



CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Can we talk? Museums facing polarisation

NEMO European Museum Conference | Sibiu, Romania | 10-12 November 2024

The annual conference of the Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO) brings together fascinating speakers and engaged participants to exchange on museum trends, opportunities and challenges. Join us for inspiring panel discussions and keynote speeches, networking with European colleagues, museum visits and much more.

[NEMO's European Museum Conference 2024](#) seeks to address the vital role museums (can) play in today's challenged democracies. Together, we will explore the power museums have to face polarisation: Which possibilities do museums have to navigate controversies and foster dialogue and debate? How can museums better respond when caught in the crosshairs of socio-political debate? Additionally, the conference will discuss how to build strong relationships with underrepresented groups and foster their representation in polarising times. Finally, we will bring to light the growing political pressure that museums worldwide are grappling with; inviting and analysing possible (re)actions as models for prevention.

Let's get inspired by examples from European museums and successful strategies from other sectors while reflecting on our museums' operations and the options we have – including effective community engagement, governance models, and conflict management strategies.

NEMO invites you to shape the conference by submitting an innovative proposal by 19 June 2024.

Please note that once you have submitted your proposal, it enters the internal curation process. We will **inform you of the status of your submission from 1st July** onwards. In the selection process we will consider the quality of content as well as diversity criteria¹.

¹ We want to **provide space for different perspectives and reflect diversity**: We also aim to include perspectives from diverse regions, gender, professional backgrounds, age groups, sexual orientations and disabilities.

Explore the three areas of the open call

Deadline: 19 June 2024.

1. **SLAM**

Navigating controversies

The Slam format brings together different perspectives in short time. Each presenter can share their vision, approach, experience in 5 minutes on the stage by using entertaining, participative or learning formats around the following topic:

How to deal with sensitive topics while facing backlash or controversy? How can museums respond when caught in the crosshairs of socio-political debate? We are searching for professionals that will talk openly about how they navigated controversies, about their ad hoc reactions or strategies, failures and lessons learnt.

2. **Workshops**

Our workshop programme has a practical/participatory approach and should offer our participants a concrete takeaway from the conference. The topics can vary. Relevant **examples** are listed below:

- Democratising the museum (diversity management, change management methods with focus on awareness (theory u) etc.)
- Conflict management strategies (mediation, moderation for cultural organisations, creating safe spaces)
- Anti-bias training
- Feel free to propose a workshop that you think would be relevant for our conference topic.

3. **Conference**

The NEMO European Conference programme includes all formats taking place on our stage: from short panel presentations to interactive formats with the audience, each in the time frame of 5-8 Minutes. You can apply with a contribution relevant to the following topics:

- a. Can we talk? Museums and communities**
How can museums build up strong relationships with underrepresented groups? How to foster representation and exchange by using effective community engagement models?
- b. Are we allowed to talk? Museums and political pressure**
We want to address the experience of museums operating within growing political influence. Which strategies can cultural institutions such as museums use to deal with or even counteract political interference?
- c.** Feel free to propose a topic that you think would be relevant for our conference.

Application process

Please submit the following information:

- ➔ Abstract of the presentation (subject, content, approach – max. 150 words)
- ➔ Approach, method of your workshop/contribution (max. 150 words)
- ➔ Name of the author
- ➔ Organisation and country
- ➔ Selection of your preferred conference area
- ➔ Title of your contribution
- ➔ Biography of each presenter (max. 100 words)
- ➔ Send your proposal to office@ne-mo.org, with “Call for participation” and the area you apply for in the subject line

For us, this is what makes a good submission:

- **Relevant, forward-thinking, problem-solving, opinionated:** your submission should be convincing and include a well-thought-out concept. Our conference participants and the programme team wish for content that deals with the challenges of today's societies, where we can learn something, be confronted with new perspectives and solutions, and be inspired.
- **We want content - not pitches!** Obvious advertising and marketing pitches will not be considered. This does not mean that our participants are not interested in the latest museum products and services. In case you would like to showcase your products or if you would like to find out more about the opportunities for your company or organisation to become a partner, please reach out to office@ne-mo.org with the subject line *Become a partner*.

Find more information about the conference on [NEMO's website](#).