

## ICOM 27<sup>th</sup> General Conference

### *"The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities"*

**Date:** November 2025    **Venue:** Dubai, UAE

### A Joint Conference between **ICMAH**, **ICR**, **DRMC**

#### INTRODUCTION

Regional museums serve as vital historical and archaeological heritage custodians, bridging the gap between local communities and global histories. However, in an era of rapid urbanization, climate change, and digital transformation, these institutions face unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Natural disasters, political instability, and conflict pose significant threats to regional museums, jeopardizing their capacity to preserve historical, archaeological, and cultural heritage artifacts, as well as the safety of their staff and the integrity of their infrastructure.

ICOM International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History (The **ICMAH**), International Committee for Regional Museums (**ICR**), and International Committee for Disaster Resilient Museums (**DRMC**) are inviting scholars, museum professionals, archaeologists, educators, and community advocates to contribute papers that discuss the preservation of regional museums and their archaeological collections during critical periods. Additionally, the conference will facilitate discussions regarding potential mitigation strategies to effectively respond to such crises through **Session A**. In **Session B**, The **ICMAH**, **ICR** will focus on reimagine how regional museums can leverage technology, participatory practices, and inclusive narratives to remain relevant and resilient. Additionally, explore innovative strategies for interpreting archaeological collections beyond traditional display methods, while addressing the evolving role of regional museums as dynamic spaces for education, social cohesion, and sustainable development. **Session C**, will be a separate session for each Committee. So, ICMAH is designating this session to discuss The Future of History and Archaeology Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities.

#### *Session A: "Strategic Planning for Regional and Local Museums in Response to Crisis for the Archaeological Heritage Preservation"*

**ICMAH, ICR, DRMC**

This session is designed to examine how museums prepare for significant events and the insights that can be derived from museum professionals during or after such incidents. The experiences of these professionals in disaster response provide valuable information to the museum sector regarding strategies aimed at safeguarding lives, collections, and archaeological sites. This knowledge will be disseminated through case studies that detail effective planning prior to disasters, responses during crises, and successful communication strategies that have been implemented.

- **Resources allocation:** to protect archaeological sites and collections from potential risks.
- **Risk Management plans:** that involve input and participation from local communities in regional museums.
- **Innovative Methods & Strategies:** to prioritize historical and archaeological collections for preservation during emergencies, ensuring smart resource allocation, and the successful interventions to uncover the key factors that contributed to their effectiveness
- **Fast Response:** the essential responses that must adopt in times of conflict or crisis.
- **Museums & Communication:** The pivotal role museums play in communication during disasters and their critical contributions during the recovery phase.
- **New Generation of Museum Professionals:** Involvement of youth in protection of local identities and cultural heritage.

## *Session B: "Interpreting History and Archaeology at Regional Museums - Beyond Display and Innovative Interpretation of Archaeological Heritage"*

**ICMAH & ICR**

Integrating advanced technology into archaeological practices has revolutionized how researchers uncover, document, and interpret the past. During excavation and documentation, tools such as LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging), 3D laser scanning, and geographic information systems (GIS) enable precise mapping of sites, even beneath dense vegetation or urban layers. These methods enhance accuracy and preserve fragile artifacts by reducing physical handling.

Beyond the field, technology plays an equally critical role in communicating archaeological findings to the public. Museums now employ Virtual Reality (VR) to transport visitors to ancient sites, while Augmented Reality (AR) overlays interactive reconstructions atop excavated ruins or artifacts. Interactive touchscreens and holographic displays contextualize objects with multimedia narratives, bridging the gap between ancient cultures and modern audiences. Digital databases and online platforms, such as *3D Heritage Archive*, democratize access to discoveries, while AI-driven apps tailor educational content to diverse learning styles. By merging cutting-edge technology with traditional archaeology, researchers and educators foster a deeper, more inclusive understanding of humanity's shared heritage.

### **Theme 1: Interpreting History and Archaeology at Regional Museums**

- **Community-Centered Narratives:** Engaging local communities in co-creating historical and archaeological interpretations.
- **Decolonizing Heritage:** Addressing colonial legacies in historical and archaeological collections and redefining ownership.

### **Theme 2: Beyond Display: Innovative Interpretation**

- **Documentation and Mapping:** working on field and the use of GIS mapping systems, photogrammetry, LiDAR, drones, 3D scanning, GPR, digital databases.
- **Digital Tools and Immersive Technologies:** AR/VR for reconstructing archaeological sites. AI-driven storytelling and interactive databases.
- **Multisensory Experiences:** Tactile exhibits, soundscapes, and olfactory installations to enhance accessibility.
- **Case Studies:** Successful reinterpretations of historical and archaeological collections (e.g., reburial ceremonies, digital repatriation).

## *Session C: "The Future of History and Archaeology Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities"*

**ICMAH**

- **Climate Resilience:** Mitigating environmental threats to archaeological collections and sites.
- **Museums as Social Infrastructure:** Addressing migration, displacement, and urbanization through heritage programs.
- **Sustainable Funding Models:** Public-private partnerships, crowdfunding, and ethical sponsorship.
- **Digital Transformation:** Hybrid exhibitions, blockchain for provenance tracking, and virtual collections.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

- The language of the conference is **ENGLISH**, NO simultaneous translation will be available in both languages.
- For papers submission, and submission instructions, and dates, please Visit ICOM Dubai website (<https://dubai2025.icom.museum/>)
- Application for travel grants shall be announced later.
- The presentations will be in PowerPoint format during the conference and the full papers will be delivered in the same time.
- Instructions for writing the full text will be communicated for accepted papers.
- Two joint sessions, each committee will hold a separate session solely for its members. Please note the topics covered in these individual sessions.

## ORGANIZING COMMITTEES & PARTIES

The Conference is organized by ICOM International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History (The **ICMAH**), in cooperation with International Committee for Regional Museums (**ICR**), and International Committee for Disaster Resilient Museums (**DRMC**).

## OFFSITE MEETING

The off-site meetings will be separate for each committee and information about them will be published separately

## CONTACTS & INFORMATION

For information and queries, please contact: [secretary.icmah@icom.museum](mailto:secretary.icmah@icom.museum), [info.icr23@gmail.com](mailto:info.icr23@gmail.com), and [chair.drmc@icom.museum](mailto:chair.drmc@icom.museum)

Or visit: <https://icmah.mini.icom.museum/> , <https://icr.mini.icom.museum/news/>, and <https://drmc.mini.icom.museum/>

We look forward to receive your abstract then the paper contributions and participation.

Respectfully,

**ICOM-ICMAH-ICR-DRMC Boards**