

Call for Papers

Session A:

Homo Viator. Dressing Nomads, Travellers, Migrants and Pilgrims: Ethical Challenges and Implications

The nomadic lifestyle is connected with the beginnings of many civilizations, but it is also an important feature of the culture of numerous contemporary societies. The need to travel is an indispensable part of human life. This Costume and ICEthics joint session invites submissions for research papers that explore the multifaceted relationship between dress and nomadic cultures, both ancient and modern, focusing on the ethical challenges and implications that arise from these interactions. Throughout history, nomadic groups have developed unique and highly functional forms of dress adapted to their specific environments, social structures, and cultural practices. These clothing traditions often hold deep symbolic meaning, reflecting identity, status, and worldview. However, the study, preservation, and representation of these traditions, particularly in an increasingly globalised world, raise complex ethical questions. This session addresses these issues by bringing together interdisciplinary perspectives from archaeology, anthropology, fashion studies, cultural studies, history, and ethics.

We seek contributions that examine a wide range of case studies and theoretical approaches, including, but not limited to, the following:

Themes:

- **Reconstructing the Past:** Archaeological and historical analyses of ancient nomadic dress, including methods of preservation, interpretation, and the challenges of representing ephemeral materials.
- **Cultural Appropriation and Representation:** The use of nomadic dress elements in contemporary fashion, film, and other media, and the ethical dilemmas surrounding cultural appropriation, misrepresentation, and the erasure of cultural heritage.
- **Identity and Dress:** The role of dress in constructing and expressing individual and collective identities within nomadic communities, and how external forces impact these identities.
- **The Commodification of Tradition:** The production and sale of “traditional” nomadic clothing and textiles, and the economic, social, and cultural consequences for nomadic communities.
- **Sustainability and Ethics:** The ecological knowledge embedded in traditional nomadic dress practices, and the potential for sustainable and ethical fashion practices in contemporary contexts.
- **Museums and Heritage:** The display and preservation of nomadic dress in museums, and the ethical considerations related to ownership, repatriation, and community engagement.
- **Nomadic Dress in a Globalised World:** The impact of globalisation, modernisation, and cross-cultural exchange on nomadic dress traditions.
- **Gender and Dress:** How dress reflects and reinforces gender roles and identities in nomadic societies, and the challenges to these roles in a changing world.

- **The Politics of Dress:** How dress expresses resistance, asserts cultural sovereignty, or negotiates power relations between nomadic groups and dominant societies.

Submission Guidelines:

- Abstracts (250-300 words) should clearly outline the research question, methodology, and key findings or arguments.
- Please include a brief biographical statement (100 words) and contact information.
- Submissions should be sent via the ICOM Dubai website by going to the Call for papers
- Deadline for Abstract Submissions: June 22, 2025
- Notification of Acceptance: July 31, 2025

We encourage submissions from a wide range of disciplines and perspectives

Session B:

From talk to action with a global perspective: what does museum decolonisation really look like? Decolonisation across different contexts

This conference session addresses a pressing and often uncomfortable question: Are museums truly transforming or engaging in symbolic gestures to appear progressive? In recent years, many institutions have made public commitments to “decolonisation”, but the substance behind these declarations is often unclear. We invite contributions that critically assess whether Western museums are enacting meaningful change or simply adopting the language of decolonisation without altering foundational power structures. Conversely, we are interested in opening the conversation beyond the often Euro-American-centric lens and recognising that decolonisation means different things in different historical, cultural, and geopolitical contexts. We encourage contributors to explore how museums in the Global South, Indigenous contexts, or formerly colonised regions approach and understand decolonisation in ways that may differ from those of Western institutions.

From Talk to Action — What Does Museum Decolonization Really Look Like?

Presenters are invited to critically examine how we might distinguish between genuine structural change and more superficial efforts—such as updated labels, renamed galleries, or the hiring of diverse staff without accompanying shifts in institutional power. Contributors may explore how progress in decolonizing museums can be meaningfully evaluated, whether through repatriation efforts, changes in governance and staff demographics, community participation, or other tangible criteria. This theme also encourages reflection on whether museums are truly transforming their internal cultures or merely changing their external image, and whether they are fundamentally rethinking the ways they collect, interpret, and display objects—or simply rebranding colonial collections. Submissions may include both

constructive case studies of institutions undergoing radical change and critical analyses of those that have failed to follow through on decolonial commitments

Global Perspectives — Décolonisation accross Different Contexts

Possible directions for papers may include explorations of how the Western Museum model itself is rooted in colonial ideology, and how institutions outside the West are challenging or adapting this framework. Authors might examine the differences between postcolonial and settler colonial contexts — for example, comparing how decolonisation is approached in Australasia, Africa, or any other former colonial context, and how historical legacies and current political realities influence museum practices. Indigenous-led museums and cultural centers may offer grounded examples of decolonisation from the community level, providing valuable insights into alternative models. Papers could also consider how museums in formerly colonised countries handle the display of colonial-era objects or represent their own cultural narratives in ways that subvert dominant colonial interpretations. Cross-cultural comparisons are especially welcome, such as examining repatriation efforts across regions, or contrasting community engagement strategies in different national contexts. Finally, the role of language, indigenous knowledge systems, and oral histories in shaping curatorial narratives invites reflection on how decolonization intersects with broader questions of representation, authority, and interpretation.

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Session C:

The session is open to all our members and ICOM Dubai attendees. There is no call for papers. It is advertised as the theme that deals with New Technologies

War Childhood Museum: Video Games and Museum Collections

This session is solely devoted to the New Technologies theme of ICOM Dubai and will investigate the collaboration between museum professionals and game developers that can lead to innovative approaches to education, engagement, and cultural preservation. The relationship between video games and museum collections is a dynamic and evolving field with the potential to enrich both the artistic and gaming landscapes. By carefully considering the ethical implications and harnessing the creative possibilities, this intersection can offer valuable and engaging experiences for diverse audiences.

This session will explore the ethical dilemmas of translating a sensitive museum collection into a video game, focusing on *We Grew Up in War*, a game currently in development by the War

Childhood Museum (WCM). It will highlight the role of co-creation with the community and contributors to the collection and discuss the challenges of adapting deeply personal experiences of childhood affected by war into an interactive format. Participants will also have the opportunity to test a demo version of the game.

Session Hosts and Presenters:

Jasminko Halilovic (Founder and Director General of the WCM) and Amina Krvavac (Country Director, Bosnia and Herzegovina of WCM)