



International Carnival and Mask Museum

Programme for Friday 15 March 2024

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM : CARNIVALS AND EVOLUTION

9.30 a.m. Introduction

By Clémence Mathieu, director of the International Carnival and Mask Museum in Binche and Lucie Smolderen, curator of the Musée international du Carnaval et du Masque in Binche.

10 a.m. Making intangible heritage live in the 21st century, transformation dynamics, challenges and objectives. (FR)

By Manuela Valentino, leading UNESCO heritage curator, museum hub, City of Mons and president of the culture and heritage section of the French-speaking and German-speaking commission of UNESCO in Belgium.

This conference addresses the issue of the the intangible traditions' evolution and their recognition by UNESCO. It examines the case of the ritual « *Ducasse* » of Mons, as well as those of the stilt walkers of Namur and the Carnival of Binche.

10.40 a.m. *Fasnacht* in the Museum : Challenges in the presentation of intangible cultural carnival heritage in museums. (FR)

By Florence Roth, curator of the European department of the Museum der Kulturen of Basel, Switzerland.

The exhibition « *Basler Fasnacht* » at the Museum der Kulturen Basel was opened in 2004 as an integral part of an exhibition on the masking and costume traditions in Europe and around the world. Since its opening, few changes have been made. This contrasts strongly with the essence of the Carnival of Basel. It is understood as a « theme carnival », which means that the active participants of the carnival deal in a satirical way with important current local or global issues. To do so, numerous costumes and masks are created each year, lanterns are painted and verses are written. Although the fundamental elements remain the same, the carnival presents itself each year in a new light. In my paper, I examine the challenges arising when intangible cultural heritage is displayed in museums. Moreover, I analyse the way in which the exhibition on the Carnival of Basel addresses the problem of a lack of contextualisation of the objects on a conceptual level and I discuss ideas on the manner of integrating current events and the context in the exhibition.

11.20 a.m. From intimate identity ritual to expression of cultural heritage. The role played by the Museum of Mediterranean Masks of Mamoiada. The future commitment towards the local and international community. (EN)

By Alice Medda, collaborator of the Museo delle Maschere in Mamoiada, Sardinia and Elena Giangiulio, director of the Museo delle Maschere in Mamoiada, Sardinia.

The proposed perspective is intended to focus attention on the transformations that the ritual of *Mamuthones* and *Issohadores* has undergone throughout the 20th century to the present day and how it has taken on expression of cultural heritage. The creation of the Mediterranean Mask Museum has played an important role in this evolution. The awareness of the ancient rooting of the ritual in the history of the local community has promoted the refinement of local craftsmanship, the strengthening of cultural tourism, the development of other sectors of the local economy in the food and wine sectors.

We discuss the future role of the Mediterranean Mask Museum from a museographical and museological point of view and how is it preparing to strengthen the dialogue with the European audience.

12 - 1.30 p.m. break

1.30 p.m. Filming and celebrating carnival. Reflections on the representation of « official » and « independent » carnivals in interaction with the camera. (FR)

By **Monika Salzbrunn**, full professor of religions, migration and arts at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland.

Within the framework of a big project financed by the European Research Council (ERC), ARTIVISM, a team of ten researchers and technicians led by Monika Salzbrunn travelled through Europe, the West coast of the United States and through Cameroon, looking for festive and carnival performances with a political connotation. The filmmaking approach adapted itself to very different contexts : In the case of the « official » carnivals, a recreational interactivity between the team and the protagonists enhanced the staging of the latter. In contrast to this, the actors of the « independent » carnivals seeking to break down the border between the spectators and the actors only admitted cameras after a long process of negotiations and trust building. According to them, carnival must be lived and not consumed or watched. However, the initiators of these autonomous festivals also have their own strategies with regard to the circulation of the representations of their actions. While the actors of the autonomous festivals mainly publish pictures of the festival itself, the professional artists of the big carnivals, for example of Viareggio, communicate on the entire creation process via the social networks.

Using excerpts from the documentary film *Créer, résister, exister. Formes d'engagement artiste au Cameroun, aux Etats-Unis, en France et en Italie* (Create, resist, exist. Artistic forms of commitment in Cameroon, the United States, France and Italy) directed by Monika Salzbrunn (assisted by Raphaela von Weichs, Federica Moretti and Sara Wiederkehr), the topic of « filming and participating in carnival » by creating representations with the actors of the festival will be discussed.

2.10 p.m. *The Imster Schemenlaufen* - an old Tyrolean carnival and its dealing with the status of an intangible cultural heritage. (EN)

By **Manfred Waltner**, vice-president of the organizing committee of the Carnival of Imst, Austria.

In my introduction I would like to present Imst and the Carnival of Imst (*Imster Schemenlaufen*), telling something about its history and evolution during the centuries and the manner how it is performed in the present. The next part of my speech will deal with possible future scenarios of the local carnival in a society in transition, treating also topics like threats and benefits of social media and digitization for the Carnival of Imst. Finally, I will talk about the impacts of the fact that the *Imster Schemenlaufen* was declared as Austrian national cultural heritage in 2010 and as intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO in 2012, as the first in German-speaking countries.

2.50 p.m. coffee break

3.20 p.m. Changes in carnival customs in Slovenia. (EN)

By **Anja Jerin**, scientific collaborator of the department of intangible cultural heritage of the Ethnographic Museum of Slovenia and **Adela Pukl**, curator of the department of spiritual culture of the Ethnographic Museum of Slovenia.

Carnival customs represent the extremely varied carnival heritage of Slovenia, which is characterized by small door-to-door rounds of carnival figures for locals and big carnivals for tourists.

The organization of carnivals (festivals) also changes the local carnival heritage, which is increasingly under the subject of decontextualization, recontextualization, festivalization, commodification, folklorization, and commercialization. This type of phenomenon can also be observed with *kurent*, the most popular and the most widespread carnival character in Slovenia. The element of the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) called Door-to-door rounds of *kurenti* was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative list in 2017. A top-down ap-

proach was in the front during the process of preparing the nomination file. The aim of some bearers of the ICH who were involved, was merely to get the UNESCO « badge ».

In the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, we have been trying for decades to document the changes, transformations, risks and challenges that accompany the development of carnival customs. During this time, the museum's collection policy, the methodology of field work, the museological layout of exhibitions, etc. also changed.

The vitality of intangible cultural heritage is the driving force that transmits customs, habits, knowledge and skills from one generation to another. And yet, just as our way of life changes, intangible cultural heritage also changes, as can be seen also with carnival customs.

4 p.m. ending and self-guided tour of the Museum

6 p.m. closure of the Museum



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10 a.m. The evolution of the subversive value of carnival in Western Europe. (FR)

By **Françoise Lempereur**, lecturer at the University of Liège, Belgium.

Even though there is little consensus among researchers concerning the origin of carnival, the sense and the values both its participants and its observers attributed to carnival hardly changed from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. Sometimes, changes took place earlier in the carnivals which, for example that of Venice, had already been internationalized and become glamorous before.

Mostly around 1850, the urban carnivals (Nice, New-Orleans, Grandville or Liège for example) turned little by little into parades or spectacular cavalcades attracting crowds, in the beginning under the pretence of philanthropy.

In the small provincial towns or villages, local traditions were generally perpetuated due to social cohesion, at least until the societal revolution taking place since the end of the 20th century (population transfers, new communication technologies, globalisation of consumption patterns etc.) as today, in the name of propriety, « political correctness » or wokeness, the limits of « intrigue », joking or satire, which were an integral part of the carnival spirit, are more and more often put into question.

We will examine the challenges and consequences of these changes for the actors, the spectators or the tourists, not only in our regions, but also in other places in Europe, focussing on the progressive disappearance of the subversive value of carnival.

10.40 a.m. When minorities are shaping the masquerade: the Carnival of Rome, renown at all costs ? (FR)

By **Eugénie Anson**, student of Art history at the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

From the 17th until the 19th century, the Carnival of Rome evolved permanently, but at what price ? The Carnival of Rome is a festivity in which the role of the minorities was decisive. In fact, the principal actors of this carnival were the women, the children, the Jews and the elderly : all were obliged to appear nude and to run all along the Corso in order to receive a *palio*. Between the spectators and the racers, there were people armed with branding irons and lances. These human races made the renown of the Carnival of Rome until the 19th century and became the correspondent of the animal races which were also considered as a major event of the festival. The Roman carnival drew thousands of people from all over Europe. However, the following question arises : In which way did the carnival remain a festival of identity reversal when the humiliation (and the identity) of the minorities were an issue ? How did the context of the 19th century made the Carnival of Rome disappear at the very moment when the war-ravaged European countries were actively looking for national identities ? The role of the governments, both political and religious ones, was paramount and determining for the festivities : a double-edged renown which led the Carnival of Rome to its downfall.

11.20 a.m. From the *Wild man* to the Devil of Gavatao. The Ducasse of Ath under attack. (FR)

By **Laurent Dubuisson**, director and curator of the House of Giants in Ath, Belgium.

In November 2005, the « Processional giants and dragons of Belgium and France » were recognized by UNESCO as masterpieces of intangible cultural heritage of humanity. Nine traditional festivals were part of this element among which the Ducasse of Ath. In November 2022, the *Ducasse* of Ath was removed from the representative list of UNESCO. Since 2019, the festival, mainly known for its procession of giants, had been the subject of a lot of controversy. The *Wild man* (Savage), a costumed character appearing on one of the allegorical floats, was accused to be a character in blackface and to retain negrophobia. From 2019 to

2024, there have been a lot of considerations and discussions on topics like discrimination, tradition, decolonisation, values of the festival, possibilities of development etc. The community of Ath wanted to provide their own answers to these questions.

12 a.m. Let's complicate things a bit: a stratigraphical time exploration of the evolution of the *Caretos* of Podence tradition! (EN)

By **Patricia Cordeiro**, working for the department of heritage and tourism of Podence, Portugal.

In 1985, a group of young men from a very small village in the northeast of Portugal travel south in a municipal bus, to participate at the « Popular Culture Journeys », at the invitation of the Ethnography and Folklore Group at the University of Coimbra. For a couple of days, they donned their traditional customs of carnival, roaming through the campus and the streets of Coimbra, performing, for the first time, in a totally different scenario from the one they were used to and knew. The times were changing, and they still are. In this presentation we'll go through these moments of change in the « recent » history of this cultural manifestation of carnival, through the lens of a tentative stratigraphical analysis of the practice and the practitioners, while also discussing about the processes of inventorying and of nomination to the Representative List of intangible cultural heritage of humanity, and its repercussion in today's Carnival of Podence.

12.30 a.m. break

2 p.m. departure of the *Caretos* of Podence from the Museum

2.30 p.m. welcome reception for the *Caretos* at the townhall

3-5 p.m. procession of the *Caretos* in the streets of Binche