

Making National Museums: Comparing institutional arrangements, narrative scope and cultural integration (NaMu)

■ First Call
5th September 2007

NaMu III: National museums in a global world

End of call date: 21 September 2007

Department of culture studies and oriental languages, University of Oslo, Norway,
19-21 November 2007

This three-day conference is the third in a series of six international workshops bringing together current and recent PhD students and senior scholars. Application for participation is open for all disciplines doing research on the historical and contemporary dynamics surrounding National Museums. The program and series is presented on www.namu.se.

The conference European national museums in a global world is part of the programme *Making National Museums: Comparing institutional arrangements, narrative scope and cultural integration* (NaMu), funded by Marie Curie Conferences & Training Courses – one of the four so-called Host-driven actions aimed at supporting research networks, research organisations and enterprises. The specific objective is to bring together researchers with different levels of experience.

The NaMu programme will form a new departure for understanding and working with the diversity of museum institutions in Europe by bringing the multidisciplinary field of museum and heritage studies together with a sharp and comparative focus on national museums. The purpose of the programme is to develop the tools, concepts and organisational resources necessary for training researchers, investigating and comparing the major public structures of national museums, responding to challenges of globalisation, European integration, and new media. This will be achieved by a series of conferences providing a venue for newer scholars and eminent researchers from Europe and elsewhere to gather and develop the multidisciplinary competence necessary for understanding and comparing the dynamics of national museums in a framework of broader studies of historical culture and identity politics. The full programme of six consecutive workshops is presented on the website www.namu.se.

In two earlier conferences this year we have explored the complexity of defining National Museums (NaMu I, Norrköping 26-28 February) and discussed contemporary narrative analyses (NaMu II, Leicester 18-20 June). In November, in Oslo, we will deal specifically

with how diversity and difference are negotiated in an increasingly globalized world and how this presents contemporary challenges to national museums.

The Oslo conference will have three kinds of activities: Key note speakers, paper presentations and opportunities for exploring national museums in Oslo engaged in questions relating to globalization and multicultural challenges. Details regarding key note speakers and excursions will be presented later.

The intention of the conference is to explore how the museum has dealt with, and still deals with, “the Other”. What happens when European national museums are confronted with the expectation of responding to multi-cultural processes in a globalized world? It would be expected that the responses have differed widely between European national museums, and therefore the conference should focus on these differences and develop theoretical and methodological tools for describing and analyzing these differences.

The Oslo conference in November 2007 will try to address some of these questions, and try to do so in diverse ways and from a range of perspectives. Probably a good way to approach this field is by starting with the overall perspectives of post-colonialism: the construction of ethnical approaches to minority identity and – not least – to the use of history and cultural heritage in strategies that aim at legitimating political and economic power for new groups and societies in different parts of the world. The question of “the Other” is here not only a question of justice or moral standards but also, of course, a question concerning the struggle for cultural, symbolic and political power.

Focal points of the conference will be such questions as:

- How are past and present enemies of the state dealt with in national museums historical narratives?
- How are religious or confessional diversities dealt with in national museums?
- How have national museums addressed the challenges of multiculturalism? How has this been challenged by one-nation politics?
- What has been the interplay between the European dimension and universal citizenship and human rights?

From these general, overarching questions, the delegates may then explore:

- The political, rhetorical and practical strategies adopted by national museums.
- To what extent it is possible to combine the concept of a national museum with a multi-cultural approach.

Papers can deal with any of these themes. Papers that take a comparative perspective on space and/or time are welcomed. Some of the papers will be picked up to be used more

extensively for workshops, while others may be used for preparatory reading beforehand. This will give us the opportunity to discuss empirical responses to the questions above, but also to deal with theory and methodology.

It is possible to participate without presenting a paper if you can provide a strong motivation of the mutual benefit anticipated.

More information can be found on the website, www.namu.se. Send an application by registering at www.namu.se and submit an abstract or motivation of 1-3 pages to the conference assistant, **Richard Susegg** – rsusegg@gmail.com before 21 September 2007. Admittance will be decided before 8 October. Papers should be delivered no later than 1 November. You will also need to supply Richard Susegg with details of your likely travel costs. Reaching the University of Oslo and the Department of culture studies and oriental languages can be done through Oslo Gardermoen airport and from there train and tram (ca 40 minutes).

The final selection of contributions will be made to ensure a rich disciplinary and national mix of delegates.

Grants for accepted participants will cover limited travel costs and accommodation at the conference.

There are three categories of participation:

1. There are 30 paid places for current PhD students who have not completed more than 4 years of postgraduate research.
2. There are 10 paid places for current postdoctoral researchers with less than 6 years postgraduate research experience.

Funding covers two nights accommodation, a contribution to travel expenses and all meals whilst at the conference.

3. A select group of keynote speakers and advisory board members will participate at the conference. Individuals who believe they could help shape these workshops through presentations etc should contact the local organisers for each workshop.

Past, present and future meetings in the NaMu series (specific titles to be confirmed in some cases):

- **Workshop 1: *Setting the frames***, Cultural Studies, Linköping University, Norrköping, Sweden, 26-28 February 2007.
- **Workshop 2: *National museum narratives***, Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, UK, 18-20 June 2007
- **Workshop 3: *National museums in a global world***, Department of culture studies and oriental languages, University of Oslo, Norway, 19-21 November 2007
- **Workshop 4: *Comparing - national museums, territories, nation-building and change***, Cultural Studies, Linköping University, Norrköping, Sweden, 18-20 February 2008
- **Workshop 5. *National museums in a technological Europe***, Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, 16-18 June 2008
- **Workshop 6. *Concluding conference: European national museums encountering a globalized culture***, Department of culture studies and oriental languages, University of Oslo, Norway, 17-19 November 2008

Organising Committee

Professor Peter Aronsson, Culture Studies, Linköping University, Sweden.

Professor Arne Bugge Amundsen, Cultural History, University of Oslo, Norway.

Professor Simon Knell, Museum Studies, University of Leicester, UK.