

# THE ITALIAN MUSEUMS FACING GLOBALIZATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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## NEW FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES TO DEFY THE GLOBAL CRISIS

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What I'm talking about today



Museums facing  
the global changes

**Eight Key Points**

# Many are the issues to discuss (1)

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- How can museums defy the effects of the crisis?
- How can museums face the challenges of globalization and social change?

# Many are the issues to discuss (2)

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- How can networking and partnerships help museums?
- How can museums establish new relationships with the territories and communities they belong to?

# Many are the issues to discuss (3)

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How can professionals  
promote a sustainable  
management of  
museums and cultural  
heritage?

# Key Point One: managing the global change

- The future of museums depends on how professionals will be able to face the global changes
- Museum professionals should be innovative leaders rather than old conservatives

## Key Point Two: facing globalization and social change

- Globalization can produce growth and intercultural dialogue, but also intolerance and destruction of cultural heritage and diversity
- Different ideas, traditions, cultures meet and sometimes collide

# How are our communities reacting to globalization?

- Do integration, openness, tolerance prevail or, on the contrary, do nationalism, narrow-mindedness, conflict?
- Here comes the role of museums and cultural activities

# Italy: the challenges of globalization

- In the last ten years Italy has become a country of immigrants even if over 4 million Italians live abroad, included the "new recent emigrants"
- Over 4 million foreigners live in Italy, the underage foreigners are four times as many as 10 years ago and 60% of them are born in Italy

# A new Italy is growing and new Italians are coming

- Every day there are 70 marriages between an Italian and a foreigner, in northern Italy 1 out of 4.
- In Lombardy almost 20% of newborn children have one foreign parent

# Museums must respond to social change

- Museums must promote intercultural activities and the integration of diversities into new community identities
- Museums help people open their minds
- We need museums that are both local and global

## Key Point Three: concentrating resources upon strategic activities

- Like other European museums, Italian museums are facing severe financial cutbacks
- What should be done?
- In times of crisis policy makers have greater responsibilities than in time of economic development

# Automatic cuts to public expenditures should be avoided

- Policy makers must have the courage to answer positively to strategic investments, such as culture, education, research, social cohesion
- It is high time to support long-term strategies, priority actions, permanent institutions rather than ephemeral activities

## Key Point Four: developing networks and cooperation

- Museum professionals should create new partnerships with non-profit and profit organizations
- Networking is more than a means of saving money, it is a cultural revolution that has an impact on all museum activities

## Key Point 5: creating new relations between museums and territories

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- The core functions of museums are the conservation and promotion of their collections
- But today's museums have new social goals and larger territorial responsibilities than in past times

# Today's museums

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- strengthen cultural identities and promote social cohesion, cultural communication and intercultural mediation
- should promote not only their collections, but also the heritage that surround them

# Italian museums are linked to local history and environment

- Half of the 5,500 Italian museums are owned by local governments, 15% by foundations and local associations, 10% by universities, 15% by local bodies of Catholic Church, only 10% by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage
- The territorial functions are part of their genetic heritage



# Museums and Cultural Landscapes

The theme of  
2016 ICOM General  
Conference in Milan

## Museums and Cultural Landscapes

**The Italian landscape is world-famous.** It has been described and visited in all ages. Many of Italy's celebrated landscapes have been preserved with their historical charm.

**Italy is a great open air museum.** The Italian heritage is displayed not only in museums but also in historical buildings, sites and centres.

Developing the relationship between museums and cultural landscapes improves the **cultural and social role of museums.**

## Many are the issues to discuss about Museums and Cultural Landscapes

How can museums become **centres of interpretation** of the places and the communities they belong to?

How can museums **disseminate the knowledge** of the cultural heritage conserved both inside and outside their walls?

## Museums and Cultural Landscapes

The theme of Milan's Conference is an ambitious **challenge for ICOM and 21st century museums.**

It highlights the **new responsibilities** of our museums towards the heritage and the life that surround them. Museums can contribute to sustainable development and forge closer links between population and natural and cultural heritage

**Landscapes are cultural heritage**

Our aim is that a ***Declaration of ICOM on Museums and Cultural Landscapes*** be approved of in Milan, so that new strategic objectives and programmes are set for contemporary museums.

## Key Point Six: promoting social participation

- More than two million Italians work on a voluntary basis for the promotion of museums and heritage
- ICOM asks governments to promote tax advantages for donors, sponsors and museum volunteers

# Key Point Seven: promoting human resources

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- 50,000 people work in the 5,500 Italian museums, but many of them are volunteers not professionals
- In past times most museum workers were permanent public officers
- That is no longer true

# Many of the Italian museum professionals

- now work on a temporary, free-lance or voluntary basis and are often underpaid and under short-term and precarious contracts
- Italian museums suffer from a severe reduction and even loss of professional positions

# The difficult working conditions of Italian professionals

- Qualified younger staff see their career opportunities disappear and are leaving the profession
- The long-term institutional knowledge of museums is at risk
- Museums need more professionals and voluntaries

## Key Point Eight: improving the competences of professionals

- Facing the crisis and the changes in the world of museums require complex competences
- Professionals must have disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, as well as transversal skills in team and fieldwork

# Museums, libraries, archives must work together

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- Many of their educational and promotional services are already jointly managed
- Traditional frontiers between disciplines and cultural institutions are changing

# Museum professionals are changing

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- Managing contemporary museums is an innovative and creative job
- New museum functions require new jobs and new skills

ICOM asks governments to

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preserve and promote the

museum professional

competences and ensure that

museum positions are filled by

qualified personnel

# In conclusion

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- Italian museums are living the most dramatic years since World War Two
- Professionals have to convince our politicians and our fellow citizens that museums are not a cost, but an investment for a better future and a better life

# In conclusion

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Facing the crisis, museum professionals must enhance mutual help and solidarity, exchange ideas and practices, build up professional and personal relations

# In conclusion

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ICOM and museum networks such as NEMO can be of great help and should become the fulcrum of a coalition of all cultural professionals in favor of cultural and natural heritage