

# Museums and Restitution

International Conference

University of Manchester, 8-9 July 2010

## Call for Papers



Museums and Restitution is a two-day international conference organised by the Centre for Museology and The Manchester Museum at the University of Manchester. The conference examines the issue of restitution in relation to the changing role and authority of the museum, focussing on new ways in which these institutions are addressing the subject.

Restitution is one of the most emotive and complex issues facing the museum world in the twenty first century. Its current high profile reflects changing global power relations and the increasingly vocal criticisms of the historical concentration of the world's heritage in the museums of the West. The 2002 *Declaration of the Importance and Value of Universal Museums*, which was signed by the directors of eighteen of the world's most prominent museums, pushed the subject to the forefront of debate as never before.

Over recent years, the issue of restitution has taken on a new complexion with different processes emerging. We have seen an increasing emphasis on museums working with source communities, and with new forms of restitution other than object restitution - such as visual and knowledge restitution. The language of discussion too has changed, with the term 'reunification', for example, rather than 'repatriation' now often being used in relation to the Parthenon Marbles. The opening of New Acropolis Museum in Athens in June 2009 has added a further dimension to the debates. We are also seeing new countries gaining increasing prominence in restitution debates: for example, the official response from the government of the People's Republic of China to the Yves Saint Laurent auction of Chinese looted bronzes at Christie's in Paris in March 2009. This is a trend clearly set to continue.

This conference will bring together museum professionals and academics from a wide range of fields (including museology, archaeology, anthropology, art history and cultural policy) to share ideas on contemporary approaches to restitution from the viewpoint of museums.

### Possible themes

- New museums, new developments
- Visual, knowledge and digital repatriation
- Authority and power: voices listened to, voices heard
- Beyond ownership? Loans, travelling exhibitions, exchanges
- Reflections on returns

Please send a title and a short proposal of no more than 300 words and biographical details to Louise Tythacott [louise.tythacott@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:louise.tythacott@manchester.ac.uk) and Kostas Arvanitis [kostas.arvanitis@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:kostas.arvanitis@manchester.ac.uk)

**Deadline for Abstracts: Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/museumsandrestitution>

Centre for Museology

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