

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

■ First Call
5th September 2007

NaMu IV: Comparing - national museums, territories, nation-building and change

End of call date: 21 September 2007

Linköping University, Norrköping, Sweden, 18-20 February 2008

This three-day conference is the fourth 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.

Comparing is part of the program *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 earlier conferences we have explored the complexity of defining National Museums and laboured with contemporary narrative analyses. In November in Oslo we will deal specifically with how diversity and difference are negotiated in an increasingly globalized world and looked into contemporary challenges.

The fourth conference in the series will take an **explicit historical and comparative outlook** dealing with any of the main questions of the program:

1) Comparing relationships between different forms of national museums and their related academic disciplines. To what extent were and are they part of institutions of knowledge? Do they present a coherent approach to memory politics? To what extent are there autonomous

logics operating in the evolution of cultural, historical, technical, natural and art national museums?

2) Comparing the narratives told in and by museums: how do they evolve over time? What “us” and what “others” were constructed with what means? Do they differ between countries structurally?

3) Comparing the role of national museums in the overall history of their setting (relating to disciplinary, esthetical, political and economical developments. Are they forming nations, creating hegemony, arguing for change, disrupting order or integrate?

Papers might deal with any of these themes. Papers that take a comparative strand in space and/or time are welcomed. Those papers that are based more on case studies are asked to articulate comparative aspects that will be focused when placed into sessions. Some of the papers will be picked up to be used more extensively for workshops, while others will be more of input to be read beforehand. This will give us the opportunity to discuss empirical answers to the questions above, but also to deal with methodology. How can comparison be used to enhance the level of knowledge in this field of study? What are the most fruitful ambitions to generalize, individualize, theory development through comparative reflection? What are the most effective level of comparison: institutions, nations, processes? It is also possible to participate without presenting a paper if you can provide a strong motivation of the mutual benefit anticipated.

More information on the website, www.namu.se. Send application by registering at www.namu.se and submit an abstract or motivation of 1-3 pages to Andreas.Nyblom@isak.liu.se before 21 September 2006. Admittance will be decided before 1 November. Papers to be delivered. 10 January. You will also need to supply Andreas with details of your likely travel costs. Reaching Campus Norrköping, Linköping University can be done through Linköping or Norrköping airports or Stockholm (Arlanda or Nyköping), Copenhagen (Kastrup) and then train/bus. Final selection 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.