

***Migrating Heritage: Experiences of Cultural Networks and Cultural Dialogue in Europe.* Perla Innocenti, ed. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014. 332 pp.\***

Reviewed by Michelle L. Stefano

Edited by Perla Innocenti, *Migrating Heritage: Experiences of Cultural Networks and Cultural Dialogue in Europe* stems from papers presented at the conference, *Migrating Heritage: networks and collaborations across European museums, libraries and public cultural institutions*, in December, 2012. The conference was organized as part of the four-year, interdisciplinary *European Museums in an Age of Migrations* (MeLa) project, funded in 2011 by the European Commission. Innocenti notes that through “adopting the notion of ‘migration’ as a paradigm of the contemporary global and multicultural world, MeLa reflects on the role of museums and heritage in the twenty-first century” (xxix). As such, this volume is the second book produced within one of the six MeLa “research fields,” Network of Museums, Libraries and Public Cultural Institutions, to which the 2012 conference corresponded.

The volume brings together 24 contributions from researchers and professionals from eight European and extra-European countries. The focus is placed on “migrating heritage”—both in terms of people and heritage resources—and how cultural institutions, predominantly museums and libraries, are connected to and collaborating with each other in order to address issues that emerge from movement, cultural encounters, and increasing multiculturalism in Europe. Innocenti introduces the concept of “migrating heritage” as a way to untie cultural heritage from fixed cultural identities, such as those constructed by and linked to the European nation-state, through understanding that the shaping of identity is fluid and mutable. Best articulated by Innocenti, it is described that:

migrating heritage encompasses not only the migration and mobility of post-colonial artefacts, but also migration of people, technologies and disciplines, crossing boundaries and joining forces in cultural networks and partnerships to address new emerging challenges of social inclusion, cultural dialogue, new models of cultural identity, citizenship and national belonging. [2]

In Sharon MacDonald’s chapter, which examines and complicates understandings of “Islamic heritage” as migrating heritage in Europe, she wonders, if heritage has always been migrating, why is it important now to emphasize the concept of migrating heritage? She answers that, in part, it is due to the fact that the migration of people has been painted as a highly political, economic, and social “problem” in recent decades, especially within the European context. Moreover, while migrating people may present challenges to long-standing constructions of national identity and belonging, they are also living and working in places where heritage is increasingly democratized and cultural institutions strive for greater inclusion. Therefore, migrating heritage, such as the heritage belonging to immigrant and refugee communities, is a significant topic to which attention should be drawn.

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Indeed, one of the main strengths of the volume is that it provides a diverse range of case studies examining how issues relating to migrating heritage have emerged and are addressed in cultural institutions and physical and digital networks across the continent. This is especially beneficial for readers interested in museum practice as the majority of chapters examine these issues in museological contexts and through museum and archives networks. For instance, Francesca Lanz argues that the contemporary realities of increased mass migration, internet connectivity, and the flow of people, information, and goods, as well as the establishment of the European Union, presents particular challenges for European city museums. Lanz offers interesting examples of how certain city museums are shifting their priorities from acting as storehouses of city history to broadening their engagement with communities of migration and urban and social issues.

Other chapters reflect on the actual methods and outcomes of collaborative projects, such as the facilitation of “Remapping Europe: a Remix,” examined by Katherine Watson and Vivian Paulissen. The project, which was initiated in 2012 by the Doc Next Network of the Youth and Media Programme of the European Cultural Foundation, brought together “young creative media makers” (29) with “(im)migrant” backgrounds from Spain, Poland, Turkey, and the UK to produce, over a two-year period, performances, digital stories, and various events that “re-view, re-investigate, and re-consider” (29) mainstream images of immigrants and migrants in Europe. Accordingly, the project entailed extensive collaboration between cultural institutions that have a shared interest in young people and “DIY media expression” based in the aforementioned countries. The authors argue that such collaborations are multilayered in terms of the “intersections”—international, intercultural, intersectoral, interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and inter-experiential—that can emerge.

*Migrating Heritage: Experiences of Cultural Networks and Cultural Dialogue in Europe* can be used as a good overview of the wide-ranging and creatively interconnected projects that have taken place in recent years in Europe. As the issues of immigration and migration, citizenship, national identity, and related problems such as poverty are not only limited to the European context, readers in the U.S. and elsewhere can find inspiration in the collaborations, projects, exhibitions, and uses of digital technologies that the contributions offer.

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