



Press Release

Experts Ponder Ways of Preserving Priceless Sounds and Images from Extinction

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Brussels, 2-4 September – International experts from across the world this week will discuss ways to look beyond professional and institutional boundaries, actively listening to each other and sharing strategies to ensure a safe and creative tomorrow for sound and image heritage. Their concrete strategies will sustain this unique heritage, creatively using it to promote social development.

The international conference titled “Unlocking Sound and Image Heritage” is making a call for fostering cross disciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange, to ensure that this heritage is available in the future. The gathering is supported by an alliance of 15 national and international cultural institutions that work with such recordings, bringing together over 200 creators, collectors, cultural heritage practitioners, policy makers, innovators and business leaders from 40 countries.

Today’s knowledge on preservation and access is fragmented, often trapped in separate areas of expertise, presenting a huge challenge to those who wish to collect and use audio-visual material. ICCROM’s Sound Image Collections Conservation programme has been actively engaged in developing a response to this global challenge for the past eight years. After six international events, the 2015 conference will provide an opportunity to celebrate the successes of the SOIMA network, strengthen partnerships with a renewed sense of purpose, and forge new alliances to bring this work forward.

“Time is running out for those trying to preserve these priceless records of the world’s heritage and knowledge. These recordings may simply disappear, unless properly collected and preserved for wider use,” said Stefano de Caro, who heads the International Centre for the Study and the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCRUM) -- the conference’s main

organizer, together with Belgium's Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA).

"Thanks to rapid technological advancements, recorded sound and images have permeated our lives and our imagination. This is very positive, because more and more people can share these memories, both personal and collective," he observed. "However, there is a catch. In documents from the Middle Ages, you can still read what was written. Now there are changes in format almost every day." More collaboration is needed with industry in order to ensure that cultural records of yesterday and today remain accessible tomorrow, he said.

Conference highlights include a keynote performance by Mshai Mwangola, a performance scholar, storyteller, orator and TEDX speaker; a talk on an innovative cost-benefit calculator for digital preservation by Chris Lacinak, founder and president of AudioVisual Preservation Solutions; and a debate on open access vs. rights management moderated by Howard Besser, founding director of the NYU Moving Image Archiving and Preservation Program ("MIAP").

The participants will hear a concert and talk on eco-acoustic complexities of the still-intact equatorial forests by David Monacchi, sound artist, researcher and eco-acoustic composer. Monacchi's multidisciplinary project "Fragments of Extinction," nearly 15 years in the making, documents the world's last remaining areas of undisturbed primary equatorial rainforest. A video concert, Timbila Tracks by Matchume Zango and Walter Verdin, will propose a way to preserve and update a disappearing traditional musical culture from Mozambique.

The conference sessions will take place at the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts (KVAB), www.kvab.be and at the Musical Instruments Museum, www.mim.be in Brussels.

For full programme, please see www.soima2015.org

Media representatives interested in covering the event may apply for accreditation to the KIK-IRPA Press Office, attn. Simon Laevers, +32 (2) 73 96 803, simon.laevers@kikirpa.be

Experts participating in the conference will be available for individual interviews upon request.

ICCROM

ICCROM is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to the conservation of cultural heritage. ICCROM aims at improving the quality of conservation practice as well as raising awareness about the importance of preserving cultural heritage. It serves the international community as represented by its Member States, which currently number 134. ICCROM contributes to preserving cultural heritage in the world today and for the future through five main areas of activity: training, information, research, cooperation and advocacy



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