

Annual report ICOM Netherlands 2024

May 1, 2025

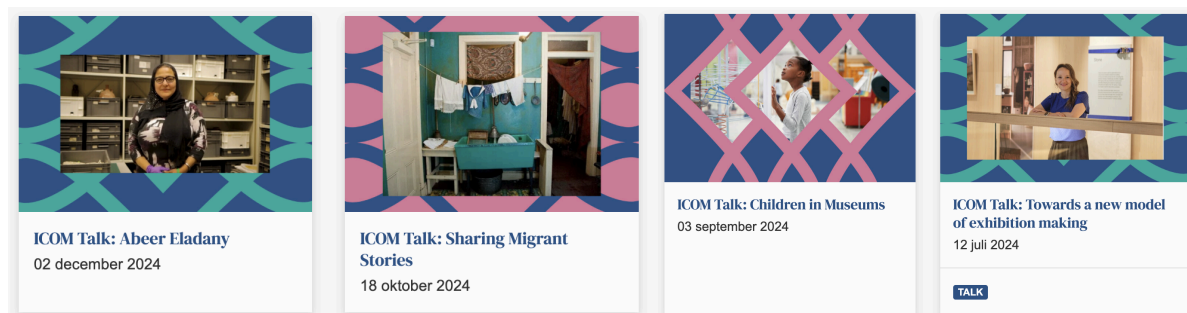
2024 was a good year for ICOM Netherlands. Together with our more than 6,500 members, the association board and the supporting office succeeded in perpetuating its role as 'bridge builder'. The work focused, among other things, on further professionalizing the organization, connecting members with each other and with international colleagues and optimizing the membership base according to the new criteria introduced in 2023. Moreover, ICOM Netherlands showed itself to be very ambitious: the national committee registered as a potential venue for the General Conference in 2028.

Program and support members

An important task of ICOM Netherlands is to connect members in the Netherlands with international museum colleagues. We fulfill this role as 'bridge builder' by: organizing a substantive program and providing financial and communication support to members at conferences at home and abroad. For example, we offered an online talk by Abeer Eladany (Egyptologist and Assistant Curator, University of Aberdeen Collections) about Wellbeing. Arthur G. Affleck III, president of the Association of Children's Museums gave a lecture on Children in Museums. Olha Mukha, curator The Territory of Terror Memorial Museum in Lviv, (Ukraine) and Sanda Koçev, historian and curator Karlovac City Museum in Karlovac, (Croatia) spoke about Documenting War. These talks were well attended and highly rated and can still be viewed online.

In addition, ICOM Netherlands supported various trips by Dutch members to conferences and board meetings of international committees abroad. For example, museum colleagues from Bonaire (the Caribbean Netherlands) attend the ICOM CECA conference 'Delicate Topics – Challenging Audiences' in Athens and the 'Momentum: New Narratives for New Futures' meeting in Medellin.

ICOM Netherlands was also a partner in meetings in the Netherlands with an international topic, such as the impressive 'International Conference on the Decolonization of Museums', organized by the ICOM Working Group on Decolonisation.



Code of ethics

ICOM members in the Netherlands have been encouraged to contribute ideas about the revision of the Code of Ethics. The members provided input in several consultation rounds, in close collaboration with the Ethical Committee for Museums in the Netherlands. The new code will be adopted in 2025 during the General Conference in Dubai, after which it will be translated into Dutch.

Emergency fund

Heritage and museums are under pressure in conflict areas worldwide. That's why ICOM Netherlands donated their emergency fund of €10,000 for Cultural Emergency Response (CER). CER works together with local partners to protect endangered cultural heritage in vulnerable and difficult-to-reach places. While the emergency fund was used last year for projects in Sudan, this year it will go to the protection of heritage in Lebanon. Even though a ceasefire has been declared and UNESCO, at the request of the Lebanese government, has increased protection of 34 cultural sites, including the World Heritage Sites of Baalbek and Tyre, the Lebanese heritage that is still under threat needs international support. ICOM Netherlands is pleased to be able to help our colleagues in Lebanon in this way.

General Conference 2025 - Dubai

We started 2024 with a New Year's meeting for all members, which we combined with an informative debate on Dubai, the location of the ICOM General Conference in 2025. Many members wanted to know more about this emirate before deciding to travel. We were informed by, among others Christian Henderson, assistant professor of Middle Eastern studies at the Leiden Institute for Area Studies. He updated us about the political, economic and cultural situation in the Gulf States in general and Dubai in particular. This allowed the board and members to better determine the advantages and disadvantages of a visit to Dubai. ICOM Netherlands will further prepare the General Conference in 2025 with more lectures, training on cultural awareness, joint travel and hotel bookings and financial support through travel grants.

General Conference 2028 - Rotterdam?

The members and board of ICOM Netherlands have the ambition to bring the General Conference to the Netherlands in 2028. Exactly 100 years after the Olympic Games were held in the Netherlands, we are now organizing the 'Olympics of Museums'. As a location we choose Rotterdam, the most diverse and international city of the Netherlands, with progressive museums and easily accessible. The theme? Building bridges! This fits in with the vision of ICOM Netherlands to connect museum

colleagues worldwide. And it fits with the water, which we are used to living with in our country, which is full of rivers and largely built below sea level. Especially in times of global tensions, with a cultural sector under pressure, ICOM can connect worlds, cultures and generations. The Dutch museum colleagues are following the selection process with excitement and have started to enthusiastically support Rotterdam's candidacy in 2025.



Membership administration

In 2023, ICOM Netherlands introduced new criteria for membership. This was carefully prepared and approved by the AGM. Implementing these adjustments was very time-consuming, both in 2023 and throughout 2024. The new criteria led to a stricter admission policy, especially for students and for people who make an important contribution to the museum network but are not themselves *in* work in a museum. For the first time we introduced the new possibility to become a *supportive member*. Many hours have been spent on carefully handling all questions and considerations, both by the secretary of the board and by the external supporting administrative office.

Board & organization

The 7 board members of the ICOM Netherlands association all work in and for museums.

Caroline Breunese, chair (director Rijksmuseum Twenthe & De Museumfabriek)

Arja van Veldhuizen, secretary (director Stadsmuseum Woerden)

Amanda Vollenweider, treasurer (senior manager Education & Presentation Van Gogh Museum)

Femke Haijtema, programming (director Museum Gouda)

Rapti Miedema, programming (senior manager Heritage & Pilots Mondriaan Fund)

Justin van den Berg, scholarships (museum concepts, education officer Wereldmuseum)

Paul Klarenbeek (senior communications officer Drents Museum)

Junior board member

In 2022, the board invited a junior board member to join for the first time. This way, a student or young professional could experience what ICOM and board work entails. Conversely, the junior board member was able to provide input on matters that are important to students and starting museum employees. At the end of 2023, a second vacancy was posted for a junior board member, after which Olivia Bicker joined the board in March 2024. Olivia studies cultural heritage at the Reinwardt Academy and worked energetically for ICOM. She made a strategic plan to involve more peers in ICOM. This resulted in a focus group of young ambassadors, who contributed ideas about ICOM for young people, and received training about ICOM internationally and in 'cultural awareness'. Olivia also initiated to give young people a major role in the concept for the General Conference 2028.

Support

In 2024, the board was supported for its administrative tasks by the Online Secretariat office. For communication and programming we worked with communications agency Ctrl Art Delete.

Proud!

Our former chairman of ICOM Netherlands Luc Eekhout was appointed Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau on April 26, 2024 for his work for various museums. He was active for ICOM for many years and put the Dutch museum field on the map.

As director of Heeswijk Castle, he has given the museum a new look. Luc was previously director of the National Carriage Museum and the Eindhoven Museum. As a volunteer, he was a member of the Advisory Board of the Dutch Funeral Museum Foundation and was a board member of the Funerary Heritage Foundation.

