

MIGRATIONS

Scientific Perspectives and Museum Mediations

An international conference organized by the Musée de la civilisation in partnership with the Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française and the Centre interuniversitaire d'études québécoises



Musée de la civilisation, Québec City
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Over the past two decades, the theme of migration has gained popularity in the museum world, with museums of migration cropping up in North America, Australia and Europe. Interest in the topic has been stimulated by a context that encourages migration, and immigration in particular, and corresponds to contemporary social and political issues. The opening up of borders and the development of technology, communications and means of transportation have spurred migration, prompting certain receiving societies to redefine themselves and seek ways of insuring that newcomers are integrated. Nations born of immigration, for their part, have turned to the history of migration to construct a collective memory that takes into account the plurality of the identities underlying the invention of a national narrative. Museums of history and society, as places of mediation, conservation and the transmission of a collective heritage, have also been caught up in this trend

The Musée de la civilisation de Québec, a national institution and government corporation, has decided to make the history of migration the central theme of a brand new permanent exhibition. Entitled *On the Road: The Francophone Odyssey*, the exhibition will open in March 2010 at the Musée de l'Amérique française, which is part of the museological complex in Québec City, and will explore the mobility of French-speaking populations in North America between 1603 and 1930. From preliminary research to final content validation, not to mention curating work and museography, the production team collaborated closely with the exhibition's scientific committee to adapt the concept and the ideas expressed to recent developments in historiography and museology. This situation meant that the team used a combination of analytical scales – international, national and regional – based above all on family and individuals. The migrant experience, which represents the exhibition's common thread, will be presented through the stories of individuals and communities, showcasing examples of migrants and inviting to follow these people and gain an intimate understanding of what migrating meant for them.

With the aim of prolonging reflection on this exhibition and, more broadly, on migratory phenomena studied both from a historical standpoint and from the perspective of their relation to territory, the Musée de la civilisation is organizing an international conference on the theme of migration involving French-speakers or migration to French-speaking areas. To allow for richer exchanges, comparisons with other cultural communities will be welcome. The conference seeks to foster reflection on the way museums appropriate the theme of migration and present it in exhibitions; it sets out to draw a portrait of the state of research today and look at relations between the scientific community and places devoted to the diffusion of knowledge.

The organizers welcome proposals for papers not only in the field of museology but also in the human and social sciences. There should be a significant historic dimension to the examples dealt with. Finally, the papers should shed light on one of the following fundamental questions:

1. **What senses are given to the concept of migration/immigration and what contemporary issues correspond to the present interest in themes like migration, diasporas and mobility?**
2. **From the viewpoint of its relation to history and territory, does migration give rise to new spaces of identity? Does it perpetuate established imaginary geography or does it create new spaces of exclusion and overlap?**
3. **How does migration become part of the museum narrative? How is the contribution of present-day migrants and those who preceded them dealt with in exhibition content, museography and collections? Does the presentation of exhibitions on the theme of migration have a role in the construction of a pluralistic, inclusive collective memory?**
4. **What is the present state of fundamental research in the history of migration and what links have been cultivated between the scientific community and places devoted to the diffusion of knowledge, particularly museums? How do researchers and those responsible for transmitting history (museums, cinema, visual arts, etc.) actually interact?**

Please send a 250-word paper proposal and a biographical note of about 150 words to colloquemigrations@mcq.org no later than **March 26, 2010. Please indicate "Migrations" in the subject box of your message, and include the title of your presentation, your institutional affiliation and your complete contact information (email address, postal address and telephone number) in your correspondence. Papers may be given in French or in English. We will acknowledge the receipt of all proposals for papers**

