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An Article Regarding the ICOM-ICR Conference 2023 in Tainan, Taiwan

Preface

An ICOM ICR (International Committee for Regional Museums) Annual Conference-2023 was held in Tainan, Taiwan from 5-8 Dec, 2023. The theme of this conference was “Regional Museum & Regional Revitalization”. The three subtitles of this conference were: 1. Regional Museums and Sense of Place, Regional Museums and Placemaking; 2. Regional Museums and Community Hubs; 3. Regional Museums and Regional Revitalization. The Conference Venue was Tainan Art Museum Building-2 for two days (5 & 6 Dec) inauguration and presentation sessions. The rest 2 days (7 & 8 Dec) were field tour of Kaohsiung and Chiayi County. The organizers of this conference were ICOM-ICR, Chinese Association of Museums and Tainan Art Museum. Likewise, the co-organizers were National Palace Museum and Cultural Affairs Bureau, Tainan City Government. There were other four organizations as a Joint Organizers. The conference was inaugurated by HSU, Yi Chun, Deputy Minister of Ministry of Culture. The Chair of ICOM ICR Ms. Zahida Quadri, the Chair of Chinese Association of Museums, Mr. HUNG, Shih-Yu, Chair of Tainan Art Museum, Ms. Chao, Ching-Hui and other dignitaries also addressed the inauguration session. An attractive and gorgeous cultural show was also performed by the artists of Taiwan during inauguration ceremony. There were presentation by 6 Key Note speakers and 52 presenters from Taiwan and abroad. Some of the speakers have been presented their paper through online too. For each presentation session there was Moderator/Host to simplify and guide to the presenters/speakers. The conference provided simultaneous translation of presentation in Chinese and English Vision.

The Outcome of Conference

The ICR conference in Taiwan was very fruitful and advantageous for me and all participants for their future career regarding museums and heritages. I can divide the conference outcomes in two phases. Phase one: Outcome of presentation and phase two: Outcome of field visit. I will highlight it in subsequent paragraphs as follows as per my experience of conference:

Outcome of Presentation

1. There was clearly shown the dedication and interest towards museums and heritages by Taiwan government level and people through various presentations and key note speakers.
2. Many presenters have clearly highlighted about the ancient history of Taiwan and its immigration history.
3. Clearly highlighted the types of Japanese museums and present challenges facing by Japanese in field of museums.
4. The Roles of volunteers in museums, their training and remuneration to volunteers.

5. Local history and activities could be discourse through cultural heritage and regional museum.
6. The importance of the local experience and collective memory generated by the interactions between people and the local environment provide the elements 'place' to become a museum exhibition space.
7. Concept and theory of 'Living Museum'.
8. The importance and necessity of environmental education as a local cultural movement.
9. Necessities to provide art training to children in terms of art appreciation, environmental and ecological education.
10. Limitation of local cultural museums in terms of resources, resulted establishes collaborative relationships and network among regional museums, to gear up local museums.
11. The roles and importance of community hub to development of regional museums.
12. A lesson learns about the situation of community driven museums during and post Covid-19 period in Pakistan.
13. Relation between community hub and regional museums as well as the roles of regional museums towards community hub.
14. The current trend of decreasing government funding for public and private museums, so seeking local support through public-private partnerships (PPP) model to maximize resources and sustain museums, thereby establishing a sense of local identity.
15. Requirements of tight relationships amongst local cultural museums, residents, local cultures and youth communities.
16. Lesson learned about the National Museum of Taiwan History as an Indigenous Cultural Center.
17. Multiple roles of Tainan Art Museum, such as Arts to School, exhibitions for diverse groups and local religious sect and 'Ageing and Dementia Friendly Project' etc..
18. The concepts of 'Citizen Participation' enrich and empower local museums.
19. Concept of "Shadow-Puppetry-in-School Project" for school children by Kaohsiung Museum.
20. Revitalizing of various regional museums

Outcome of Field Tour

During the ICOM-ICR conference there was a two days field visit on 7/8 Dec 2023. This tour was specially design for foreign participants by coach (Bus), Both days tour has been started from Tainan Art Museum. On first day the tour was centralize in Kaohsiung and the second day tour was in Chiayi County with night stop. Both tours were very wonderful and educative for me. I have learned many things from these tours. The outcomes of tours which I have experience and benefited are as follows:

1. On first day our first tour was in Kaohsiung Municipal Museum of history. The building itself was a very attractive object. On top of that the museum was well displayed the history of Tainan on very attractive way, which was a great benefit for me.
2. In Kaohsiung Pier to Pier Park I got chance to see model of old train. At the same time I visited the sea port. There was a very majestic view around.

3. After lunch we move to Tainan Wuyuan Cultural Center, where we visited a historic old building and Tainan Chikan Tower. Those objects have provided me the knowledge of history and art of ancient period.
4. On same day we visited the National Museum of Taiwan Literature. The display and exhibition in museum was very attractive, informative and fruitful. The new technologies and new practices were applied for exhibition. In some part of the museum there were entertainment sections for visitors too, which gave me great pleasure while watching the museum. I got the knowledge about old literature and history from this museum.
5. Our second day tour was started from National Museum of Taiwan History. The building of museum itself was very unique. The display of artifacts and objects in the museum was very attractive and the history of Taiwan was described on very interesting way. The museum gave me the insight of Taiwan history and culture. The way of presentation in museum was very attractive and using scientific method to attract the visitors. The hospitality of museum staffs was appreciable. We were treated by delicious lunch in museum. Our two staffs were also presented their presentation in this museum, which was very educative and informative for me.
6. During the tour we visited the salt worksite in Chiayi, Butaizhou South. Here I leaned the way to produce high quality salt from the sea water. I saw they are using a fantastic method to produce salt. I also got a packet of salt as gift.
7. At last we visited the National Palace Museum Southern Campus. The museum building itself was very huge and modern architecture, which attracted all of us. The exhibition of museum was very informative using modern and scientific method to display the objects. I learned the history of Taiwan through museum. The surrounding area of museum was very beautiful. It was another attraction for visitors. The area of museum was large.
8. At evening we have had our last dinner together with all participants at hotel nearby museum. We have had good opportunity for interaction with the friends of Taiwan and abroad. At last day dinner of conference we have got a great platform to exchange our personal and professional view, knowledge and experiences to each other. After having farewell dinner our friends were departed for rest in same hotel and some of them been moved to Taipei including me.
9. Finally, I got opportunity to visit interesting and beautiful many places of Tainan, Keelung and Taipei city of Taiwan.

Feedback/Suggestion

1. Participants have provided information about how to reach Tainan from their respective country, but it was not enough. So required more information in future conference.
2. During two days tour I have visited many museums, but there was time constraint to visit inside in detail. So, enough time should be provided to visit in museums.
3. It should have been more comfortable for participants if few guides were detailed at arrival terminal gate of both international airports and Tainan train station.
4. Sufficient time should be provided to visit market place to buy local items and souvenir to take home for relatives and friends.
5. A certificate should be provided to all participants through ICR as participant for record.
6. It is better to increase the grant amount (at least Euro 1500) for grantee.

Conclusion Remark

The overall management part of the conference was excellent. Every aspects of conference were well managed. There are many lesson learned parts for all in terms of management of conference. The published conference agenda booklet was very informative, attractive and useful. The two days presentation session was meticulously organized. All key note speakers, moderators, hosts and speakers were highly qualified and professionally sound on their concerning subject matter. The deliberation of all speakers was very impressive, informative and knowledgeable. The government sector and all the museums help selflessly during the ICR conference. Specially, the people of Taiwan were very helpful, humble, polite and carefulness to the guests. The manner and behavior of people of Taiwan towards guests was very praiseworthy. In my opinion the ICR conference in Taiwan was highly successful event. The success of this credit goes to the Government of Taiwan, Chinese Association of Museums (CAM), Tainan Art Museum and all the museum officials and peoples of Taiwan. Last but not the least, it is needless to say the center point of the success of this ICR conference is Mr. Eddie Lai, Associate Curator at Tainan Art Museum. He has sweated a lot to make successful this ICR conference.

In summary, the ICOM ICR Conference 2023 ended very successfully. Myself and all the participants have learned multiple aspects of knowledge from this conference. I hope the knowledge and experiences which everybody has gained in this conference would help them in future for their professional career. Thank you.

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