

INNOVATION AND SUSTANABILITY OF SMALL MUSEUMS



Prem Singh Basnyat, PhD

MUSEUM IN GENERAL

Museum as such serves as a mirror for a country because it reflects the national scenario of political, economic, cultural and historical past.

It is not to be viewed as a book loaded with highly jargonized language by an author. It is in true sense of the term a comprehensible book written down to commoners' digestion, like laborers, peasants, children and foreigners.

The significance of museum is all the more being realized in the present context after the World War II when the countries broken free from colonial noose are turning to retrieve their culture and practices.

In the scary context of one country split into many by conflict, war and colony, and embittered by feud and contempt now see the possibility of rebuilding/rejoining with a glue of identical culture and civilization.

IMPORTANCES OF SMALL MUSEUMS





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Hundreds of languages, castes and cultures stay set in harmony within a country, for instance; Nepal is house for over 120 languages and more than 100 species of caste. All of them are eager to learn about the origin and present status of their language and culture.

The commoners do not sound happy with the history written about the high class ruling elites who for a long time enjoyed high echelons of power, the history, culture, practice and museum singing sweet of them. It seems that they are demanding the foundation of more inclusive history, culture and museums.

And obviously, a state is obliged to have the people of the specific locale realize the glory of their caste, language and culture. The need of doing this is all the more pressing in the poor and conflict ravaged countries.

IMPORTANCES OF SMALL MUSEUMS

The best way to do so is to found museums of low cost with high public participation. Likewise, museums in advanced and developed countries are likely to strengthen unity, identity and National security, finally.

Therefore, the present write up underscores the foundation of small museums with lasting sustainability. The scribe also forwarded examples and grounds to justify the need of such museums for scribe's country Nepal.

CONFLICTS TARGETING HERITAGES



AFP



Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar

Bosnia and Herzegovina





Illicit antiquities trade threatening cultural heritage

Stephen Quillen

Tunis

Besides the illicit trade of weapons and drugs, smugglers in the Middle East and North Africa have found a lucrative business in trafficking antiquities.

The smuggling of ancient artefacts to wealthy clients around the world has spiked in the last decade, with experts warning that the region's archaeological heritage is in peril.

"The problem has dramatically increased since the outbreak of conflict," said Michael Danti, principal investigator and academic director at the American Schools of Oriental Research's Cultural Heritage Initiatives. "We are seeing the full range of antiquities."

Danti noted that "looting is worst in Syria," where the Islamic State (ISIS) has systematically plundered or destroyed many of the 4,500 archaeological sites that contain historical treasures.

While such looting long preceded the civil war, the conflict "helped to create conditions ripe for widespread, systematic exploitation of artefacts," wrote Maria Kossel and Fiona Rose-Greenland for the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute. "The auction market, in particular, is a general breakdown in border controls and competition among insurgent groups for revenue streams all played their part."

Despite the conditions, Syrian archaeologists have gone to great lengths to preserve the country's artefacts, in some cases evacuating or hiding them.

On August 18, 2014, Khalid al-Assad, an 81-year-old Syrian archaeologist and head of antiquities for the city of Palmyra, was publicly beheaded by ISIS after he refused to reveal the location of the city's hidden artefacts. UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova called his death "a deplorable act, made all the more senseless that it was the result of an attack on the museum and ancient citadel."

"They killed him because he would not betray his deep commit-



Lost treasures. A fragment of an Assyrian-era relief is seen at the ancient site of Nimrud that was destroyed by the Islamic State fighters near Mosul.

ment to Palmyra," Bokova said.

By 2016, all six of Syria's UNESCO World Heritage sites were reportedly damaged or destroyed. Up to 100,000 Syrian cultural artefacts were reportedly under ISIS control.

There have been similar reports in Libya and Iraq.

■ The amount of money ISIS is taking in is estimated at \$150 million-\$200 million per year.

Italian newspaper La Stampa reported in 2014 that Italian organised crime networks were selling weapons to ISIS in exchange for stolen antiquities, which were then sold in Russia and Asia.

An Interpol database that tracks stolen works of art listed dozens of missing antiquities from museums and sites in the region. "A total of 94 items of invaluable cultural her-

itage were stolen from the Mosul Museum in Iraq" in 2014-15, the database read. "Many other objects were destroyed."

While it is impossible to gauge how devastating ISIS's campaign of destruction has been on the region's cultural heritage — particularly in Iraq, Syria and Libya — the amount of money the extremist group is taking in is estimated at \$150 million-\$200 million per year.

ISIS is not the only culprit. Rival militant factions, organised gangs and ordinary citizens seeking a big payout have tapped into the market. This is particularly true in Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories, where the prevalence of historical artefacts and religious relics fuels demand among collectors and traders, but the practice extends to the Gulf and North Africa.

In March 2015, Tunisian authorities stopped a trafficking network from smuggling a rare, 13th-century

Turah out of the country. The scroll, which authorities described as "a one-of-a-kind historic artefact" made of ox skin, was reportedly being transported to an unidentified source in Europe.

In all cases, the trafficking apparatus is composed of loaders, dealers and collectors who navigate a complex process that can span decades.

"Not all antiquities are sold immediately," said Danti, who added that the end buyers are not well known. "Many will be transferred back and forth or sit in secret caches for years or even decades."

"Some antiquities are used for barter exchanges or as criminal collateral in other illegal activities," he adds, saying that "immEDIATE laundering onto the legal market and sale is the only route."

"Lower-value and mid-value material is being sold using the internet. Higher-end material is more difficult to trace because professional

smuggling and dealing networks handle such material. They make use of private sales and the freeport system to protect themselves."

Much has been done to crack down on the illicit trade of antiquities. In December 2015, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) published an "emergency red list" of cultural objects at risk of being stolen from Libya. The ICOM maintains similar lists for Syria and Iraq.

To more effectively deal with the problem, Danti suggested a number of government measures: "Better monitoring of the freeport system. Stiffer penalties for dealers and purchasers of antiquities. More methods for tracking material... Bilateral agreements between countries to develop and enforce cultural property laws and more law enforcement dedicated to cultural property crime."

"In the end, we need peace in the Middle East. The criminals are exploiting instability and poverty."

Syrian conflict in spotlight at London's Imperial War Museum

Karen Dabrowska

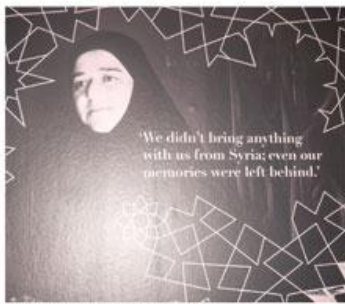
London

The Syria: A Conflict Explored exhibition is rightly an "exploration" by London's Imperial War Museum (IWM) into the narratives of the sides competing to tell their version about the Syrian conflict, which has developed into an international proxy war.

Divided into three parts, the exhibition's first section features a museum-like display of objects that tell the story of the tragic events in Syria. A child's abandoned orange life jacket found on the Greek island of Chios refers to the more than a million Syrians who have fled the fighting and are living as refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Europe.

Also displayed are souvenir mugs and plates with photos of Syrian President Bashar Assad and Russian President Vladimir Putin, which are on sale in the port of Tartus, Russia's Mediterranean naval base; cartoons from Syria's most famous political cartoonist Ali Ferzat; a helmet worn by the White Helmets Organisation recognised for rescuing civilians in opposition-held areas; and a replica of a barrel bomb used by both sides in the conflict are among the offerings.

The second section consists of an installation film on two framed



Rare insight. Syrian refugees tell their story.

screens giving the visual effect of shattered glass. Produced by Liminal Films in collaboration with the IWM, the film tells the story of the conflict. It begins with a historical background to Syria and introduces the parties in the conflict. The film ends with a poignant quote from Lakhdar Brahimi, the veteran Algerian diplomat who was the UN and Arab League Special Envoy to Syria from 2012-14: "Everybody had their agenda and the interests

of the Syrian people came second, third or not at all."

The final section of the exhibition gives a voice to Syrians — the refugees, the civilians who stayed as well as the internally displaced. In captions under black-and-white photos they tell their story.

"The situation in Syria is complex, live and evolving and we know that viewpoints may change in two years, two months, two days or two hours," said Gill Web-

ber, executive director of Content and Programmes at the IWM. "We aim to help our visitors cut through the complexity and enable a deeper understanding of the causes, course and consequences of what is happening in Syria today."

"A Conflict Explored reflects a multitude of perspectives and positions and also questions and challenges the information we have available right here and now."

A Lens on Syria, another retrospective about the Syrian conflict, is displayed on the same floor of the IWM. It is the first British exhibition of 60 photographs of award-winning Russian documentary photographer Sergey Ponomarev.

The Assad Syria series offers a rare insight into what life was like for people living in government-controlled areas in 2011-14.

Ponomarev was one of the few photographers allowed access to Syria. In a statement accompanying his photographs, he said: "For Assad's Syria I was trying to document life inside one of the most tightly controlled states in the world. In this environment photographers and journalists were caught between what we saw and what the government wanted to show us. How do you distinguish between reality and propaganda?"

But it is vital to remain objective. Just because people are in government-controlled areas does not mean they are living well or safely or that they necessarily support the government."

graphs, which ends the exhibition, is a collection of images taken at the height of the European refugee and migrant crisis from June 2015-March 2016. The images capture the disillusionment and extinction of hope against a background of changing seasons, harsh weather, deprivation, violence and border closures.

■ Syria: A Conflict Explored reflects a multitude of perspectives and positions about the Syrian civil war.

The exhibition features many contrasting photographs: worshippers at the Shia mosque of Sitt Zainab and Christians attending mass at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross. A photo of Homs in March 2014 in which a family relaxes over drinks at a café in the government-controlled Gouta district, where living conditions form a stark contrast with those in the opposition-controlled parts of the city then under siege. A young boy in another photograph, children play in the ruins of Homs after opposition forces have left.

Syria: A Conflict Explored and A Lens on Syria are on display at the Imperial War Museum in London through September 3.

Karen Dabrowska is an Arab Weekly contributor in London.







In scribe's presentations in international forums, the scribe has been claimed that museums can be set to act as a peace center to build peace in the conflict ridden countries. And this is possible too.

Unfortunate we must call it that in most International conflicts / wars, it is the religious, cultural, historical centers and museums to be targeted first.

The museums flatten to rubbles and the antiques get plundered.

Present day Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya offer glaring examples of such devastation. The museums devastated during the World War I and II number beyond count.

The United Nation's failure to protect such cultural heritage from the feud and fight is no less. Any failure of the present generation to protect the museums, temples, churches and public places built strenuously by the past generation is sure to cause loss of our art and cultural identity. That is sure to terminate the momentum of development of our civilization.

WAR POWERS LOOTING HERITAGES



After Second World War in Germany



Looting of the Iraq National Museum and
Mesopotamian Archaeological Sites



Looting of the National Museum of Iraq

If the 21st century military warfare doesn't spare to plunder and rub the epitome of age old cultural heritage, how else is to describe them? They are not any less than the gang of robbers of the Stone Age! This is a really a sensitive issue.

It is therefore a matter of grave concern of all the connoisseurs of art, culture and history. If we still fear to raise the voices against the super powers' guns, bombs and missiles and resort to keep mum even as they destroy the embodiment of our ancient art and culture, there is none but ourselves to be dead alive.

From now on, let us speak loud and clear to the world **"No plundering others"** culture in the guise of war'. It is high time we preserved the existing museums and found more museums to preserve the art, culture and history.

It is advisable that United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the power centers take a policy to found and provide assistance to small scale museums in the developing countries.

SMALL MUSEUM/MUSEUM AWARES CONFLICT PREVENTION

It is very obvious to mention is that another aspect not much attended to is that almost 80 percent of the conflicts happen in the poor countries. Search of race, region, religion and language related identity and poverty coupled with lack of access to resources fan the fire to conflict. Identity based conflict outnumber the conflict due to lack of basic needs.

As referred to above, what one finds is people seek representational access to resources from their respective castes, religion, lineage, culture and civilization. Such conflicts tend to be detrimental challenging to massive ethnic cleansing.

SMALL MUSEUM/MUSEUM AWARES CONFLICT PREVENTION

There are abundant examples of such conflicts in the world. Clear enough, all revolt and conflict have their roots to search of identity, and foundation of museums and rewriting of history to some extent calms the fire of fury. Because the museums keep things to represent the ethnic groups, they own up a sense of “**we-feeling**” to generate a sentiment of collective love and ownership.

If government offers a little assistance to set up and operation of museums, they will sustain and grow up.

ICOM NEEDS TO FOCUS ON SMALL MUSEUMS



It also would be fair to highlight is that the International Committee of Museums (ICOM) Paris's turn/move to concentrate its conferences, researches and case studies for development more to developing countries than developed ones would be fruitful.

May be the rich and the power centers don't need small scale museums so much. They need large and advanced museums suitable to their operation viability/capability.

To put it in brief, the ICOM, Paris would do well to put foundation of small scale museums for another two decades in its priority. That would be the call of the hour.

SMALL MUSEUMS ARE BENEICIARY IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

Another equally important aspect that we cannot afford to overlook is that the poor countries with difficult geographical terrains, sparsely populated areas, winding up and down roads, tall mountains and snow caped Himalayas, flood prone plains and inclement climatic zones.

For instance Nepal have their own assets endowed by nature.





Village Tourism





But we see underdevelopment turns the blissful nature to limitation. This scribe is proud of his country where visitors from far and near come and return with experience of a world of fun and joy.

Fortunately, the incumbent Right Honorable President of Republic Korea Mr. Moon-Jea-In and teams of museum experts and other personalities came to Nepal and returned happy with the beauty hereof.



President of Republic Korea Mr. Moon-Jea-In



President of Republic Korea Mr. Moon-Jea-In



museumassociation.org.jp

Professor Bae Kidong, PhD and his team



Professor Bae Kidong, PhD

President Moon has once already visited Nepal prior to his assumption of the presidential responsibility to help the earthquake victims in 2015.

Museum expert Professor Bae Kidong, PhD and his team visited Nepal for archeological research in several parts of Nepal.

Given many places without access to road transport, inaccessible due to no bridge over the big rivers, sparsely populated areas with people ground under poverty, foundation of museums in those places to represent and conserve their languages, cultures, costumes and practices would prove like a godsend gift there.

The communities there would surely join hands to found such museums and upkeep them with a sense of pride. The museums in those places would certainly contribute to enhance local economy from tourists and pacify the flaring fire of identity conflict to a great extent.

They would also serve as open school and peace center. In retrospect, the 1995-2005 ten year Maoist war within/ insurgency weakened Nepal when as many as more than 17,000 people lost their lives. Many people in the rebellion period demanded racial and religious identity.

Now 20 years down the line since the end of insurgency and arrival of the Maoists in peace process, as many as 120 castes of people are still raising their voice.

Small scale museums in the far off places without access to modern facilities would surely address the expectation of the people to some extent.

The same is true to the African countries, Balkan region, and underdeveloped countries of the Middle East where foundation of small museums are long felt.

SOME SMALL MUSEUMS IN NEPAL








WELCOME TO
OLD GURUNG
MUSEUM
& TRADITIONAL RESTAURANT
GHANDRUK 5

ENTRANCE

ENTRY FEE, RS 30
FOR ONE PERSON

MAIL
BOX

CHICKEN

 **ANNAPURNA** 
NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
P.N. CAMPUS  POKHARA



OFFICE HOURS
MUSEUM IS OPEN
FROM 10 AM TO 5 PM
DAILY EXCEPT ON
SUNDAY AND HOLIDAYS





It also would be very important to note that yet another aspect that needs attention is that museums are the entities of pride and glory of any country.

Advanced countries have founded museums to represent their progress and achievement. It has found way to the national policy there. But in the poor countries where food, shelter and clothing is the immediate need cannot found museums of advanced quality and are concentrated to the cities only.

Mass of the population cannot avail of the museums in the cities. It is better for the poor countries to found small scale museums to represent their art, culture and history.

As a start up, they can initiate to found small museums and to grow and conserve them.

ONE FOR ALL & ALL FOR ONE



To sum up, knowledge, experience and skill grows and expands by sharing. Just as a lit candle can make aflame thousands of unlit candle, so it can spread light too at the same time. For the development of **sustainable small museums**, why not the developed countries initiate to expand the branches of their museums in other parts of the world as help and assistance?

Things such as how operate the museums and what to keep there could be sorted out from bilateral agreement. Why delay to start a campaign of “**Museum for Museum**” with International Move?

Just as a bank/ industry/ INGO of one country expands/opens its branches across the world, if the same could be done to expand museums in the countries rich and poor, it would greatly contribute to the growth and development of the museums rapidly.

For this dream to take shape, **“one for all and all for one”** spirit of benevolence is a must.

Any queries?

Thank You