



SAVE THE DATE!

Working with Cultural Objects and Manuscripts: Provenance, Legality, and Responsible Stewardship

*National Museum of Finland, Helsinki,
Monday – Tuesday, 5-6 June 2017*

Aside from the devastating humanitarian issues, the ongoing Syrian civil war and the rise of such terrorist organizations as ISIS in large parts of the Middle East and North Africa have brought the continuing problem of looted, stolen and trafficked cultural objects (including but not only antiquities) to the attention of the media once more. It has been traditionally assumed that the problem is one for the “source” nations — which are losing their cultural heritage at a rapid rate — and the most prolific “market” centres — such as London, New York, and Brussels — to solve. Little attention has been paid to the position of the Nordic countries in this debate.

There are also concerns — raised internationally — regarding the role of scholars and museums in researching (or not) potentially tainted cultural material. Dilemmas abound: Is it better to document unprovenanced material rather than have it disappear altogether? Or does the act of publishing an object of unclear origin add legitimacy to looting and illicit trade, and maybe even enhance the market value of these and other objects? To what extent is it the role of the scholar to engage in debates concerning cultural object provenance, and is there a notional ‘line in the sand’ concerning when unclear provenance becomes more or less acceptable to the academic community?

In this international symposium we will address the topic of trafficked cultural objects in Finland, in order to generate awareness and kick-start a national debate. The conference is organised with funding from the University of Helsinki Future Fund and generous support from the National Museum of Finland and ICOM Finland.

Confirmed Keynote speakers:

- ☞ Dr. Neil Brodie, Senior Research Fellow, School of Archaeology, University of Oxford
- ☞ Prof. Patty Gerstenblith, DePaul University, USA
- ☞ Prof. Christopher Rollston, George Washington University, USA

Further details will be issued shortly but for now, please save the dates! Please direct any queries to: wcom.helsinki@outlook.com, check out [our conference website](#), or [follow us on Twitter](#).