

## **ARTEFACTS XX**

### **Scientific Heritage at World Exhibitions and Beyond. The Long XXth Century**

Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci, Milan  
September 20-22, 2015

ARTEFACTS is an international network of academic and museum-based scholars interested in promoting the use of objects in studies of the history of science and technology. The network was established in 1996 and since then has held annual conferences and published several books examining the various ways that this can be accomplished.

The next conference will be held at the **Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci, Milan-Italy, 20–22 September 2015.**

In conjunction with EXPO 2015, the world exhibition which will take place in Milan from May till October 2015, this edition of ARTEFACTS invites participants to ponder over the role played by scientific and technological heritage in national and world exhibitions of the twentieth century and over the impact of these exhibitions in the establishment of permanent collections and museums.

Much has been written on the dynamics of representation in exhibitions of the nineteenth century, but much remains to be investigated with regard to the twentieth century, both in terms of social and political changes and changes in science and technology, as well as in terms of the perception of the role of science in society.

Some of the national and world exhibitions of the twentieth century were unique opportunities for presenting and displaying instruments, collections, memorabilia and also models, exhibits, replicas or prototypes of modern technologies. These artefacts were proudly shown as precious relics witnessing the work of famous scientists or the pretended intellectual supremacy of a certain nation, as masterpieces of applied arts and as icons of progress and national achievement.

A relevant aspect of this field concerns the relationship between the collections shown at the world exhibitions and the foundation of permanent museums.

In many cases these kind of fairs stimulated the establishment of permanent museums of science and technology in Europe and the United States. They were in fact unique opportunities for the collection of tools and materials; once the show was over, the artifacts gathered there were used to substantiate the museum collections. What remains today of this twentieth-century history, to which many existing scientific museums owe their foundations or at least their consistent growth?

What, then, was the role of scientific-historical artifacts at exhibitions? Has it always existed? When did the scientific heritage become a vehicle for national identity? At what point did this kind of material start to lose some of its communicative and representative power? Has it played a role also in non-Western countries? Is now-a-day the scientific heritage exhibited in national and universal exhibitions?

ARTEFACTS XX invites the submission of proposals with reference to three historical frames, with a special focus on the period between the two wars:

**1880-1914: Between the legacy of XIX century exhibitions and the search of new trends**

**1918-1940: The emergence of a historical interest towards the scientific heritage and the rhetoric of national science**

**1946-today: New frontiers of scientific and technological research, which role for artefacts?**

ARTEFACTS conferences are friendly and informal meetings with the atmosphere of a workshop. There is plenty of time for open discussion and networking. Each contributor is allocated a 20 minutes slot for her or his talk plus abundant time for questions and discussion. Please send your proposal for sessions or individual papers (title, text 500–700 words) along with a brief CV to Laura Ronzon (ronzon@museoscienza.it) **no later than Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2015** (submissions are for approval). Please remember that the focus of presentations should be on artefacts.

You can find more information on **[www.artefactsconsortium.org](http://www.artefactsconsortium.org)**

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