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Date 28 April 2022

Subject Sharing Stories on Contested Histories: Call for Applications

To whom it may concern,

It is my honour and pleasure to bring the Call for Applications for the Sharing Stories on Contested Histories training to your attention. We look forward to working with a new group of heritage professionals and academics from the Netherlands and the 23 partner countries of the International Heritage Cooperation programme (Previously: Shared Cultural Heritage) of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE). This training is organised by the RCE in close collaboration with the Reinwardt Academy, the cultural heritage faculty of the Amsterdam University of the Arts.

When it comes to presenting contentious pasts, international heritage institutions are becoming increasingly aware of the need to become more polyvocal, engaging, diverse, (self)reflective and participatory. Inclusive, representative modes of sharing cultural heritage add relevance to our institutions and contribute to tackling broader societal issues. However, the desire to empathetically share contested histories can lead to a diverse range of challenges for heritage institutions.

The Sharing Stories on Contested Histories training aims to engage with these shared challenges by bringing together upcoming museum and heritage professionals and academics from different countries to reflect on how we engage with international cultural heritage topics that may be considered 'contested'. These challenges are not confined within national borders, and we believe that it is only by joining forces and learning from and with each other that we can fully benefit from the potential of cultural heritage to address societal challenges.

Within this context, the RCE invites emerging museum and heritage professionals and academics from the Netherlands and the partner countries of the International Heritage Cooperation programme to join the fourth edition of Sharing Stories on Contested Histories. The partner countries of the programme are Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy,

Japan, Morocco, Poland, Russia\*, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

### **Training and selection details**

The training will take place **online**, from **13 – 25 November 2022**. It will focus on case studies from four different countries: Brazil, Indonesia, the Netherlands, and South Africa. The capacity of this training is limited to 24 participants, and the trainee group will be composed of one participant from each partner country and one from the Netherlands. The training is open to applications from young, upcoming museum and heritage professionals and academics.

To apply for the training, candidates are invited to submit a motivation letter (500 words) and a resume to Ms. Yulia Dolinina, Project Officer:  
[y.dolinina@cultureelerfgoed.nl](mailto:y.dolinina@cultureelerfgoed.nl) before **8 June 2022**, 8 AM CET.

Full details of the application requirements and selection criteria can be found in **Appendix I**, along with further information about the training, the RCE, and the International Heritage Cooperation programme. Information about the current and past editions of the training is also available on our website:  
<https://english.cultureelerfgoed.nl/topics/international-heritage-cooperation/collections/training-sharing-stories-on-contested-histories>. Further questions can be directed towards Ms. Yulia Dolinina.

I truly hope that this letter has piqued your interest and that you will take this training opportunity into consideration.

Sincerely,



Mr. M. Stafleu MA  
Head of Strategic and International Affairs  
The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands

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\* Cooperation with Russian state institutions and organisations is currently suspended (see the letter of the State Secretary in appendix I, available in Dutch). However, we will consider applications from Russian heritage professionals and academics working in private and independent organisations or working independently.

## **Appendix I**

### **International Heritage Cooperation**

A worldwide heritage community, in which professionals connect, learn from each other and develop knowledge together. That is the mission of the International Heritage Cooperation Programme of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE). This is not only because of the importance of ensuring that heritage is passed on to future generations, but primarily because heritage is valuable in a changing world. Heritage reveals who we are, where we come from and what we stand for. Without knowledge of the past, understanding ourselves and others is virtually impossible. Equally, heritage can contribute to identifying solutions for societal challenges, such as climate change, sustainability, participation and social inclusion. The challenges faced by society call for continuous development, the ability to respond to changing demands and circumstances and a shared quest for appropriate solutions. They call for curiosity, openness and innovation of a kind that are not confined within national boundaries.

The RCE is just one of many players within the worldwide heritage community. Yet the RCE has an important role to play in promoting international cooperation in heritage and the sharing of knowledge. In this context, societal challenges in which international cooperation offers an added value above national cooperation alone are central. Think, for instance, of issues such as the repatriation of colonial collections, the management of shipwrecks in foreign waters and urban renewal. Together with its foreign and Dutch partners, the RCE contributes to finding solutions for these (shared) challenges by bringing experts together and facilitating the sharing and development of knowledge. This enhances heritage conservation both in the Netherlands and in the partner countries. In doing this, the RCE is also fostering relationships with other countries and contributing to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

In order to achieve these ambitions, the RCE has established the International Heritage Cooperation programme. It continues the work achieved in the period 2009-2020 within the Shared Cultural Heritage programme. Although shared heritage remains relevant for the Netherlands, this new policy period will focus on the shared challenges we face. After all, every country faces similar issues in caring for its heritage. But because every country operates in a different context, with different issues and approaches, we can also learn from each other. This shift in emphasis is in line with the need in the partner countries and the Netherlands to

ensure that international cooperation not only benefits our shared heritage, but also the shared challenges we face.

This ambition is reflected in the following goals:

1. Fostering connections, exchange, and cooperation in order to enhance heritage conservation in the Netherlands and in the partner countries.
2. Developing new knowledge and expertise together for the purpose of societal challenges where international cooperation offers greater added value than national cooperation alone.
3. Ensuring that knowledge and expertise developed within the programme are visible and accessible.

## **RCE**

The RCE is closely involved in listing, preserving, sustainably developing, and providing access to the most valuable heritage in our country. The agency is the link between policymakers, academics, and practitioners, providing advice, knowledge, and information, and performing certain statutory duties. The Sharing Stories on Contested Histories training falls within the RCE's theme of Collections.

Responsibility for the Netherlands' international cultural policy is jointly shared by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (BZ), the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (BHOS) and the Minister of Education, Culture and Science (OCW). In the International Cultural Policy 2021-2024, the RCE has been appointed as one of the executing agencies on the topic of cultural heritage. Other executive organisations are: National Archives of the Netherlands, DutchCulture, the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage (KIEN) and the Dutch embassies in the 23 partner countries, namely Belgium/Flanders, Germany, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, the UK, Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, China, South Korea, Australia, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Japan, Russia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, the United States and South Africa. The RCE already worked together with the last ten of these countries during the previous period.

## **Reinwardt Academy**

The Reinwardt Academy positions itself as the knowledge-, research-, and training centre of cultural heritage in the Netherlands. This higher vocational college (in Dutch: HBO) is located in Amsterdam and offers the only bachelor's programme on Cultural Heritage available in the Netherlands, as well as a master's programme on Applied Museum and Heritage studies. Additionally, the Reinwardt Academy is well-known for its contributions to the Dutch and international heritage field due to

its role as a platform for (inter)national heritage professionals to exchange knowledge and experience.

### **Sharing Stories on Contested Histories Training**

The training programme aims to strengthen an international working community of young, upcoming museum and heritage professionals and academics from the 23 partner countries and the Netherlands. Using four case studies from four different countries, the participants will explore the relevance of contemporary museums. As a strategy to overcome grid-locked discussions and polarised bubbles, constructivist and empathic multivocal storytelling will be explored. Through activity-oriented assignments and workshops participants will experience the various concepts of exhibiting, storytelling, tour-guiding, and educational programming, and will get a new and immersed understanding of this way of exploring museum collections and their stories. As we will be working as professionals amongst professionals, there will be a constant flux of exchanging knowledge, ideas, and concepts. From this, a community of practice for peer-learning and co-creation will arise.

### **Theoretical approach**

Most museums have long-established roots in traditional museum learning (education) and exhibiting (presentation), which is offered in a well-designed environment (aesthetics). Too often this leads to a single voiced, grand narrative way of storytelling. However, museums have developed rapidly in the last few decades by becoming more inclusive, representative, and participatory towards their public. These ways of sharing cultural heritage and the linked histories have been successfully tested but are not yet a common practice. The deconstruction of underlying institutionalised power structures and working fashions is needed and a new and active working mode needs to be found.

This development has its roots in 'New Museology' and strongly focuses on society, reflected in a maximum societal involvement in what museums collect and the way they present it. New Museology revolves around three key issues: representation, access, and participation. The key concept here is user-generated content: it is the users that, as participants in a specific community of interest, deliver content. This is also significant when topics related to contested heritage are considered. As these discussions are often heated and difficult, museums and heritage institutions can offer safe places for societal development. They provide spaces where discussions and debates can take place in a non-toxic and open way: 'contact zones'. These concepts also apply to the subject matter of topics and histories that are shared between countries and communities. In many cases these are disputed histories which require a dialogical and polyphonic approach. This training

programme therefore focuses on researching polyphonic storytelling and communicating heritage through multiple interpretations.

### **Set up**

The **online** training is case-oriented and practical in approach. Basic literature will be provided in advance. The programme is comprised of the following elements:

- Lectures will offer both theoretical reflection as well as case-studies.
- Practical and immersive workshops will lead to deeper insight.
- Museum case studies will offer exploration and reality checks.
- Individual presentations will offer opportunities for sharing ideas and opinions.
- Teamwork will offer opportunities for co-creation.
- Literature will be provided for orientation and self-study.
- Questions addressed in this course include:
  - How do visitors perceive museums and museum collections in exhibitions in relation to contested histories/coloniality?
  - How can we involve visitors from culturally diverse backgrounds and place their needs at the heart of our museum work?
  - Which fresh methods of constructivist and emphatic interpretation can we use to engage visitors in the multiple perspectives of museum collections and stories?

The new training programme for 2022 will focus on international case studies, drawn from four countries: Brazil, Indonesia, the Netherlands, and South Africa. The case study museums will often be connected to marginalised communities who have complicated, delicate relationships with other groups or authorities.

The first week of the programme will consist of an online ‘world tour,’ in which we will have a virtual visit to each case study institution. We will meet the curators and educators who are responsible for the museum and hear about its place in the community. They will give insights into their work to strengthen the position of their communities by opening lines of communication and contact with the rest of society.

In the second week, the trainees will reflect upon the central dilemmas of the case studies and discuss potential approaches. In a process of intense and creative teamwork, they will prepare presentations for a final conference. The international teams cooperate to elaborate on transnational ideas on how to share stories on contested histories.

## **Results/Outcomes**

The training programme is explorative in its nature, utilising innovative methods to achieve:

- a better understanding of exhibiting/storytelling and its emotional impact;
- a strong understanding of constructivist learning regarding open and multiple interpretations;
- a good understanding of concepts of empathy as a means to enable an open-minded and safe sharing of ideas;
- insight into methods that enhance mutual tolerance through emotional networks;
- insight on how to develop multi-vocal exhibiting and storytelling.

## **Requirements of participants**

The capacity of the training program is limited to 24 participants. One participant will be chosen from each partner country and the Netherlands. In our selection procedure, we will aim to achieve a balance between museum and heritage professionals and academics from (vocational) universities. Selection is done by the RCE and the Reinwardt Academy according to the following criteria:

- The candidate works in the museum, heritage, or academic field in one of these countries: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Morocco, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia\*, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Turkey, the United Kingdom, or the United States of America.
- The candidate is proficient in the English language, both in written and spoken form.
- The candidate falls within the age range of 25 - 35.
- The candidate has a bachelor, specialist, or master degree.
- The candidate has at least three years of experience in the heritage or the academic field.
- The candidate can commit to the training period: 13 – 25 November 2022. It is necessary for participants to free their agendas for the dates of the training to ensure focused participation.

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\* See the letter of the State Secretary in appendix I, available in Dutch.

The course will be conducted in English, so participants need to have a good working understanding of the English language.

To apply for the training, candidates must submit a **motivation letter** (500 words) accompanied by a **resume**.

The motivation letter should include a short reflection on the question: 'How can the training contribute to your professional growth?'

The resume should include the following details:

- First name
- Surname
- Address
- Email address
- Gender
- Date of birth
- Education
- Employer, if applicable
- Position in the organisation, if applicable
- Level of English [Reading, Speaking, Understanding]
- Work experience
- Location and time zone for the period of the training

The results of the selection will be communicated before 15 July 2022.

### **Time investment**

The course will be held online over 10 working days, starting on Sunday 13 November, and ending on Friday 25 November 2022. The expected total workload of this two-week training programme will be 80+ hours.

Each day will feature two live sessions (in total 3-4 hours per day), in which participants are introduced to case studies and engage in group discussions. Along with attending the live sessions, participants are expected to allocate additional time every day (4+ hours) for preparatory reading, self-study, and group meetings to work on assignments. Applicants should be aware that the international nature of the programme will likely require work outside of regular office hours. Some participants will have early starting or late finishing times.



# Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap

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**Onze referentie**

31832865

**Bijlagen**

Europese verklaring over steun  
en solidariteit aan Oekraïne

Datum 9 maart 2022

Betreft Solidariteitsverklaring van de Europese ministers voor Oekraïne en  
uitgangspunten t.b.v. culturele samenwerking met de Russische  
Federatie en Belarus

Hierbij treft u, vooruitlopend op het verslag van de informele OJCS-raad van 7 en 8 maart 2022<sup>1</sup>, een solidariteitsverklaring over Oekraïne aan die tijdens de informele OJCS-Raad vastgesteld. Deze verklaring is op het laatste moment opgesteld. Zowel in de geannoteerde agenda als het schriftelijk overleg dat u eerder heeft ontvangen hebben we hier geen melding van gemaakt, omdat het voornemen toen nog niet bekend was.

De hele wereld heeft geschokt gereageerd op de gebeurtenissen in Oekraïne. Ook in het culturele veld in Nederland leven grote zorgen over de Russische militaire inval in Oekraïne en de ongekende humanitaire crisis ten gevolge daarvan. Deze zorgen deel ik. Daarbij zijn er vele vragen over hoe te handelen in deze extreme situatie, juist in de wereld van kunst, cultuur en media. Cultuur gaat immers bij uitstek over geografische grenzen heen. Deze zorgen en vragen spelen niet alleen in Nederland, maar ook in andere landen in Europa. Ik onderhoud daarom nauwe contacten met mijn collega's in de Europese Unie en daarbuiten, om zo goed mogelijk gezamenlijk op te trekken.

In de verklaring die tijdens de informele OJCS-raad is vastgesteld, verwijzen we naar de internationale regelgeving en waarden van democratie en vrijheid. Daarbij betuigen wij gezamenlijk onze steun en solidariteit aan Oekraïense kunstenaars, journalisten en cultuur- en mediaprofessionals, en spreken wij onze bereidheid uit om hen te helpen.

We spreken ook onze zorg uit over het erfgoed in Oekraïne en verwijzen daarbij naar het Haags Verdrag inzake de bescherming van culturele goederen in geval van een gewapend conflict (UNESCO-verdrag 1954) als onderdeel van het internationaal humanitair recht.

## **Advies aan de Nederlandse culturele en creatieve sector**

De solidariteitsverklaring is in lijn met hoe we in Nederland de culturele en creatieve sector adviseren om te gaan met culturele contacten in de Russische Federatie en Belarus. Mede namens de ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken en voor

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<sup>1</sup> Het verslag hiervan zal ik u volgende week toesturen.

Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, roep ik de Nederlandse culturele en creatieve sector op om onafhankelijke, kritische organisaties en individuele denkers en kunstenaars te blijven steunen. Tegelijkertijd vragen we hen, gezien de aard van de gebeurtenissen en in lijn met het beleid van vele andere Europese landen, om alle formele en institutionele samenwerkingen met de overheid in de Russische Federatie en Belarus, evenals de aan hen gelieerde culturele instellingen, op te schorten.

**Onze referentie**  
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We blijven wel ruimte bieden aan individuele Russische en Belarussische kunstenaars in Nederland, om de verbindende kracht van kunst en cultuur te kunnen blijven benutten. Deze kracht bleek ook weer tijdens de landelijke actie 'hArtforUkraine' die het culturele veld het afgelopen weekend organiseerde. Het is belangrijk om juist in deze tijd goede contacten met onafhankelijke journalisten en kunstenaars in de Russische Federatie en Belarus te blijven onderhouden.

Velen vragen zich af hoe zij onafhankelijke journalisten en kunstenaars en journalisten in Oekraïne kunnen helpen in deze uiterst moeilijke tijden. En ook hoe zij onafhankelijke journalisten en kunstenaars in de Russische Federatie en in Belarus kunnen ondersteunen. Samen met het Nederlandse culturele veld willen we bekijken hoe we dergelijke initiatieven vorm kunnen geven.

Ook houden velen zich bezig met hoe we Oekraïense onafhankelijke journalisten en kunstenaars die in Nederland hun heil hebben gezocht, kunnen opvangen en ondersteunen. We zullen bezien hoe en op welke wijze de Nederlandse culturele en creatieve sector hieraan een bijdrage kan leveren.

De staatssecretaris van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap,

Gunay Uslu