



‘Museums and Social Change: the case for and against digitising’

**ICOM-SA Workshop, 13 July 2012
KwaZulu-Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg**

Programme

08.45 Registration and tea

09:00 Opening remarks –Rooksana Omar, ICOM-SA President

09:05 The future of digitisation: the case of the Mandela Foundation
– Verne Harris, Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory

09:35 The Google Art Project ISANG – Lailah Hisham,
Iziko South African National Gallery

10:05 Ethics and digitisation – Sylvia van Zyl, ICOM-SA Training
Portfolio

10:25 Questions and comments

10:45 Summation and vote of thanks – Prof Shahid Vawda,
ICOM-SA Special Projects Portfolio

11:00 Refreshments

11.30 ICOM-SA AGM



'Museums and social change: the case for and against digitizing'

ICOM and ICOM-SA has been engaging in a series of workshops on museums and social change in the 21st century and one of the central themes is: What role can museums play in social change? Do they merely mirror social change? Can museums become proactive agents of social change? Are they institutions that can engage in reflexive analysis through their displays and exhibitions? Can they present critical alternative perspectives? These are some of the questions that ICOM and ICOM-SA would like to address and have been addressing this year.

In the next workshop, to be held on the 13th July 2012, we would like to extend these concerns to the issue of digitization in museums. Most people think of digitization as a technical issue. However, digitization is both a technical issue as well as one that concerns why and how images, artefacts, objects are digitized, stored and put on display. It also involves the question of how accessible or inaccessible digital archives are to a range of people from researchers to ordinary citizens. In other instances digitizing involves choice of images for particular reasons and possibly also manipulation of images be it a reflection of artistic, ethnographic, archaeological, historical or any contemporary digitised object. This not only involves ethics but the very core of the museum – its collection and the poetics and politics of display.

At the workshop we shall have two presenters that will present the case of digitizing from contrasting kinds of museums: one deals with history, memory, social change and justice while the other deals with the more visual aspects of art galleries. This workshop will therefore focus on the themes of memory, visualization and digitization and how the inaccessible archive becomes the centre stage on a global platform. The speakers at the workshop should provoke lively discussion and challenge prevailing ideas. We also encourage debate on alternative perspectives, including why digitizing may not be the in the best interests of museums or any heritage institution.

Entrance is free of charge and seats are limited. You are therefore requested to indicate your attendance to Marianne Gertenbach, email: dmpgertenbach@telkomsa.net before the end of June.