Demystifying engagement in the University Museum

Anastasia Christophilopoulou

This paper explores the potential of the university museum as a place for creativity and collaboration and for sharing ideas and practice. Projects and public engagement initiatives generated by university museums have the potential to both enrich our professional practice and to inform our public programmes, exhibitions and displays. University museums collaborate with a wide range of researchers but also reach

outside of the academy to encourage participation from as wide a public as possible. Through this work we explore how the development of visual literacy, and creative and collaborative approaches to interpretation, can enable new and different ways of seeing and understanding our collections. Our research is interdisciplinary and committed to understanding and sharing different voices, experiences, and perspectives from within the museum, university and wider community, including advocating the need for institutions to embrace the need for public scholarship. However, does the message from university museums really gets across to touch and impact the lives of our wider audiences? This paper, drawing on two of the conference thematizes (University Museums and interdisciplinarity & Innovative and participatory approaches towards society) as well as background work conducted as part of the Fitzwilliam's material cultures in public engagement project (<https://beta.fitz.ms/research/projects/material-cultures-in-public-engagement>) will be exploring strategies on how museums and communities can work better together to bring about change. In particular, we will attempt to answer the following questions:

How can research within the university and university museum can help us to develop our practice by challenging the assumptions we hold about how our visitors experience the museum?

How might we interrogate and challenge some of the hierarchies within the museum, university, and broader society through more participatory approaches to research?

How can collaborative approaches to research enrich and extend our understanding of the cultural value of museum buildings, displays and programming?

Dual management: between the national cultural heritage laws and University practice

Ivana Mitrović

The oldest collection of the Belgrade University dates back to 1835 and marks the beginning of the practice to collect specific object for the needs of teaching and research. Today, there are over two dozen museums and collections affiliated to the Belgrade University while most of them are still more academic than public institutions. Such traditional practice may change soon because of the new Law on Museum Activity, demanding a different managing approach.

The relation of university practice in regard to its academic heritage, in the context of the new Law on Museum Activity is tackled through possible perspectives on how to integrate different management models. The comparative method was applied.

University museums are often at the outskirts of official museum community because, from the legal point of view, they represent “museums within an institution”, hence the museums founded not by a state or a local community government but by an institution, such as university. As such, most of the university museums and collections are less accessible to the general public, more available to academic public and sometimes, not even to them. According to Holton (Holton, 2000) artifacts related to science are residues of physical actions of doing science while separation between culture and scientific knowledge leads to terrifying effects of bewilderment and homelessness. University museums are symbiotic institutions in this sense, and the true challenge is to represent this unique heritage beyond academic walls while adapting to the newly established criteria.

The new Law on Museum Activity is all about visibility and availability of museum heritage, introducing, among other things, online central register/inventory at the Ministry’s websites.

On the other hand, university heritage is often, if at all, managed by faculty or department responsible for particular collection and usually with limited resources. The reason for this kind of management is the genesis of university museums that were founded by scholars for scholars, in order to promote and improve teaching and science within the discipline. The ongoing transition process toward (more) public museum leads to implementation of dual management system, trying to meet the national, legal criteria while at the same time adapting its traditional policy due to the rethinking of museums.