President of the World Cultures Institute French Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage: Chérif Khaznadar

Director of the World Cultures Institute: Arwad Esber

Director of the French Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage: Séverine Cachat

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Free entrance

- Tuesday through Friday from 2 pm to 6 pm or by appointment
- Tuesday through Sunday from 2 pm to 6 pm during temporary exhibitions

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The Maison des Cultures du Monde (World Cultures Institute) was founded in Paris in 1982 by Chérif Khaznadar. And is dedicated to supporting cultural diversity and promoting intangible cultural heritage (ICH).

Welcoming traditional performing arts in their different forms, whether musical, choreographic, festive or ritual, especially within the framework of the Festival de l’Imaginaire since 1997, the Institute also provides a space for reflection and dialogue.

The Institute publishes recordings of traditional music under its label INEDIT, and edits a semi-annual journal, Internationale de l’Imaginaire.

Moreover, it offers its expertise in cultural engineering through various cultural services and programmes.

In accordance with the Convention for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage adopted by the UNESCO in 2003 and ratified by French government in 2006, the Ministry for Culture and Communication has designated this Centre as a competent body for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present on its national territory. In 2011, it became the French Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The World Cultures Institute’s international resource centre was opened in Vitré in 2005. The City of Vitré has made it possible for the Centre to be located in the northern wing of the former Benedictine priory.

This fund comprises especially the archives of the Institute, which are partially available for online consultation on the multimedia database Ibn Battuta. In addition, the Centre houses the collections of items and objects, including musical instruments and masks from all over the World.

Dedicated to informing, documenting, training, as well as debating on living heritage in all its diversity, the French Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage is also a network of all actors invested in the various fields of ICH.

According to the Convention, intangible cultural heritage means the “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage”.

This heritage “is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity”.

It is manifested inter alia: in the oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship.

In 2010, The World Cultures Institute was accredited as a NGO to act in an advisory capacity to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In connection with the French Ministry for Culture and Communication, which coordinates the implementation of the Convention in France, the Centre participates in guiding applicants through the procedure for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, as well as on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and on the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices.

Finally, it is a tool for raising public awareness on the safeguarding of ICH through exhibitions, educational workshops for school children, conferences and other activities.