

Candidates for ICOM MPR Board, Special Election 2024

CANDIDATE FOR VICE CHAIR:



**Niloofar Yazdkhasti, ICOM Iran
Curator and Researcher, Iran Dolls Museum**

Statement:

It is with great honor that I submit my candidacy for the position of Vice Chair in the upcoming ICOM MPR election. ICOM MPR's strategic goals, including increasing representation and participation among young professionals and colleagues from under-represented regions, align closely with my experience of over a decade in promoting cultural heritage through education and community engagement.

As the founder of "The Museum Matters," a social media initiative aimed at advancing cultural heritage awareness, I have developed strong skills in engaging diverse audiences, aligning perfectly with MPR's mission of innovative curation. My experience as a Museum Curator in Iranian museums along with winning the Iranian Museum Educator for Children Competition in 2013, underscores my dedication to engaging younger audiences and supporting MPR's objectives.

To address contemporary challenges within the sector, MPR seeks to embrace change and advocate for best practices. My academic background, including two master's degrees in Museology and Art Studies, and research on museum digital communication, AI in cultural heritage, and museum social interaction in the Metaverse, equips me to contribute

effectively to these initiatives. Additionally, my cooperation with the Save Cultural Heritage Group as a Digital Media Partner further strengthens my capacity to support MPR's goals. Through participation in various international events, I have reinforced my belief in the necessity of embracing change, fostering global best practices, and facilitating knowledge exchange. By standing as a candidate, I confirm that I am fully aware that, if elected, my term of office will end at the next elections to be held in 2025.

Biography:

Niloofar Yazdkhasti is a dedicated museum professional with a background in Museology and Art Studies. She holds two master's degrees, one from the Indian Institute of Heritage and the other from Tarbiat Modarres University, Tehran, specializing in museum digital communication and education. As the Museum Curator at the Iran Dolls Museum, Niloofar leads innovative projects and spearheads marketing and public relations efforts to broaden the museum's reach. She founded "The Museum Matters," a social media account promoting cultural heritage.

In 2013, Niloofar won the Museum Educator Competition in Iran, showcasing her commitment to education. Her research on cultural heritage, AI, and Metaverse at the Université Polytechnique Hauts-de-France reflects her dedication to advancing museology. She actively participates in international conferences and training courses, sharing insights on museum documentation, visitor experiences, and public engagement strategies. Her passion for integrating AI and innovative curatorial practices drives her mission to preserve cultural heritage globally.

CANDIDATE FOR SECRETARY:



**Carolyn Mwenda, ICOM Kenya
Head of Marketing, National Museums of Kenya**

Statement:

With over twenty years of experience in marketing and public relations, I have successfully led initiatives that significantly increased visitor engagement and public awareness at the

National Museums of Kenya, where I currently serve as Head of Marketing. My academic background includes a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Cape Town, Graduate School of Business, complementing my practical expertise with a strong theoretical foundation, as well as a Post Graduate Diploma from the Chartered Institute of Marketing where I now hold the prestigious Chartered Marketer title.

My role at the National Museums of Kenya has equipped me with the skills to develop and execute innovative marketing strategies, leverage digital platforms for wider reach, and build meaningful relationships with diverse audiences. As a proactive member of ICOM, I have a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the museum sector. I am dedicated to contributing to MPR's Vision and Strategic Goals by sharing best practices, fostering collaboration among members, and promoting the importance of cultural heritage. My focus will be on enhancing communication channels, supporting professional development, and advocating for the role of marketing and public relations in the sustainability of museums globally.

By standing as a candidate, I confirm that I am fully aware that, if elected, my term of office will end at the next elections to be held in 2025. I am committed to serving the MPR Board with dedication and enthusiasm, and I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to our shared mission.

Biography:

With over twenty years of experience in marketing and public relations, I have successfully led initiatives that significantly increased visitor engagement and public awareness at the National Museums of Kenya, where I currently serve as Head of Marketing. My academic background includes a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Cape Town, Graduate School of Business, complementing my practical expertise with a strong theoretical foundation, as well as a Post Graduate Diploma from the Chartered Institute of Marketing where I now hold the prestigious Chartered Marketer title.

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CANDIDATE FOR TREASURER:



**Vinod Harikumar, ICOM United Arab Emirates
Senior Marketing and Communications Leader**

Statement:

With over 14 years of experience in marketing and communications, I possess a strong foundation in financial management, budgeting, and strategic planning, which are essential for this role. My tenure as Vice President at Claruz Digital has equipped me with the skills to manage budgets effectively, forecast financial performance, and ensure fiscal responsibility.

As Treasurer, I will contribute to MPR's vision by implementing transparent financial practices and developing strategies that align with our strategic goals. I am committed to enhancing financial reporting and accountability, ensuring that our resources are utilized efficiently to support member initiatives and programs. I believe in fostering collaboration and open communication among committee members to drive financial sustainability and growth. By leveraging my expertise in financial analysis and stakeholder management, I aim to support MPR in achieving its objectives and enhancing its global impact.

By standing as a candidate, I confirm that I am fully aware that, if elected, my term of office will end at the next elections to be held in 2025. I look forward to the opportunity to serve and contribute to the financial health of MPR.

Biography:

Vinod Hari is a Senior Marketing & Communications Leader based in the UAE, with over 14 years of experience in driving impactful marketing strategies across various industries, including SaaS, Financial Services, and E-commerce. He holds a B.Tech. in Electronics & Communications from the University of Kerala.

Vinod began his career at Crayons Advertising Ltd., managing the Grand Kerala Shopping Festival, one of the biggest shopping festivals in Asia. He then advanced to Ernst & Young (EY), where he developed global marketing strategies for their delivery centers, in

Argentina, Poland, China, and India. As Brand & Marketing Director at Six Degrees Media, he led successful campaigns and built high-performing teams for various brands. As the Vice President at Claruz Digital, Vinod has achieved a remarkable 10X revenue growth for his clients, over five years and has built the agency from scratch.

He is a recipient of the UAE Golden Visa for Creative Talent and an esteemed member of the International Committee of Marketing & PR (ICOM). Vinod is dedicated to innovation and collaboration in the marketing landscape.

Four (4) CANDIDATES FOR ORDINARY MEMBER (Only one can be elected):



**Christiana Kazakou (GB/GR), ICOM UK
Researcher, Curator, Cultural Producer**

Statement

As a researcher and professional, I am committed to advancing marketing and public relations in the context of transdisciplinary practice and the museum sector. My experience in strategic marketing, public engagement, and cultural promotion uniquely positions me to contribute meaningfully to the committee's goals and initiatives.

I advocate for:

- **Global Diversity:** Engaging with local, national, and international communities of practice to broaden global reach and promote ICOM's mission and activities worldwide.
- **Transdisciplinary Discourse:** Collaborating with media outlets, cultural institutions, and independent practitioners and researchers to disseminate knowledge and develop collaborative programming. This approach amplifies ICOM's message and reach by fostering intergenerational, intercultural, and interdisciplinary communication, promoting global best practices and projects to museum professionals.

- **Innovative Marketing Solutions:** Applying cutting-edge marketing technologies and methodologies to explore how emerging technologies redefine digital communications.

My dedication to ICOM's values of cultural diversity, professional integrity, and excellence drives my desire to serve on this committee. I am confident in my ability to help shape and execute impactful initiatives that will enhance ICOM MPR's presence and influence worldwide. By standing as a candidate, I confirm that I am fully aware that, if elected, my term of office will end at the next elections to be held in 2025.

Biography:

Christiana Kazakou (GB/GR) is a researcher, curator, cultural producer. Her research with i-DAT, currently funded by the UK Arts & Humanities Research Council, explores transdisciplinary curatorial models and spatial trajectories within the art & science discourse. Following her MA Art & Science (Central Saint Martins, London) she worked for diverse organisations and groups whose work span the spectrum of the arts, sciences, technology and society. She is also the Program Engagement Specialist for LEONARDO/ISAST and LASER Talks; a program of international gatherings that fosters interdisciplinary dialogue and opportunities for community building in over 50 cities & 5 continents worldwide.

In 2019 she joined S+T+Arts (Science, Technology and the Arts) Regional Centres, a European Union Initiative in Greece and Augmented Europe, a Creative Europe project in collaboration with new media organizations MEET, RIXC, PUBLIC ART BERLIN and the Athens Digital Arts Festival as a researcher, curator and producer. She received funding to participate as a changemaker at the Museums Association's Mindsets + Missions programme. She is a member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), Museums Association, ITD-Alliance – Global Alliance for Inter- and Transdisciplinarity, Architectural Association, Somerset House EXCHANGE, 180 Studios, HomoLudens Ecosystem.



Carolien Mertens, ICOM Belgium
Head of Public Engagement, Royal Library of Belgium

Statement

With over a decade of experience in cultural management and event planning, I bring a diverse skill set that aligns closely with MPR's vision of being a global voice and networking hub for museum professionals.

As Head of Public Engagement at the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR), I lead teams in Communications, Museum & Temporary Exhibitions, and Development, focusing on making cultural collections accessible to broad audiences. My leadership in developing revenue streams and managing complex projects aligns with MPR's goals of professionalizing governance and promoting best practices in communications and community engagement.

I believe museums are essential spaces for fostering empathy and societal connection. At KBR, our museum is in the process of evolving into a place of impact, embracing diversity, inclusivity, and sustainability. This vision aligns with ICOM MPR's mission to create relevant, engaging spaces for all communities.

I am committed to enhancing member representation and participation, particularly by engaging young professionals and colleagues from under-represented regions. My experience in managing an international event planning business has given me insights into global trends and diverse cultural perspectives, crucial for fostering inclusive and meaningful conversations within ICOM MPR.

I am eager to contribute my expertise and passion to help ICOM MPR continue to be a welcoming and dynamic platform for museum professionals worldwide. By standing as a candidate, I confirm that I am fully aware that, if elected, my term of office will end at the next elections to be held in 2025.

Biography:

Carolien Mertens is a 36-year-old experienced cultural manager and event planner. As Head of Public Engagement at the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR), she leads the teams for Communications, Museum & Temporary Exhibitions, Development, Venue Hire, Shop, and Reception, developing strategies to bring KBR's collections to life and make them accessible to a broad audience. Previously, she was responsible for KBR's commercial activities, successfully developing new revenue streams and managing income-generating activities. In addition to her work at KBR, Carolien has been running her own event planning business since 2016, organizing over 100 international events. With an academic background in history and various management training programs, she has built a strong foundation for her leadership role in promoting cultural engagement and public involvement.



**Keith Reburiano, ICOM Philippines
Head of Communications and External Affairs, National Museum of the Philippines**

Statement:

I am Keith Reburiano and I want to be involved with the executive board because I can contribute to MPR’s vision of promoting best practices in community engagement among museum professionals worldwide through my perspective as an Asian millennial with a background in international studies and a passion for history and built heritage.

This opportunity not only allows me to contribute to a once-in-a-lifetime endeavor, but also learn from renowned museologists and experts while collaborating with fellow workers in government, the private sector, and non-state actors to support MPR’s vision of being the global voice and networking hub of museum professionals in the field of public relations and marketing. Using these key ingredients will help the board craft holistic programs, activities, and projects that support our members in navigating the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment of the fourth industrial revolution.

Should I be chosen as a member of the board, one of my main initiatives would be to conduct an “ICOM MPR 101” webinar, an online fireside chat for new members to introduce them to our vision and upcoming activities. By standing as a candidate, I confirm that I am fully aware that, if elected, my term of office will end at the next elections to be held in 2025.

Biography:

Keith is a civil servant with a decade’s worth of experience in government service. He served as Liaison Services Coordinator for the National Organizing Council during the Philippines’ hosting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meetings in 2015 and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in 2017. He also served as a consultant for the Development Academy of the Philippines’ “SPARTA” project, and as Defense Researcher for the Philippine Air Force from 2016 to 2021, where he received multiple recognitions, including the coveted Meritorious Achievement Medal.

Keith is a member of the International Council of Museums and a Trustee of the Heritage Conservation Society, an NGO advocating for the preservation of Philippine built heritage.

Currently, he is the Officer-in-Charge of the Communication and External Affairs of the National Museum of the Philippines and is pursuing his master's degree in International Studies, majoring in European Studies, at De La Salle University.



**Živilė Stadalytė, ICOM Lithuania
Communication Specialist, National Museum of Lithuania**

Statement:

My experience in the museum and cultural sectors aligns perfectly with the goals for the ICOM MPR Ordinary Board Member position. Working at a leading museum in Lithuania and the Association of Lithuanian Museums, I have developed strong media connections and extensive communication expertise. These skills have allowed me to effectively increase the visibility of the organizations I represent and find meaningful ways to publicize museum activities.

My deep understanding of museum operations enables me to seek effective solutions, while organizing cultural activities has helped me generate unique ideas. My marketing experience aids in securing sponsorships and attracting additional revenue, and my connections within the museum field facilitate joint projects and participation in international museum networks.

As a board member, I would contribute valuable insights into communication strategies and support museums internationally. I am ambitious, goal-oriented, and passionate about implementing modern solutions. I value structure and clarity, ensuring smooth processes. I am comfortable both leading new projects and joining ongoing initiatives. By standing as a candidate, I confirm that I am fully aware that, if elected, my term of office will end at the next elections to be held in 2025.

Biography

I am a dedicated communication specialist with extensive experience in the museum and cultural sectors. I'm based in Vilnius, Lithuania. I hold a Bachelor's degree in history from Vilnius University and a Master's in Heritage Protection Studies. Since 2015, I have been working for the National Museum of Lithuania, where I play a significant role in managing communication strategies, developing creative projects, and enhancing the museum's public image. In 2024, I expanded my expertise to the Association of Lithuanian Museums.

I trust my ability to generate unique ideas and my deep understanding of museum operations. I excel in organizing cultural activities, leading marketing initiatives, and securing sponsorships. My strong media connections and communication skills have significantly increased the visibility of the organizations I represent. Ambitious and goal oriented, I consistently seek effective, modern solutions to challenges in the museum industry.

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