

ICOM PRAGUE 2022

Dear DEMHIST members and friends,

We would like to share with you some thoughts about the exciting programming at the ICOM Prague Triennial conference that took place August 20 - 26.

The week of events was full and varied – from pre-conference tours of Prague, plenary sessions, key note speeches, roundtable discussion, professional paper sessions to offsite meetings and excursions. There were so many wonderful and enriching meetings and experiences, we can't mention them all, but these were the highlights and events relevant for DEMHIST.

The theme of the conference was "The Power of Museums". This theme was the leitmotif through the various plenary sessions, with keynotes and roundtable discussions on themes such as Purpose (civil society), Vision (leadership), Sustainability (resilience), and Delivery (technology). This also gave room for a focus on ICOM red lists for endangered art and discussions around the cultural and heritage crisis in the Ukraine following the continued Russian invasion.

The evening before we dove into the conference programme, DEMHIST held a “meet and greet” over glasses of prosecco at the historical Art Restaurant Mánes. It was an evening of firsts for many of us, the first time meeting old friends since Kyoto, the first time meeting colleagues and team members in person and not just through digital meetings. It was an evening of connections and reconnections that set the tone for the rest of the week.



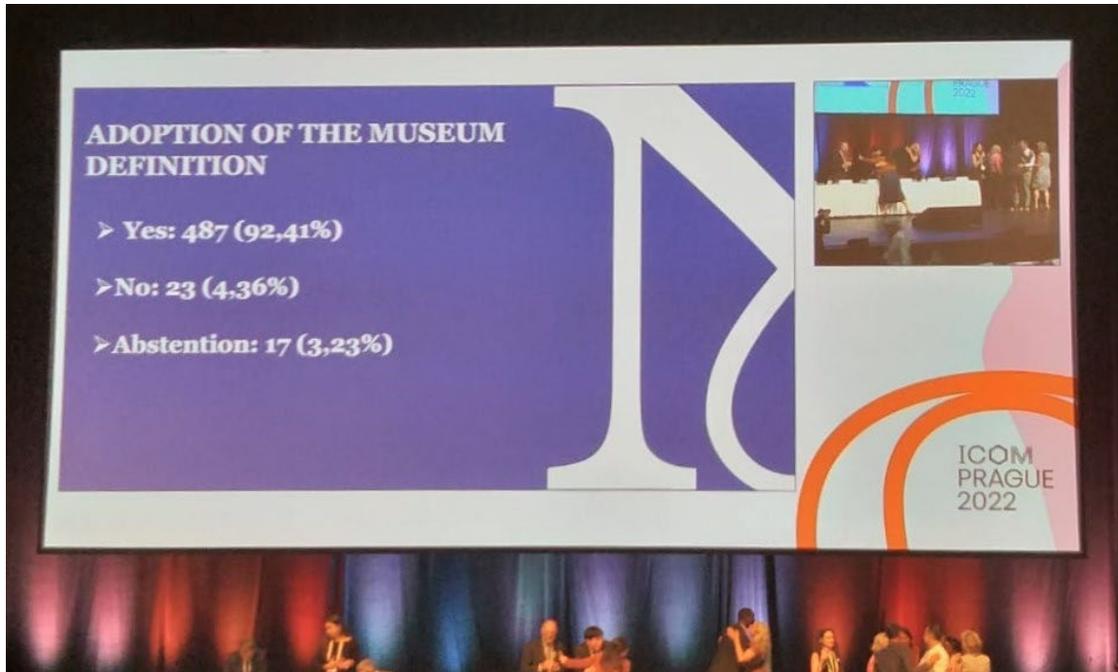
News from the plenary sessions

Emma Nardi (Italy) was elected as new ICOM President. Furthermore, 14 new members have joined the ICOM Executive Board. There were also the elections for the positions for the chair and the vice chair of the Advisory Council: Antonio Rodriguez (USA) was elected as Chair and Medea Ekner (Sweden) as Vice Chair. Our own chair Yvonne Ploum was elected as the new Spokesperson for all 32 International Committees. She will work closely together with Muthoni Thangwa (Kenya), Spokesperson for the National Committees and with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Advisory Council.

Even more exciting was that the new Museum Definition was adopted by the ICOM General Assembly with 92,41% approval! Finally, after a process that started in 2015 the global museum world is united in this new definition.

More news: the General Assembly also adopted the 2022-28 Strategic Plan, as well as three important Resolutions, on Language diversity, Active participation of National

Committees and on Armed conflicts. You can access these documents through the ICOM website by entering the Agora (membership zone). The Strategic Plan will be taken as a guideline for the DEMHIST Strategic Plan that will follow soon.



DEMHIST Paper Sessions

"*The Power of Historic House Museums*" was chaired and moderated by DEMHIST Vice chair Timna Seligman (Israel). The session tried to highlight the unique position of Historic House Museums, and what their special powers may be: Does the power lie in the spaces themselves – in the nexus of authenticity and memory that create the historic house museum experience of historic structure, collections, and narrative? How does this power continue to resonate and remain relevant? How does current digital innovation align with topics such as historical authenticity, visitor experience and collection care? Presenting topics as diverse as barrier free visits, restitution, historical activism and contemporary visitor involvement, we heard from Sergio Servellon (Belgium), Milja Stijovic (Serbia), Linda Norris (USA), Bo Shung Chen (Taiwan). Unfortunately, technological issues prevented us from hearing from Cristina Fiordimela, Italy, but her paper along with those of the other presenters will be available on the DEMHIST website in the near future.

"*House Museums and Risk Management*" was chaired and moderated by DEMHIST Vice chair António Ponte (Portugal). The session focused on issues widely discussed within the museum community: considering the need to preserve cultural heritage, physical collections, and intangible contexts. The objective in risk management is to serve the museum's internal purposes and to support the surrounding communities in the preparation of risk mitigation actions. In a fully attended session, we heard five presentations by Emma Coburn (UK), Remko Jansonius and Rebecca Peterson (USA), Martin Roubicek (Czech Republic), Iveta Černá (Czech Republic) and Sing-da Huang (Taiwan) on the subject with very different scopes: climate change to the security issues of museum institutions; issues of authenticity and reuse of structures; problem solving in the event of fires; and political issues of use and appropriation of cultural heritage. This session has opened up a debate that needs to be continued on all levels and in all variables in order to find mechanisms to reduce these different types of risks for cultural heritage in general and in particular for house museums.



Joint Session

Together with ICOM-CC, DRMC, ICMS, ICTOP, INTERCOM and ICOM JAPAN, DEMHIST organised an inspiring expert session on *Resilience of Historic House Museums and their Collections to Risks posed by Climate Change, Environmental Disasters, and Conflict Zones*. A keynote by Takeyuki OKUBO (Japan) and five panellists (Achal Pandya (India), Yuji Kurihara (Japan), Remko Jansonius (USA), Stacy Bowe and Liz Kirby (USA)) addressed every aspect of the main topic. We

heard about involving the community in protection historic sites, playing disaster games to provide creative solutions to the challenges, about making historical water basins usable again, about creating a network of all stakeholders and institutions that you need if crises occur and about ways to value your collection (house and artefacts), to prevent you from choices when there is no time to weigh. Almost 100 museum and heritage professionals participated in the round table discussion.



Offsite Meeting

The offsite meeting provided the opportunity for DEMHIST members, both new and old, to do what DEMHIST members like best and what they do best: visit house museums and talk house museum business. We started at the Study and Documentation Center Norbertov, with introductory comments by DEMHIST Chair Yvonne Ploum, followed by presentations by Maria Szadkowska, DEMHIST board member and Head of the Centre for Monuments of Modern Architecture (CPMA) and Petr Krajčí, Curator of CPMA. Ranáta Hajnová, Production and Museum Educator of CPMA, and her staff provided excellent tours of two villas. The meeting

included the screening of a documentary film about the restoration of the Villa Müller, one of the first examples of the restoration of a modernist architectural monument in Eastern Europe and the first house museum in the Czech Republic.

Villa Müller (1930), designed by Adolf Loos, served as a prime illustration of Loos's concept of "dwelling" and "Raumplan." Villa Rothmayer (1929), designed by Otto Rothmayer, who also oversaw the restoration of Prague Castle, provided an interesting contrast between its working-class design and interiors as compared to Villa Müller's more upper-class interiors. A sumptuous lunch buffet, accompanied by live music, was served in the garden of Villa Müller. The day concluded in the garden of Villa Rothmayer, with bubbly and hors-d'oeuvres, along with the option to participate in a collage-making workshop.



We would like to thank all the participants who joined us in Prague, whether onsite or online, your presence made it a wonderful experience. Many thanks to the DEMHIST Prague team - Maria, Petr and Ranáta for planning and hosting the offsite meeting, and for the City of Prague Museum for sponsoring the day. Special thanks to our conference assistant – our "Man Friday" David Seidler for helping and facilitating the day to day running of our meetings.



Looking forward to seeing you all at our General Assembly, October 27 2022.

DEMHIST Board

(Yvonne Ploum, Dalia Gallico, Cecilia Casas Desantes, Remko Jansonius, Denis Verdier Magneau, Yoshihiro Nakatani, António Ponte, Timna Seligman, Maria Szadkowska, Amilcar Vargas)