

Conference Report

Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change



Journeys of Expression III: Tourism and Festivals as Transnational Practice Innsbruck, Austria, 5-7 May 2004



Informal encounter between Grant McCall and Stan Frankland, Valerio Simoni observing



Visit to the Castle Ambras with its 16th century curiosity cabinet

Feedback

This conference provided a convivial setting in which to take forward a whole range of key themes and issues in festival studies, and to interact with like-minded researchers.

Melanie Smith, University of Greenwich, United Kingdom

The conference helped me to critically reconsider the concepts, categories and rhetoric I am using in "scientific" discourse. I discovered new perspectives in tourism research and gained new knowledge about social practice of tourism.

Sasa Poljak, Institute of Slovene Ethnology, Slovenia

I think that "Journeys of expression III" managed to raise many interesting questions and debates that can lead to reconsider some established concepts and categories – such as liminality, authenticity, host/guest, tourist/local – revealing the traps of overgeneralization and oversimplification. This should be encouraging as far as the pursuing of further research on tourism and festivals is concerned.

Valerio Simoni, University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland

Why do tourists go to festivals? How do they participate? What do they experience and through which forms of symbolic or semiotic frameworks do they make this experience meaningful? Do festivals become social nodes of a transnational system of social relationships, of a 'global village'? What is the meaning of the economic and symbolic exchange processes involved? How are the touristic strangers domesticated?

The aim of this third Journeys of Expression conference was to bring together different theoretical and disciplinary approaches to the relation between tourism and festivals in the context of the contemporary world(s).

Themes of interest to the conference included:

- tourism and festivals as transnational social phenomena
- hospitality, participation and transnational exchange in 'cultural' festivals;
- 'cultural' festivals as international institutions, utopias and doctrines;
- festivals between the expression of power and the communication of experience;
- tourism as a global geographical extension of ritual processes;
- heritage, culture and nature as sacred spaces;
- the challenge of internationalisation to cultural values and organisation patterns;
- domesticating the alien: cooking, eating and digesting the stranger.

As well as the academic programme, delegates also experienced the nearby renaissance Castle Ambras, situated in the English landscape garden and one of the most important sights in the city. Its cultural and historical importance is closely connected with Archduke Ferdinand II (1529-1595) who encouraged science and arts in the way of a true Renaissance ruler. Delegates were able to see the remarkable chamber of art and curiosities held in the *Wunderkammer* (curiosity cabinet), collected by archduke Ferdinand from 1563 to 1595 and were provided with an insight in how the world was constructed by the Renaissance mind. This chamber of curiosities has attracted visitors since the seventeenth century including Queen Christina of Sweden and Goethe.

The conference was jointly organised with our partners from the Institute of European Ethnology and Folklore, University of Innsbruck and in collaboration with ATLAS and IFEA Europe. It was supported by the City of Innsbruck and the Tyrol Region.

The proceedings of the conference (CD ROM) are available for purchase (£19.50 including postage and packing). Please go to our website (www.tourism-culture.com) to download an order form or contact us at ctcc@leedsmet.ac.uk.

Collaboration with the Institute for European Ethnology and Folklore

Through this event, the CTCC has reaffirmed one of its long established partnerships, with the Institute for European Ethnology and Folklore (IEEF) at Innsbruck University. The IEEF's main focus is on popular and masscultural phenomena in a European, as well as a regional (Alpine) perspective. The IEEF was founded in 1923 as the 'Institute for historic settlement and popular tradition research in Alpine countries'. It gained its profiles a folklore institute with its own course of studies in 1941. After World War II teaching was resumed in 1954. With the general shift in German folklore studies towards a modern cultural science (European Ethnology) the institute changed its name and profile to the Institute of European Ethnology/Folklore. In the last fifteen years, folk narrative research, especially legend research and communication processes in every-day culture, have been the central interests of the staff working at the Institute. In relation to this topic the Institute has organised several exhibitions, conferences and series of lectures. Both the CTCC and the IEEF share interests in the ways that myth, legend and folkloric practices are increasingly commoditised, ritualised, and performed for tourism as expressions of cultural identity. Social customs, community festivals and celebrations have become objects of the tourist gaze. For further information on the work of the IEEF please contact Oliver Haid (Oliver.Haid@uibk.ac.at).

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