

BULLETIN

of the European Museum Forum

OCTOBER 2008

The 2009 EMF Annual Meeting will be held in Bursa, Turkey from 6-9 May. The registration form and details will be circulated with the EMF Bulletin in January. They will also be available on the website.

Strangled, not stirred When the newly established Association of Danish Museums (ODM) merged with the long established Danish Museum Training Institute on 1 July 2006, expectations were high. Not only was the Association overtaking an economically sound institute, it was also marrying one of the museological training institutes in Europe with a solid reputation built on a long standing tradition in international and Nordic cooperation.

The sound finances of The Danish Museum Training Institute to a great extent thanks to the support of the Heritage Agency in Denmark. Its reputation was built over some two decades, with the annual organisation of 20-25 courses, programmes, excursions and seminars, with some 500-600 participants on all levels of the museum world, not least the successful Nordic Museum Leadership Programme.

So, expectations were that the merger would heighten both professional and museological standards and that even more museum professionals would benefit from more and improved courses and an even more synergetic co-operation with the museum field.

In the autumn of 2006 a new training programme manager was appointed. Shortly after, the Secretary-General of ODM either fired most of the staff of the training institute or forced them to quit, so nothing was in the way of a shining new policy.

In Spring 2008 the website of the Association showed that 73% of all courses and training had been cancelled or postponed and that the few courses that actually were held were registration courses organised by – yes – the Heritage Agency. In March 2008 the General Assembly of ODM demanded the appointment of a director. The new training programme manager disappeared quite suddenly and after a decent interval the Secretary-General quit the job ‘for personal reasons’.

Since 1 July the Association of Danish Museums has been looking for a director who will be appointed some time in the autumn. What will happen to the training department is as yet unclear. **Marieke Burgers, EMF Danish National Correspondent**

2010 European Museum of the Year Award application forms are now available! Copies can be downloaded from the EMF website or obtained from the Administrator, EMF Judging Committee members or National Correspondents. Closing date: 15 March 2009.

One Hundred Years without Tolstoy In June-August 2008 this multimedia exhibition was shown at Yasnaya Polyana – the Leo Tolstoy memorial museum-estate. The exhibition was made as a travelling one, and it is planned to be shown at other places as well between 2008 and 2010.

2010 is the 100th anniversary of the death of Tolstoy; 2008 is the 180th anniversary of his birth (we have just celebrated it on 9 September). These dates provide an occasion for us to reflect again on ourselves and the world which surrounds us. A century later, Tolstoy's creative heritage remains surprisingly relevant, and has lost neither its force nor its ability to convince us.

Tolstoy's works, charged with emotion and sometimes cutting, but always sincere, touched on nearly all of the most acute problems of civilisation. The last century has been a vivid illustration of his bitter reflections and fears.

Tolstoy is not a prophet and not a seer. He is very astute and very engaged. His intense vision takes in everything, penetrating the depth of phenomena and events and surmounting all barriers and boundaries. This is the vision of genius, and it is outside of time; for him it is evident that the nature of many things remains unchanged, regardless of how new their outer shell may appear to us at times.

The exhibition is based on photo- and video materials related to last century's history, and extracts from the writer's literary works, articles, letters and diaries from different years. Thus, Tolstoy's text itself becomes an exhibit which helps the visitors have a kind of dialogue with the author. The texts and images, projected on three screens, make a combination that is both thought-provoking and highly emotional.

It is interesting to reflect on history together with Tolstoy, to try and understand what in our world concerns and alarms him, and to listen to what he so insistently wanted to call to our attention. By this exhibition we wanted to give such an opportunity to our visitors. And it worked, judging by their numerous comments in the interactive guest book, which saved their handwritten entries in the computer.

The exhibition is bilingual, all the texts are shown in Russian and English, and it makes our potential audience really wide. Many of the quotes used have never been translated into English before. All the equipment is light and can be easily transported.

We are looking for new partners, and if you are interested in having such an exhibit at your museum for a while, please contact Elena Petrova, Yasnaya Polyana Museum-Estate. lr-Office@tgk.tolstoy.ru. Tel: +7 48751 76574 EMF Russian National Correspondent

To ease pain, visit an art gallery Great art has been known to lift the spirits – but could it also ease physical pain? Researchers from the University of Bari in Italy believe it can, following an experiment in which volunteers given pricking sensations felt less discomfort when looking at beautiful works of art than at unattractive paintings or blank canvasses. The 10 volunteers had been asked to pick their favourite and least favourite works from a selection of 300, including Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*. They then gazed at paintings while researchers blasted a laser pulse on their hand. The volunteers reported experiencing one-third less pain when looking at the beautiful pictures than when looking at the ones they didn't much like, or at the blank canvas. "Hospitals are designed to be functional", says Dr Marina de Tommaso, who led the research. "We think their aesthetic aspects should be taken into account too." Reported in The Week, Issue 685, 4 October 2008

The Brussels Museums Late-Evening Openings (Nocturnes) have become a classic in the cultural autumn of the Belgian capital. This year again, almost 50 museums are participating. The formula stays unchanged: every Thursday between 5 and 10 p.m. at least six museums will offer guided tours, walks with story-tellers, workshops. It is an ideal opportunity to discover Brussels' museums in a relaxed atmosphere. Access and activities cost only €2.50 (€1 for young people up to 25 years of age); some museums open for free.

The public we welcome at this event is very diverse: Belgians and tourists, young and

old, even families with children... a lot of people who don't have the opportunity to visit museums during the day, because they're working!

This event is organised by the Brussels Museums Council, which also edited the new Brussels Museums map, an essential tool in discovering Brussels' museums. It will allow you to locate them easily and give you indications on how to reach them by public transport. An illustrated mosaic at the back provides practical information on each museum. This map is trilingual (French-Dutch-English) and is free. If you plan your trip to Brussels, we are happy to send you a copy of this map.

If you can't come to Brussels, you can always have a look at www.museumtalks.be. On this very nice website you can listen to short mp3 audio guides for about 40 museums, recorded by artists, musicians and media personalities, as well as by anonymous visitors, talking about works or items that have made a special impression on them. And all in no fewer than 25 languages!

More information can be found on our web portal: www.brusselsmuseums.be. **Leen Ochelen, EMF Belgian National Correspondent**

Joy for Everyday Life - works of art in the Post Museum, Helsinki *The Post Museum opened its doors again at the beginning of September. The first thematic exhibition of the renewed museum is entitled 'Joy for Everyday Life'. It displays works of art from Itella's art collection. Of the approximately 1,000 works of art acquired for the collection, the exhibition displays a selection that includes as many artists as possible. These works of art will now be placed on public display for the first time ever.*

Itella's art collection comprises works of art acquired by Posti-Tele and Suomen PT Oy in the 1990s. The collection was initiated in 1991, when the central postal administration was transformed into a State-owned enterprise. It was added to for approximately eight years and, when Posti and Tele went their separate ways at the end of the 1990s it was divided between Finland Post and Sonera. Works of art are displayed on Itella premises for staff

nationwide, and they have also been on loan in other museums.

The collection aims not only to please staff and customers, but also to promote a positive corporate image and support the Finnish art world. One of the most important acquisition criteria was that all of the works of art should be of domestic origin, and the works were acquired from key artists of the time, not forgetting younger masters. In this exhibition, each artist's most significant work of art in the collection is not necessarily included, because the purpose of the selection chosen for display is to provide an image of the collection's character. **Marja-Liisa Pohjanvirta, EMF Finnish National Correspondent**

News from the UK

Greening the museum The UK National Museum Director's Conference is reviewing the guidelines on the environmental conditions required to conserve collections. Nicolas Serota, the director of the Tate, has already raised the issue of relaxing the guidelines on the range of temperature and humidity at which museum objects are stored at the Bizot group of international museum directors held this year in Budapest. Uppermost on the directors' minds is an alternative to costly and energy-intensive air conditioning.

Fire Brigade Museum in danger The London Fire Brigade Museum's future is under threat after a politician who is looking to cut the fire service's cost called it, "a luxury we can no longer afford." He then added, "when you have seen one brass helmet, you have seen them all," a comment that has kick-started a campaign to save the small museum run by two paid staff and volunteers. The museum is housed in an historic fire station along with the brigade's archives. It has a lively education programme, but is only open to general visitors by appointment.

Two Titians for sale The Duke of Sutherland, who owns two large paintings by Titian which are on long-term loan to the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh, has announced his desire to sell them. The estimated market value is in the region of £100m. The National Gallery of Scotland, and the National Gallery, London, have

joined forces to mount a campaign to purchase them. The Duke has said he is willing to sell them separately, allowing the galleries time to raise the money.

Museums of Damien Hirst The artist Damien Hirst's sale at auction of new works, cutting out his London and New York galleries, raised a total of £111m. Exactly how much Hirst will receive is unclear but it has considerably increased his personal wealth. The multi-millionaire's intentions to open one art gallery in a historic country house and another in a former scenery-painting studio in London, will have received a boost. The planned museums will display works by Hirst and those in his collection, which includes artists such as Francis Bacon, Andy Warhol and Tracey Emin.

Leeds' new municipal museum The new Leeds City Museum opened in September in a former theatre originally built as a lecture hall in the 19th century. The museum displays local history, Egyptology, natural history and ethnography. The floor of a large central space, formerly the stage and auditorium, is now covered in a giant map of Leeds. Six interactive podiums on the map allow visitors to find out more about particular areas and see films made by community groups.

The Great North Museum in Newcastle will combine the collections of the Hancock museum of natural history with collections of classical Greek pottery, archaeology of Hadrian's Wall and ethnography. The combined museum is a partnership between the University of Newcastle, Tyne and Wear Museums Service, a natural history society and a society of antiquaries.

Historic Royal Palaces in London, which is responsible for Hampton Court Palace and the Tower of London, will be celebrating the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII's coronation. There will be a new exhibition in Hampton Court, complementing part one about Young Henry, which opened in 2007. The king's armour will be displayed in the Tower.

The Victoria & Albert Museum's new Medieval and Renaissance galleries will open, the most extensive redisplay since the British Galleries, which opened in 2000.

Other recently completed projects that form the museum's rolling programme of renewal include a new education centre. Also under way is a theatre gallery, to house part of the collection previously on show in the now closed Theatre Museum, Covent Garden.
Javier Pes, EMF UK National Correspondent

Museums and their architects: ideas for constructive co-operation was the main focus of various presentations given at the joint annual congress of the Association of Swiss Museums (VMS) and ICOM Schweiz, held at the beginning of September 2008. Museum directors, culture mediators and architects exchanged ideas and discussed models and possible means of co-operation. The enthusiasm of the 130 participants reflected that of the museums as far as architecture is concerned – given that for the majority of those present, a project for renovating, converting or extending their respective museums is currently in progress.

The five assumptions presented by architect Isa Stürm (Urs Wolf SA, Architect ETH/BSA, Zurich) are given as examples, together with a summary of the explanations given by museum advisor Willi Athenstädt, Bern. Examples regarding museum construction:

Assumption 1 *The architects responsible for designing a museum are given a detailed introduction to the institution's current collection, its prospective collection policy and to its activities in general.*

Assumption 2 *Architects obtain information from all the people connected with the museum. They can then take into account the experience of curators, conservators and restorers, technical staff, museum educationalists, librarians, shop assistants, barkeepers, gardeners etc.*

Assumption 3 *Architects and museum professionals review the structure of the visiting public and how it might develop in the future: people visiting exhibitions or listening to talks, cinema audiences, library users, students attending lectures, shop customers, restaurant clients, people hiring event rooms, passers by...*

Assumption 4 *Museum professionals and architects together define the museum's space allocation plan and zoning. They*

must carefully consider the ratio between different areas, whether internal or external, open all of the time or some of the time, checked or unsecured, available to rent or open to the public. It is also important to leave some potential for expansion and new ideas.

Assumption 5 *Building a museum requires precise knowledge about its history, its urban context and the culture it belongs to. From an international point of view, it should present quite distinct local, cultural and temporal characteristics.*

*Willi Athenstädt, Museum advisor, Bern
Users, planners, supervisors. Mediation
processes in museum construction*

Many people involved in a construction process within the culture industry, particularly in the case of a museum or exhibition centre, believe that they are part of a community of likeminded people, united by a single aim; to achieve the best possible result. But that is a fallacy. Of course everyone wants to achieve the best result, but there is no clarity or consensus about what the best result actually is, either at the start or even at the end of the process.

Babel Constructors, users, planners and contractors ostensibly speak the same language, but their positions are clouded by their own justifiable, role-related interests. Recognising these positions and coordinating them in discussions and decision-making is a complex, intricate process that requires diplomacy or confrontation, perseverance or compliance. In other words, sticking to the same metaphor, it is a case of understanding and translating all the different languages and finding a lingua franca. That is a task for the moderator, who is generally the representative of the user/constructor.

The early bird catches the worm The idea and agenda behind a museum construction project often originate at a higher level. The people who subsequently put the project into practice and future museum users are not usually involved in the process, but they are the ones who bear responsibility for it once the construction has been completed. It is essential to involve these parties in the planning process as soon as possible, firstly so that they can grasp the vision behind the

project and secondly so that requirements related to its future use can be taken into account. These parties must remain available to assist the project in the long term even after inauguration/start-up.

Class trip Drawing up the criteria for a building project is a matter of making well-informed comparisons and critically weighing up data before setting project-specific standards. This requires knowledge of a wide range of other projects and their details, including awareness of what has already proven itself elsewhere on an everyday basis. This sort of knowledge cannot simply be obtained from specialist literature, but is best acquired locally or by talking to the people involved. This obviously concerns the representatives of the users/constructors as well as the entire planning committee.

The long river Every process follows a predictable course. Any object that is dropped into a spring flows down the stream and turns up again somewhere along the river. The building process follows the same logic. It just needs to be anticipated. Something that is today declared harmless by someone involved in the construction process may later turn out to be irreparable. That is when the experience of representatives of the users/constructors is needed to prevent rescheduling, alterations or irreversible decisions.

The naïve fallacy Anybody who builds something or who has something built needs to be represented by competent people. This will involve great expense, as knowledge is required in the areas of curatorship, exhibitions, architecture, company organisation, engineering, material science, law, building standards, logistics and much more. Representatives of the users/constructors first need to acquire all of the above as well as being available at an early enough stage. Their managerial and supervisory roles mean that their involvement is required during the entire construction process. Consequently, they cannot undertake or continue any other tasks. Once the construction has been completed, they must remain available for optimisation and reorganisation purposes, at least until the end of the key warranty periods. This all costs time, and therefore

money – something that is often greatly underestimated.

Summaries of the other presentations can be found in German and French at: www.museums.ch > For specialists > Annual congress.

Susann Bosshard-Kälin, National Correspondent EMF, Switzerland.
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'Germany has a long comical tradition'
Comedy is not usually associated with Germany, but a new museum in Frankfurt opened on 1 October dedicated to humorous art and hopes to put the record straight. In an article written for *The Guardian* newspaper in the UK (7 October 2008) Jochen Hung comments:

Frankfurt, Germany's financial centre and the seat of the European Central Bank, isn't a particularly funny place these days. The credit crunch has hit this hub of international finance especially hard. Yet in the midst of all this gloom, Frankfurt city council last week opened the Museum for Comic Art (Museum für Komische Kunst). It is, according to the broadsheet *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the 'first of its kind worldwide' and boasts 'one of the greatest riches of pictorial humour to be found in Germany'. The people of Frankfurt love the idea: more than 1,700 visitors flocked to the opening ceremony, undeterred by a particularly fierce rainstorm.

It might seem incongruous to some British people that the world's first museum dedicated to what Americans still call 'the funnies' should be based in Germany, of all places. But it actually makes perfect sense, according to Achim Frenz, the museum's founder and director. "Germany has a long comical tradition", he told *The Guardian*. "The stereotype of the humourless German has always been unfounded and with our museum we want to prove this image wrong."

At the heart of the new comic collection is the work of the artists of the New Frankfurt School, a loose club of

illustrators, poets and painters who formed in the early 1970s and borrowed their name from the group of neo-Marxist philosophers that included Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas, the original Frankfurt School. The reference to the fathers of critical theory is a joke in itself, of course, because although all the members of the New Frankfurt School were – like everyone else at the time – highly politicised, they never intended to stage a revolution, be it social, philosophical or even artistic. Their humour was more subtle, sometimes even sad, but always a life-affirming and earthy affair, and in that respect much closer to one of Frankfurt's other great sons, Goethe.

The 'big five' of the New Frankfurt School are the poet and caricaturist Robert Gernhardt, writer and cartoonist F.K. Waechter, and the illustrators Hans Traxler, Chlodwig Poth and F.W. Bernstein. After cutting their teeth on *Pardon*, Germany's answer to *Private Eye* and by that time Europe's biggest satirical magazine, they founded *Titanic*, a monthly magazine of satirical texts and drawings.

With their work for *Titanic* and various other newspapers, they transformed the status of political cartoonists in Germany. "After the war, cartoons in Germany were droll drawings confined to a newspaper's 'joke page'," recalls Frenz. "In the '70s and '80s the New Frankfurt School had a great influence on the German 'humour landscape' and introduced a whole new quality to cartoons, politicising them." The museum's aim, he says, is to preserve this turning point for coming generations.

Despite the levity of its contents, the museum has been treated as a very serious subject in Frankfurt. The city council spent around 360,000 Euros (£280,000) buying nearly 8,000 drawings, caricatures and paintings of its famous sons, and another 2.7 million Euros (£2.1 million) on the conversion of the Leinwandhaus, one of the oldest buildings in Frankfurt.

The 600-year-old Gothic building provides a gloomy home for a colourful collection. The complicated refurbishment fell well behind schedule, and just days before the opening the exhibition space was still a building site. On top of that, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* reported on a row between Gernhardt's widow, Almut Gehebe-Gernhardt, and Frenz over the name of the new institution. Gehebe-Gernhardt apparently championed 'caricatura', while Frenz was keen to limit the institution's scope to political drawings only (the official name encompasses both: Caricatura - Museum für Komische Kunst).

Frenz didn't find the reports on the supposed quarrel at all funny. "This was a private matter. It is normal in our circles to have heated discussions, but that doesn't mean we actually fell out with one another. The article really hurt me." As well as showcasing caricatures and cartoons, the exhibition space has a small stage, where satirical readings and performances, as well as current stand-up comedy, will have their place.

When asked about the future plans of the museum, Frenz's deadpan answer could easily have been made by a British comedian making fun of the museumisation of comedy: "We have big plans for the comic arts. This is only our first step to world domination."

Caricatura: Museum für Komische Kunst, Weckmarkt 17, D-60311 Frankfurt am Main. Tel +49 69 21 23 01 61. www.caricatura-museum.de

All kinds of Angels We do not normally publicise exhibitions, but we are making an exception in the case of this one which opened at the Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht on 3 October. The invitation reads: 'For centuries people have been fascinated by angels: mysterious beings, who move as messengers between heaven and earth. Angels are still all around us today: in our speech, in advertising, on the stage, in films, in music and – of course – in the visual arts. Museum Catharijneconvent brings all these angels together in an impressive manner in the exhibition, *All kinds of Angels*.

The exhibition will be opened by writer Kader Abdolah in the museum café. He will also be presented with the first copy of the book *Engelen van deze tijd* (Angels in Our Time) by journalist Twan Geurts. After the opening you will be able to visit the exhibition and you are invited to join the heavenly reception.

Considering the heavenly character of this opening we kindly ask you to wear something white.'

Museumcard era to commence

Introduced by the Ministry and Culture and Tourism and TÜRSAB, Turkey's first Museumcard will enable art lovers and culture buffs to tour the nation's museums to their hearts' content. Issued in just 60 seconds, the photo-bearing card turns museum visits into a cultural activity in which everyone in the country can take part. The historic monuments, treasures and cultural riches of Anatolia, home to many different civilizations down the ages, can be visited easily and cheaply with the new Museumcard, which can be purchased at all museums and archaeological sites attached to the Culture and Tourism Ministry as well as over the internet. To buy a Museumcard, just apply with a photo ID to the Museumcard Central Office or one of its points of sale, or to a TÜRSAB agent. Skyline, 9/2008

Espace Alu, the Museum of Aluminium in Saint-Michel-de-Maurienne in the French Alps opened on 30 November 2007. It is the first museum in the world entirely dedicated to the history of the 'light metal'. The approach is a multi-disciplinary one and includes geology, scientific research, technical processes, labour management, social and cultural issues, and literature. Six of the 11 aluminium plants built in the French Alps after 1892 were in 'Aluminium Valley' as the Maurienne Valley became known. The last one came into operation in Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne in 1907 and is one of the oldest smelters built in Europe. We couldn't consider restoring any of these to host the museum as they were dismantled soon after production ended and no other relevant industrial building was available in the town. After a feasibility study a former vicarage was chosen as the location of the future museum, a building large enough and conveniently situated in

the historic heart of the city. The building's size made the choice of a rich iconography and videos an imperative requirement.

An electrolysis plant couldn't be reconstructed but tools and industrial items are added to provide the atmosphere of aluminium smelting. The exhibition traces the history of aluminium as a material and the aluminium industry in France, set into an international perspective, from the 19th century to the present. Since the end of the 19th century, aluminium plants had a considerable impact on the landscape, the local economy and the society of the Alps. The first part of the tour offered to visitors explains why manufacturers chose to come to Maurienne and settle there. The valley's history is recalled, from prehistoric times to industrialization, as well as the end of the aluminium industry and post-industrial reconversion, by means of an audiovisual device which shows pictures one after the other on a valley model, figuring time changes. Other episodes deal with the history of each of the six plants built in the valley: the exhibits emphasise the necessity 'to tame torrents' to make electricity, which was essential to the aluminium production, and the community facilities set up by the manufacturers to improve their employees' living conditions. Finally, the economy of the French aluminium industry and its development, compared with its European and international competitors, completes the show.

Through the 'materials staircase', a large timeline by which the appearance of aluminium is situated in general history, one reaches a magnificent scenery of bauxite mining. Bauxite is the ore from which alumina is produced. It was named after the village, Les Baux-de-Provence in southern France, where it was first discovered in 1821. Its geological history is explained as is the quest to isolate the metal and find aluminium production processes. Explanations are historical and technical and given in a pleasant didactic manner: cubes which must be turned, videos, rollers to be adjusted, periscopes, and so on.

The smelting plant's world in the 21st century is suggested by quite different means: visitors, through various media which include a model of cellar AP 30,

observe the electrolysis process and understand the operations which are part of the electrolysis series. The scientific and technical dimension is not forgotten: through videos and handlings, the visitor sees the characteristics of the metal and the transformation processes.

The last part, entitled 'The Age of Aluminium', is dedicated to the world of artefacts. The evolution of our daily life and the advance of aluminium in everyday use over more than one and a half centuries are set in showcases in thematic and chronological order: the Sainte-Claire Deville's period, World War I, household electrical appliances, tableware, the 'Pop' culture, leisure, toys, packaging ... Items from the Jean Plateau-IHA collection guarantee visitors' surprise and pleasure. Numerous donations received and purchases by the museum complement this outstanding collection.

Finally, the third level of the building, entitled 'At Work!' recalls the improvement of working conditions in aluminium plants through a circular audiovisual entertainment. Testimonies of former employees and some symbolic objects of aluminium production are presented – working clothes, ingots of foreign plants, moulds, ladles, laboratory material, medical instruments. The visit ends with a literary walk which picks out the term 'aluminium' in literature through quotations of Jules Verne, de Lautréamont, Flaubert, d'Ivoi and Garcia-Marquez.

Visitors leave the museum by a magnificent wooden staircase endowed with a central mast with translucent shelves on which items donated mostly by the inhabitants of Saint-Michel-de-Maurienne are arranged. The piling-up effect is a real success, as the variety of artefacts as common as aluminium milk pots or coffee pots is clearly shown.

Espace Aliu is not dedicated to nostalgia: its purpose is to pass on to future generations the history and uses of aluminium as well as the memory of the Maurienne industrial valley. Rooms are designed for temporary exhibitions, educational workshops are planned, while artefacts in showcases will be regularly renewed.

Espace Alu, Place de l'Eglise , F-73140 Saint-Michel-de-Maurienne, France. Tel +33 4 79 56 69 59. musee@espacealu.fr www.espacealu.fr. Florence Hachez-Leroy, Université d'Artois, France, first printed in TICCIH, No. 41, Summer 2008

Digitisation in European Museums "Equal access assures all European citizens opportunities to explore their common cultural heritage." Digitisation of cultural and scientific heritage is currently one of the main focuses of the European Cultural Agenda.

Member States are engaged in various ongoing initiatives to digitise the content of their archives, libraries and museums and to make it accessible online. Contributors have to date made varying levels of progress.

EUROPEANA was conceived as a multilingual point of access to Europe's digital cultural heritage, capable of storing data on all types of cultural material (texts, audiovisual media, museum objects, archival records, etc.) and delivering it to users. The initiative's aim is to enable all Europeans to access Europe's collective memory and use it for education, work, leisure and creativity. As the European Commission stated in August 2006, efforts in this area will contribute to Europe's competitiveness and support European Union action in the cultural field.

Firstly, material from different cultures and in different languages will be available online for citizens, and thereby foster awareness of their respective national cultural heritage and the heritage of other European countries. EUROPEANA will contribute to presenting Europe's rich and diverse heritage on the Internet and to protecting cultural objects from irrevocable loss.

Secondly, the cultural heritage sector will benefit from the digitization process. Thirdly, such activities will contribute to enhancing growth in related sectors such as tourism, education and media.

The initiative to 'make the wealth of material in Europe's libraries, museums and archives accessible to all' stems from Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for the

Information Society and Media. The first steps to launch this initiative were taken following a recommendation on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material made by the European Commission on 24 August 2006.

Libraries are leading the way in digitisation but in order to have a complete overview of our cultural heritage we need to include archives and museums in this process too. A lot of museums have already created digitized information about the cultural heritage in their care.

NEMO's role in the digitisation context is two-fold: it gathers and distributes news about EU digital initiatives that concern museums, and provides information about successful museum digitisation projects on its website.

In doing so, NEMO seeks to encourage museums to take an active part in the digitisation process and make their treasures visible online. Monika Hagedorn-Saupe, NEMO News, 1/2008. www.ne-mo.org

'CultureSampo – Finnish Culture on the Semantic Web' system launched at the National Museum in Helsinki on 25.9.2008 This is a prototype intelligent national search and browser service cum shared publication platform for 'memory organisations' (archives, libraries and museums). The system is a follow-on from the internationally and nationally awarded service 'MuseumFinland – Finnish Museums on the Semantic Web', the scope of which it expands to include, in addition to the contents of museums, also the great diversity of cultural contents of libraries, archives and other organisations as well as online material like Wikipedia.

The pilot version of CultureSampo contains the collections of about 20 Finnish museums, libraries, archives and other organisations as well as other sets of material. The Finnish collection items in the system number over 50,000 and are grouped into the categories of artefacts, photographs, maps and charts, paintings, poems, books, national melodies, videos, skill descriptions as well as stories (e.g. the national epic the Kalevala, in which the Sampo is a kind of cornucopia). The system's other contents include the Getty

Foundation's register of about 120,000 artists and material from the Agricola - Suomi history network and Wikipedia are likewise associated with it.

Collections can be searched for and browsed from several thematic perspectives with the aid of Google maps, timelines and ontological classifications. The Finnish national ontology service KOKO, which comprises tens of thousands of concept classes and individuals, is in the background to CultureSampo. The KOKO ontology was created on the basis of the Finnish YSA general search word index, the MASA subject search index for the museum sector as well as various vocabulary lists serving the design, industrial design and photography sectors. The system is also linked to the National Land Survey of Finland's register of place names, which contains about 800,000 localities in Finland complete with their coordinates, as well as with the Dutch Iconclass system, which is a specialised library classification designed for art and iconography. CultureSampo is based on the latest research into semantic web and Web 2.0 technologies. In its complexity, the system is the first of its kind in the world.

The content providers for the pilot version were: the Antiquaria Group (Lahti City Museum, Kuopio Cultural History Museum, North Karelia Museum), Espoo City Museum, the Geological Survey of Finland, GTK, Helsinki City Library, Libraries.fi, the National Library, the National Museum and other museums belonging to the National Board of Antiquities, the National Land Survey of Finland, the Finnish Literature Society SKS, The Finnish Museum of Agriculture SARKA, the Finnish Museum of Photography, the library of the University of Art and Design Helsinki, the Finnish National Gallery and Veljekset Karhumäki Oy.

The system was developed by the Helsinki University of Technology's and the University of Helsinki's Semantic Computing Research Group.

Work to develop CultureSampo began in 2004. It is part of the extensive national FinnONTO development project 2003-07 and 2008-10, which is being financed by

Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, and 38 different companies and other organisations. The project is also being supported by the Finnish Cultural Foundation and the work is partly associated with the EU's SmartMuseum project.

The publication and presentation event for CultureSampo will be open to all, free of charge. It comprises 14 different presentations and demonstrations. <http://www.seco.tkk.fi/events/2008/2008-09-25-kulttuurisampo/>.

Additional information can be found on CultureSampo project's website (in Finnish and Swedish, with some English):

<http://www.kulttuurisampo.fi/>. Eero Hyvönen, Professor, Head of Research, Department of Media Technology, Helsinki University of Technology and Department of Computer Science, University of Helsinki eero.hyvonen@tkk.fi

The Leventis Municipal Museum is expanding and changing. Our permanent exhibition spaces are getting bigger, changing face and expanding to the wing of Constantinos Leventis. The cabinets will be renewed and enriched with collections for the Medieval Nicosia and for the Modern History of our city. The journey through the history of Nicosia will be more interesting and exciting, by means of audiovisuals and unique priceless objects.

The new galleries and the renewed Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia expect to reopen by the end of 2009. Visitors will then have the opportunity to see in close-up the colours of Medieval Nicosia, to learn about the building of Venetian Walls of our city, to saunter and experience the city life as it was during the years of the Ottoman Period.

In the scenic interior courtyard of the museum you will be able to enjoy a cup of coffee, while at the renewed Shop of the Association of Friends of the Museum, there will be available for sale publications and unique objects. Until the reopening of the Museum our city and its history will be presented at the House of Educational Programmes. Loukia Loizou Hadjigavriel, EMF Cyprus National Correspondent