



Sharing a  
World of Inclusion,  
Creativity and  
Heritage.

Workshop with Jacqueline Hoàng Nguyễn, artist in residence at National Museums of World Culture (SE).  
Photo: Tony Sandin



# ABOUT SWICH

## ETHNOGRAPHY, MUSEUMS OF WORLD CULTURE AND NEW CITIZENSHIP IN EUROPE

Within the frame of SWICH - Sharing a World of Inclusion, Creativity and Heritage, ten European museums reflect current issues concerning the role of ethnographic museums within an increasingly differentiated European society. The EU-funded project runs from November 2014 to September 2018 and is based on the results of two earlier projects, *Ethnography Museums and World Cultures* (RIME) and READ-ME I & II, which dealt with the future of ethnographic museums. The focus now lies on central concerns of visionary ethnographic museum practice within the context of a post-migrant society. The project aims at increasing the role and visibility of ethnographic and world cultures museums as centres of cultural encounters, open discourse, creative innovation and knowledge production based on transnational and international collaborations.

With Weltmuseum Wien as project leader, the partner museums work on strategies for a future-oriented museum practice in a series of conferences, workshops, residencies, publications and cooperative exhibition formats. These settings serve as platforms for the discussion of future collecting strategies, the inclusion of contemporary art and the relational role of ethnographic objects in the complex networks between originating societies and local diaspora-communities. Furthermore, the significance of new digital technologies as tools for cross-cultural cooperation are examined.

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# CONCEPTUAL FOCUS

The project revolves around a series of interrelated key concepts: co-creativity and experimental exhibiting, relationality, cultural subjecthood, emotional citizenship and diaspora. We address ideas of relationality, as a way to explore how ethnographic museums and collections are sites around which relationships are built between the museums and their multiple stakeholders, both historical and contemporary. Such a relational approach takes into account co-creative knowledge production, collaborations with artists, experimental modes of engaging with museum collections and the importance of contestation. Similarly it addresses issues of Europe's diversity by looking at the intersecting diasporas of objects and peoples. A major concern for this present project is the question of how new digital technologies are impacting on notions of citizenship and (transnational) belonging and how the different stakeholders experience our museums and relate to cultural heritage presented in them.

With these interrelated concerns, museums of ethnography and world cultures develop new practices to address shifting citizenship regimes in Europe. SWICH explores how museums can function as places that foster a greater sense of belonging for diasporic and post-migrant communities without their continued 'othering' or alienation. These museums that reveal how deeply European cultures are rooted in travel, encounter, and empire for centuries demonstrate how varied and international European cultures in fact are. The focus therefore is not only on (post)migrant citizens, as the goal is to develop these museums as places of encounter where all visitors can attain a better understanding of a changing, super-diverse Europe.

SWICH group photo at Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico L. Pigorini.  
Photo: Fabio Naccari



# PARTNERS

## WELTMUSEUM WIEN

project coordinator  
Vienna (AT)

## MUSÉE ROYAL DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE

Tervuren (BE)

## NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF WORLD CULTURE

Stockholm/Göteborg (SE)

## MUSEO NAZIONALE PRE- ISTORICO ETNOGRAFICO LUIGI PIGORINI

Rome (IT)

## MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Cambridge (UK)

## MUSEU DE CULTURES DEL MÓN

Barcelona (ES)

## NATIONAAL MUSEUM VAN WERELDCULTUREN

Leiden/Amsterdam/  
Berg en Dal (NL)

## MUSÉE DES CIVILISATIONS DE L'EUROPE ET DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE

Marseille (FR)

## LINDEN-MUSEUM STUTTART

Stuttgart (DE)

## SLOVENE ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

Ljubljana (SI)

## CULTURE LAB – INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXPERTISE

(BE)

Work space of Rajkamal Kahlon during her residency at Weltmuseum Wien (AT).  
Photo: Rajkamal Kahlon



# MAIN THEMES

## CITIZENSHIP AND BELONGING

How can museums' collections and programs provide sources of identification in an increasingly differentiated European society? How do they function as nodes for engagement for both local and transnational identity and belonging?

## STEREOCULTURE: THE ART OF LISTENING

Which strategies help museums to develop and sustain practices that encourage multi-vocal approaches? How can museums introduce such inclusive, democratic or co-creative activities?

## CONNECTING DIASPORAS OF OBJECTS AND PEOPLES

If ethnographic collections in European museums can be seen as 'Object Diasporas' - what can they tell us about relations between mobility, materiality and feelings of belonging? How can ethnographic museums with their collections function as mediators to build relationships with originating and diasporic communities?

## COLLECTING FUTURES

As museums in contemporary Europe shift their focus and start addressing post-migrant communities, how will this affect our collecting behaviour in the future? How do new digital technologies influence our collecting practices and the interpretation of our collections? What role can or will originating and diasporic communities - both local and international - play for these new collecting practices?

## CREATIVE DIALOGUE

What kind of collaborations between ethnographic museums and contemporary artists succeeded in creating inspiring works of art or projects of cultural critique? How can new modes of public engagement be developed through a creative dialogue? Which methods help to bring together different disciplines and maximize the public's encounter with ethnographic museums?

## DIGITAL CONTACT ZONES

How does digital technology influence the ways in which ethnographic and world culture museums work? In what ways can the shifts that digital technologies have created for human experience and political subjectivities coincide with these museums as an archive of world cultures? How does new media technology help to revolutionize the ways in which we understand and experience objects?

Lab-Meeting "Outside In - Illuminating Guests",  
Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (BE).



# ACTIVITIES

In a number of activities, the SWICH partner museums work on methods for a future-oriented museum practice. In differing settings questions concerning citizenship and belonging, collaborative exhibition practices, innovative artistic interventions or the impact of digital technology on future collecting are discussed.



Workshop "Co-Collecting", Research  
Center for Material Culture (NL).  
Photo: NMvW

Participants examine the main SWICH themes and present best practice examples in a series of workshops, organized at different partner museums. Discussions revolve around key aspects such as collections as source of identification, co-collecting or digital futures.



Presentation of Leah Enkiwe  
Abayao, expert in residence at  
Linden-Museum Stuttgart (DE).  
Photo: SEZ-Stiftung Entwicklungs-  
Zusammenarbeit Baden-Württemberg



Lab-Meeting "Diaspora Objects",  
Museu de Cultures del Món, Barcelona (ES).

At two international conferences the findings of SWICH are shared with a broader audience. In Leiden in November 2016 and in Cambridge in 2018 scholars and professionals with different disciplinary backgrounds critically discuss the themes of the project. For those who are not able to come to Cambridge and Leiden the proceedings of the conferences will be available online.



Lecture by Benoît De L'Estoile,  
Workshop "Visual Arts, Performing  
Arts & Museums" at Pigorini Museum  
Rome (IT). Photo: Fabio Naccari

In four experimental exhibitions and four collaborative exhibitions, the SWICH museums put the concepts dealt with at the workshops and conferences into practice. Together with representatives of diasporic communities, artists or designers the museums develop innovative exhibition formats and redefine exhibition making at museums. A printed booklet documents each exhibition.



Artist Talk with Bianca Baldi,  
artist in residence at Slovene  
Ethnographic Museum (SI).  
Photo: Slovene Ethnographic Museum



Workshop "Shared Authority" at MuCEM (FR), presentation by Fanny Wonu Veys.



Workshop "Co-Collecting", Research Center for Material Culture (NL), lecture by Helen Mears. Photo: NMvW

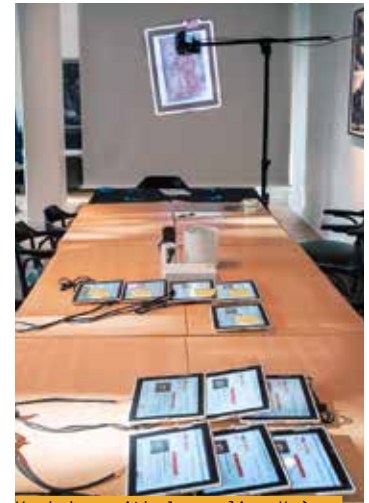
To enable in-depth research for artists and researchers external to the institutions, the museums organize various residencies. The topics "Outside In - Illuminating Guests" and "Co-Creation Labs" guide the guests through their stay in the respective city. The outcome of each residency is defined by the museums themselves and can take the form of an exhibition, a performance, a website or any other experimental format.



Workshop "Collections as Source of Identification", Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (BE).

In one publication, the "Residencies Revisited Sketchbook", all residencies are presented. Both the residencies and the exhibitions are linked to lab-meetings where the collaborators and museums involved participate and discuss concepts, experiences and results.

For a coffee table book publication, an innovative photographer documents ethnographic museums in Europe. Accompanied by interviews, the book presents ethnographic and world culture museums with their contemporary aims and practices. At the end of the project, the scientific results of SWICH will be presented in a scholarly publication.



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Throughout the project, the website swich-project.eu serves as a space for documentation, discussion and information about the project.



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