

CIMAM

10-12  
NOVEMBER

2017 ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE

NATIONAL  
GALLERY  
SINGAPORE

THE ROLES  
AND RESPON  
SIBILITIES  
OF MUSEUMS  
IN CIVIL  
SOCIETY

# The Roles and Responsibilities of Museums in Civil Society

Given the rising sentiments of populist nationalism that we are witnessing around the world, and extending from the focus on the conference in Barcelona (*The Museum and Its Responsibilities*), it is imperative that we re-evaluate and re-examine the roles of museums, their public functions and how they respond. We ask:

How can national museums and art museums counter this global phenomenon of xenophobia and populism, to connect a local public with regional and international histories, perspectives and concerns?

How can museums continue to be effective forums in society where different communities and peoples of all backgrounds and beliefs still come together, instead of retreating into parochial isolation?

At the same time we return to the mission of CIMAM and consider: Who are CIMAM's stakeholders? Who has vested interests, and what are the constituencies to whom we are responsible?

To begin to address these issues, discussions at the CIMAM 2017 Annual Conference will start by considering the role of the city on Day 1. It considers the importance of cities for art, identity and history within the context of the national, regional, international and supranational. Can we speak of the contemporary city as sanctuary, as we speak of the museum as

sanctuary? If contemporary political crises are inextricable from the politics of centres versus peripheries, can cities and the urban-international (art) elite be both the problem and the solution?

On Day 2, the conference focuses on the multifarious cultural and artistic contexts of Southeast Asia. It looks at the specificity of art museums and spaces in the region to consider their driving forces: what are some of the positions adopted by institutions, artists and agents in this part of the world? What are some of the lessons we can learn from Southeast Asia, a political construct as imaginary as it is intractable?

On the last day of the conference, we turn our attention to envision how collections can be activated to manifest their potential for civil society: how can collections and collection strategies of museums be representative of the constituencies they are intended to serve? How are a museum's civil responsibilities reflected in its collection, and are there national, regional or international implications?

This year, a Pre-Conference Tour (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam) is being organized in addition to the traditional Post-Conference Tour (Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia). The aim is to provide delegates with opportunities for a fuller understanding of the heterogeneity and richness of artistic production and the concomitant development of museums and art spaces of Southeast Asia.

The CIMAM 2017 Annual Conference is organized by CIMAM and the National Gallery Singapore.

# CiMAM — International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art

Inés Jover  
Director CiMAM Executive Office

Mireia Salvador i Branera  
CiMAM Administration and Production

Fabra i Coats  
C/ Sant Adrià, 20  
08030 Barcelona  
Spain  
[cimam.org](http://cimam.org)  
[info@cimam.org](mailto:info@cimam.org)

CiMAM's identity by Rogier Delfos Studio.

CiMAM's office at Fabra i Coats is supported by The City Council  
of Barcelona.