

## **CHAIR REPORT – 2020 - 2021**

2020 was an unusual year, characterized by the COVID-19 pandemic and international lockdowns along with the cessation of in-person cultural and academic activities on an unprecedented global level. Many of us faced periods of closed museums, furloughs from our jobs, work from home, or even employment termination as our institutions scrambled to face the new reality. We continue to be in the throes of the pandemic to this day.

DEM HIST activities for 2020 were limited to online programming. A surprising, but perhaps obvious result of moving meetings to online platforms has been the increased attendance of members from across the world who would not have been able to attend in-person meetings such as the DEM HIST annual conference and GA, or other symposia and conferences organized by our associated working groups or collaborators.

### **Activities – symposia and conferences**

#### **General Assembly November 19 2020 (online meeting, Zoom platform)**

The GA included presentations on special project grants (see below) and included a focus report from special project grantee Lei Yin from China and four National Group reports (Mexico, Brazil, Portugal and Italy).

75 members, representing 22 countries, registered for the GA; 39 members attended, 28 members actively participated by voting (approval of minutes, budget, etc.). During the meeting, the election results for the 2020-23 committee board were announced. The meeting was supported and powered by Erfgoed Academie, Netherlands

#### **Webinar "House Museums and Sustainability" December 16 2020 (Zoom platform)**

The two-hour meeting was attended by 80 members from 33 countries and 16 ICs. It included presentations from internationally renowned specialists in the field (Sarah Sutton, George Okello Abungu, Remco Wagemakers), a presentation by Caitlin Southwick from the ICOM Working Group on Sustainability, as well as breakout sessions for discussion. The webinar was concluded by a real-time improvised theatrical response from Greek-Dutch performer Soula Notos.

The webinar aimed to give a preview for the postponed 2020 conference (which we are now concluding as an online event despite hopes for a physical meeting) and to support members to keep sustainability on the agenda. Despite the Covid-19 crisis, we believe sustainability remains relevant for the future of society and museums alike. Event supported and powered by Erfgoed Academie, Netherlands

### **"Museum Houses for Equality: Diversity and Inclusion" October 12-13 2020 (hybrid)**

Mexican DEMHIST Working Group and the Network of Museum Houses, VI National Meeting

The meeting opened with a keynote address followed by presentations in virtual format. The venue was the Arocena Historical House Museum in the city of Torreón, Coahuila to expand **equal** opportunities in the participation of all museum professionals by decentralizing the meeting to the northeast of the country; **diversity** in terms of the representation of all sectors regardless of their condition and, finally, **inclusion** in responding to the call of the Arocena Museum to add the entire Casa Museo community to the celebration program for the centenary of the Arocena Building, built between 1919 and 1920.

[https://museoarocena.com/encuentrodemhist?fbclid=IwAR0LdpTp6E93SgmwquWlhRtg2vD\\_7LWr1J5V7tcSTV5xpDJM5rRccPraND8](https://museoarocena.com/encuentrodemhist?fbclid=IwAR0LdpTp6E93SgmwquWlhRtg2vD_7LWr1J5V7tcSTV5xpDJM5rRccPraND8)

### **Essence and meaning in the museum, December 7-9, 2020 (online)**

14th Brazilian Meeting on Palaces and Historic House Museums.

The aim of the meeting was to reflect on the concepts of value, to enhance the understanding of the real meaning of the experience in the house museum and their relevance in today's society. The sessions were held in Portuguese with English subtitles and the participants were able to ask questions in English via chat. There were participants from Brazil, Mexico, Portugal and Italy.

The co-sponsors of the meeting were ICOM-Brasil, DEMHIST, Acervo dos Palácios-Governo de São Paulo, Secretaria de Relações Internacionais Secretaria de Comunicação do Estado de São Paulo and Latin America Memorial.

### **Publications**

Publication of the proceedings from the symposium "Hygiene and Bathrooms in the House-Museums of the Twentieth Century: Objects, Spaces, Practices" Held on March 15, 2019 and supported by the Commission of ICOM Italia, in partnership with Fondazione Adolfo Pini and FAI (The National Trust for Italy) and hosted by Milano at Villa Necchi, Campiglio, Milan.

### **Special Projects Grants**

Our 2020 call for project grants was sent to our members on May 28, 2020.

Understanding the implications of the pandemic on programming, we stated that preference would be given to projects and activities adapted for implementation during the pandemic with a focus on digital and video programming.

The review committee selected 4 of the 9 applications:

**Lei Yin (China) / Nanjing Imperial Examination Museum of China.** The main component of this project was a modern dance performance. Initially postponed, Yin and partners were still able to complete the project and performance during 2020. Yin gave a 5-minute presentation on his project at the General Assembly. **Kelsey Brow (USA) / King Manor Museum.** Initially planned as a real-time exhibit, Brow instead pivoted to create a virtual exhibit instead which is currently in its last stages of completion. It addresses the role of women in early 20th historic preservation,

connecting with the centennial of women's suffrage. **Walaa Eldin Badawy (Egypt) / Manial Palace Museum.** The goal of the project is to create a virtual tour of the Palace Museum. The project is still underway. **Suzanne Bravery (Australia) / Making Museums Matter.** Initially intended as a real-time workshop to encourage regional participation of house museum volunteers and emerging museum professionals, developing training materials, and making such materials available online, Bravery has pivoted to a primarily virtual project execution.)

### **New DEMHIST Board**

Following the elections held at the General Assembly, a new board was elected and started working on forwarding DEMHIST activities:

Yvonne Ploum, Chair; Timna Seligman, Vice Chair 1; António da Ponte, Vice Chair 2; Remko Jansonius, Secretary; Amilcar Vargas, Treasurer

Councilors: Dalia Gallico, Yoshihiro Nakatani, Cecilia Casas deSantes, Maria Szadkowska, Denis Verdier-Magneau.

### **2021 – an update**

The board decided that its activities would best be served by dividing into five working groups, each group made up of 3-4 members who would be able to work more efficiently. The groups are Communications, Conference, Governance, Grants, and Outreach.

**Communications** – works on DEMHIST's social media and website presence, as well as working in coordination with the other groups whenever emails or postings are needed.

**Conference** – has been very busy this year planning the 2021 online conference. They have also started working on the Prague 2022 conference. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, the publications for previous conferences have stalled, but we hope that by the next Chair Report we will have 4 new online publications to announce (London, Baku, Kyoto, and online-Netherlands).

### **Governance –**

#### **The New Museum Definition**

In early 2021, the DEMHIST Governance Working Group conducted a survey among DEMHIST members as part of the ICOM Define's call for input towards the development of the new museum definition. The survey was conducted in the 3 official ICOM languages (English, French and Spanish) as well as Portuguese. 87 DEMHIST members responded to the survey and submitted keywords that they considered to be important for inclusion in this new definition. The DEMHIST Working Group translated and cross-referenced the keywords, and submitted 17 keywords to ICOM Define. This was Consultation 2 of the overall process, which includes 4 consultations and conclude

in May 2022. Round 3 consultation was completed by board members in September 2021 based on the results of the wider DEMHIST membership survey held during round 2.

## **Grants –**

### **New Research Grant funded by Fondazione A. Pini**

The pilot of a new grant program was initiated in the Summer of 2021. For this first year, the research grant in the amount of 3,000 euro, was awarded to researcher Angelica Piras, University of Bologna, Italy, whose research will focus on new and best practices in historic house museums adapting to a post-pandemic reality. The research project will result in an article. Selection of the grantee occurred in collaboration with ICOM-Italy. This grant is fully funded by Fondazione Adolfo Pini, and administered by DEMHIST. The goal is to make this an annual grant program, and to expand the pool of possible grantees across and beyond the global DEMHIST membership.

### **Special Projects Grant**

For the year 2021, the DEMHIST board decided not to send out a call for proposals for special project grants. Instead, the decision was made to allocate these funds to ICOM members and students from category 3 and 4 countries for complimentary registration to attend the DEMHIST 2021 virtual conference. The goal is specifically to invite broader participation from countries that are often underrepresented in DEMHIST activities and meetings, especially due to the budgetary hardships of these pandemic years. At the time of this writing, we have provided 21 complimentary registrations to participants from 7 countries, including Azerbaijan, Brazil, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jamaica, and Mozambique.

### **Travel Grants**

For 2021, the ICOM Young Professional Travel Grant and the Jeanne Watson Bursary were put on hold until we can once again meet in person – Prague 2022!

## **Outreach –**

### **Outreach to Portuguese Language Countries**

DEMHIST communications have been translated into Portuguese and sent to the members' mailing list. A meeting was held with managers of Brazilian house-museums to report on DEMHIST's activities. We also held a meeting with Daniel Inoque from Mozambique, to address support for the meeting on museum houses there.

### **Executive Board Activities**

Demhist Chair and other EB-members joined and contributed to several webinars and meetings organized by ICOM Official.

Demhist Chair contributed to the webinar: When Private Homes Become Museums: Transforming the Sursock Palace after the Beirut Blast, March 19, 2021 organised by ICOM and ALIPH and joined several webinars and meetings of the IC-Chairs Working Group.

## **Membership**

There has been a slight fluctuation in the number of individual and institutional DEMHIST members. Some members had joined or renewed their membership prior to the onset of the pandemic, while others may have joined or renewed, or not, later in the year. It is therefore not entirely clear what the impact of the pandemic and the ensuing budget cuts for many individuals and institutions may have been on membership levels. This may be more apparent for 2021 membership levels which we will share at the GA in Prague 2022.

The number of DEMHIST individual members dropped from 455 in 2019 to 436 in 2020. The number of institutional members increased from 116 to 123.