

President's Report for period August 2022 to Sept 2023

CONFERENCE PRAGUE 2022

The 26th ICOM General Conference was held in Prague from August 20 to 28. UMAC's participation in the triennial conference consisted of two parts.

PART 1 - 22-23 August: joint meeting with colleagues from three other ICOM international committees NATHIST (natural history museums), ICME (ethnography museums) and ICR (regional museums).

PART 2 - 25 August: UMAC met separately at the Faculty of Science Charles University, Prague (Hrdlicka Museum).

The main conference theme for the joint meetings were: The Power of Museums: Sustainability with the following subthemes

Session I- The Power of Museums: Inclusion / The Making of an Inclusive Museum- Diversity, inclusion, and decolonisation in all aspects of museum functions- Challenges and prospects in making museums polyphonic spaces- Incorporating different knowledge systems into museum practices

Session II- The Power of Museums: SDGs / Museums' Actions for Sustainable Development- Coupling SDGs and Museum practices- Enhancing the effectiveness, the implementation of SDGs- Climate actions to support the sustainable development of museums.

Session III- The Power of Museums: Harnessing the Power of Networks- The transition of museums from an authority to a network of agencies- Involving communities in museum practices- How transdisciplinary innovates museums.

There were 79 contributors from 34 countries and 162 presentations.

This was probably the largest collaborative venture UMAC has ever undertaken, and it was driven by the previous UMAC Board under the leadership of Marta Lourenço.

The Organising Committee for the joint meetings consisted of Marta Lourenço (Portugal, Chair UMAC), Dorit Wolenitz (Israel, Chair NATHIST), Irena Žmuc (Slovenia, Chair ICR) and Ralf Cleplak Mencin (Slovenia, ICME). The Program Committee for the joint meetings consisted of Andrew Simpson (Australia, UMAC), Christel Schollaardt (The Netherlands, NATHIST), Dorit Wolenitz (Israel, NATHIST), Fiona R. Cameron (Australia, ICME), Huang Lei (China, ICR), Irena Žmuc (Slovenia, ICR), Marta Lourenço (Portugal, UMAC), Peter Ride (UK, ICME), Phaedra Fang (Taiwan, NATHIST), Ralf Čeplak Mencin (Slovenia, Chair ICME).

The organisers of the off-site meeting for UMAC were Nathalie Nyst (ULB, Belgium) and Martina Galetová (Hrdlicka Museum, Charles University of Prague).

Travel grants to attend Prague 2022 were provided by UMAC. The criteria for travel grants were published on our website. This was separate from the Young Members travel grants program administered by ICOM.

We introduced a new option for poster presentation in Prague, this proved to be an option taken up mainly by virtual attendees. Poster authors had the option of producing a short video of their work and making it available on the UMAC YouTube channel. There was a total of 44 poster presentations published as abstracts in UMACJ vol 14 (2), thirteen took up the option of presenting their work as a short video.

WEBINAR

UMAC held an online webinar about the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on academic museums and collections in Ukraine's higher education sector. Following a short presentation by Svitlana Muravska at the UMAC Conference in Prague, last August, UMAC delivered the webinar on Thursday 29 September 2022. The meeting involved Ukraine university museum professionals who had been directly impacted by the Russian invasion; it took place via zoom and was [live-streamed on YouTube](#) with around 300+ global participants.

The meeting was organised by the past and present 2022 Chairs of UMAC, the Chair of Universeum, the Polish University Museums Association and ICOM Ukraine. The meeting discussed and canvassed forms of assistance that could be provided, specifically immediate actions that could be taken to help ameliorate the current conditions in Ukrainian universities.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The UMAC 2022 Annual General meeting held online on September 19, 2022. The 22nd AGM was held online via Zoom and broadcasted live via YouTube. Links were provided individually and instructions on how to vote in the new Board Elections were also provided to members wishing to participate in meeting resolutions and voting for the new Board as 2022 was an election year. In constructing and running the online meeting we closely followed ICOM guidelines. This was the first time UMAC conducted an AGM entirely online, 50 voting members participated and resulted in the election of a new Board for 2022-25. UMAC members from the Technical University of Dresden and the University of Padua formed an election committee to oversee governance of the election process.

PUBLICATIONS

Over the reporting period UMAC published issue [14 \(2\)](#) in 2022 as the abstracts volume from the Prague meetings; issue [15 \(1\)](#) in 2023 a general un-themed issue with 7 articles and; issue [15\(2\)](#) in 2023 being the abstracts volume from the Sydney UMACX meeting.

In 2022, with our partnership with the Shanghai University Museum, four more issues of the UMAC Journal were translated into Chinese and made available on our website. There are now a full set of [UMACJ issues in Chinese](#) from issue 8 through to issue 13.

The journal is only produced in digital format under a Creative Commons License CC BY-SA 4.0, ISSN 2071-7229.

UMAC Award videos, posters and Imaginations instalments are accessible on the [YouTube channel](#).

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

The main early task of the new UMAC Board was the development of a new strategic plan for the current mandate that aligns with the ICOM strategic plan (2022-2028). This was developed over three of the six Board meetings during 2023. The UMAC mailing list was used to seek out members interested in contributing to the development of a strategic plan, this resulted in three strategic planning meetings that included invited participants. A new strategic plan was adopted by the Board and presented to the broader membership at the AGM (see below).

COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to the journal, UMAC maintains a UMAC Mailing List, Facebook, Twitter, WeChat and YouTube channels. This year we commenced a LinkedIn Group which has attracted 150 members. Regular messages are distributed across all media.

The following videos were added to the YouTube channel over the reporting period. This included 13 posters from ICOM 2022 presented as videos, 7 Imaginations videos, 1 global dialogue on the situation in Ukraine, 3 videos of the finalists for the 2023 UMAC Award and 1 video from TUD Dresden to promote the 2024 combined meeting with Universeum.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

During 2022 we supported the first regional meetings of university museums and collections professionals in Malaysia, Thailand and Iran through participation via digital platforms with presentations on the benefits of ICOM and UMAC membership with an outline of regular activities and publications. The pre-recorded presentation for the 2022 Annual Forum of Chinese University Museums (postponed due to Covid) was also part of the same strategy to raise awareness of the global nature of the UMAC network and attract new individual membership.

18 March 2023 Presentation to the ASPAC Board on the project ‘Two Horizons: two-way museology, a cross institutional and multi-knowledge system exploration’.

4 May 2023, ‘What does decolonizing the museum mean?’ A panel discussion on the future of museums with international museum colleagues from Australia, Scotland, and Vietnam held at the University of Wyoming Art Museum, USA.

19 May 2023 A recorded message of welcome on behalf of UMAC to delegates at the 2023 meeting of the National Network of Higher Education Museums in Indonesia, held at the University of Indonesia, Jakarta.

21 May 2023 UMAC confirmed support for the Women's Institute's application by Carmen López San Segundo, from Universidad de Salamanca, in order to carry out the activity "III Forum Di(ver)sities: album, photography and co-education".

25 May 2023 a presentation about UMAC is made at clausuran la IV Jornada de Patrimonio Científico by Board member Ana Isabel Díaz Plaza at the University of Salamanca.

May to August 2023 51 letters of invitation were written to individuals in 21 nations to attend the UMAC 2023 conference in Sydney.

28 August 2023 UMAC convened a meeting at the UMAC 2023 conference with a delegation from the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, A memorandum of understanding was developed and signed to enable the resumption of a global training and workshop partnership in 2024 and beyond. The MOU covers the mandate of the current UMAC Board.

UMAC continued the UMAC Futures project designed to connect with young professionals and researchers working in university museums, a number of interviews conducted by Zhao Ke (Chinese Electronic Science and Technology Museum) were posted online.

With the agreement of the Board UMAC commenced a new project to raise the awareness of universities in the Spanish speaking world of UMAC and its activities, this work is being coordinated by Board members Ana Isabel Diaz-Plaza Varon and Margarita Guzman.



UMAC 2022-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

STRATEGIC GOAL	OBJECTIVES	TASKS	BOARD ROLES
Networks/Global Positioning			
Supports ICOM focus area 1, strategy 1 (global) & focus area 2, strategy 4 (diversity) strategies 2 & 3 (climate change and digital futures)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building Bridges Project for university museums in Spain and Latin America 2. Support the development and activities of regional and national networks of university museums 3. Develop productive partnerships with a range of other connected organisations – target ICOM ICs, U21 etc and increase UMAC membership 4. Increase awareness of UMAC Award 5. Open UMACJ to more participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate the priorities for the ICOM Spanish-speaking community in relation to university museums and collections - Identify and develop durable connections to other relevant ICs with university museum members - Research regional UMAC membership to identify potential areas of growth - Target membership growth in selected under-represented regions (e.g. Latin America, Africa, ME, some Asia), also using UMACJ for this purpose 	Anna, Margarita, Fatemah, Andrew
Relevance			
Supports ICOM focus area 2 strategy 3 (communication) & focus area 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advocate for the unique benefits university museums and collections can bring to higher education through the three missions (research, teaching, engagement) 2. Document the impact and difference made by university museums and collections (build evidence dossier) 3. Deliver and broadcast high quality annual conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and broadcast a UMAC ‘mission statement’ on the value of university museums - Build awareness of, and support for, UMAC initiatives in higher education sector groups and individual universities - Develop UMAC presence in Object-Based Learning Communities of Practice with university museum perspective 	Andrew, Gina, Dominck
Decolonising Practice			
Supports ICOM focus area 2, strategy 4 (diversity) & focus area 3 strategy 5 (decolonisation)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support current uni-museum initiatives on new ways of working with objects – attention to regions 2. Develop research and projects focused on regional issues around diversity 3. Develop program to implement guidance on restitution and return of objects 4. De-center the UMAC Journal: new voices, methodologies and themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a project on decolonisation of museums and the academy through dialogue with members and partners. Seek funding for project proposals - Guide development of partnerships with local communities and under-represented groups to change museum practice (e.g. gender, class) - Propose regional UMACJ issue(s) to be led by joint regional/Board editors, driven by regional issues. 	Giovanna, Sian, Andrew



Approved by the UMAC Board

Andrew Simpson (October 2023)