

COPTIC
MUSEUM
OF CANADA



MUSÉE
COPTE
DU CANADA



THE MUSEUM & CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

In our last issue of the Newsletter we announced that the Museum closed on March 14 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This Newsletter issue, the first since that time, features for our readers on actions and activities during closure and an outline of CMC's phased approach to re-entry and re-opening plan and draft Guidelines to ensure safety of the collection, volunteers, visitors and contractors.

Closed but Active!



ZOOM meetings have become the “new norm”! Webinars related to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on museums and online reports from museums, the arts and culture sectors around the world are a significant source of information on

new and emerging best practices. In a strange way, this virus has brought the museum world together.

The CMC's Board of Directors and volunteers are actively engaged with keeping the Museum afloat. Of foremost concern is the safety of the collection, dealing with the impact of closure on financial resources, experimenting with virtual opportunities, and of course how visitors can once again safely visit the CMC's collection and use the Cecile Barsoum Reference Library.

The Board of Directors' preparations for a five-year strategic plan had to be set aside to deal with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the CMC's operations in the new reality. Instead, the Board has been working with external consultants from Management Advisory Services who are assisting with setting priorities through and beyond this crisis period and developing a fundraising plan. As with all museums, the drop in revenue due shutdown is a major challenge.

Volunteers have continued curatorial and administrative work remotely, as feasible. General monitoring of temperature and environmental conditions of the gallery and storage room has been carried out by the building's maintenance staff person.

Closure and the continued reality of Covid-19 has also been an opportunity to explore and experiment with virtual programming. With so much of our lives having shifted online and at the same time increasing signs of screen fatigue, the challenge is to create opportunities that can engage individuals and groups with the CMC.

Current online activities

The CMC's website is the venue for

- interactive workshops we design together with individuals and groups, and
- a “Treasure Hunt on Coptic Art and the CMC's collections”.

Contact us by email for further information.

- While the global impact of Covid-19 and history is unfolding, an appeal was launched for an image to tell the story of Covid-19 at CMC 100 years from now.
- The CMC's Facebook is particularly active.
- The Museum's Cecile Barsoum Reference Library will be available on an online data base early Fall 2020.
- Plans are underway for a new website design to be launched later this year.

Rather than a full investment of online programming, the CMC Board of Directors recommended exploring a “mixed” approach with both online and onsite options that would allow the Museum to shift and adapt programming when needed.



CMC's Phased Re-entry & Re-opening Plan and Guidelines

This is a living document that is constantly updated based on Federal, Provincial and Municipal public health directives, as well as directives specific to museums.

We are especially grateful to the Ontario Museum Association and Museums Canada for their diligent efforts to keep museums abreast of the pandemic, as well as, educational opportunities through webinars, and advocating for Canadian museums. The Canadian Conservation Institute's directives on the protection of collections during lockdown and preparation for reopening are invaluable.

The CMC is coordinating with St. Mark's Church reopening procedures and practices with special attention on shared entrances to the building, inside spaces, and utilities. The CMC will not re-open until it is ready to safely receive visitors in the gallery and Reference Library. Re-opening procedures will be posted on the CMC's website and emails will be sent to stakeholders.

Four phases determine the CMC's comprehensive re-opening plans and guidelines to taken into account the safety of volunteers, the public and the collections. No specific dates have been set for any of the phases. The approach is to be flexible and agile pending the (changing) status of the pandemic and the CMC's readiness.

PHASE 1: Re-entry

Currently in process.

Curatorial and building management personnel only.

- Cleaning and disinfection of surfaces of all Museum spaces.
- Inspection and assessment of impact shutdown of all the collection.

PHASE 2: Re-entry of volunteers

- Orientation and Training.
- Exploring and preparing online virtual projects with videographer.

PHASE 3: Re-opening of Gallery and Reference Library

- Admission prerequisites and hours of opening will be posted on the website and sent through emails.
- Since closure we have been keeping a list of people who have expressed interest to visit the CMC's collection and/or requested to use the Reference Library. We will be contacting them personally when the CMC gallery and Reference Library re-open.

PHASE 4: Re-opening: onsite programmes

- Admission prerequisites and hours of opening will be posted on the website and sent through emails.



Among other factors, the Guidelines for each phase require

- specific planning, preparation, evaluation, reporting;
- purchase & use of appropriate PPE, thermometers, sanitation and disinfection supplies;
- inspection and monitoring of collection to ensure safety of the collection under increased measures of sanitation;
- cleaning and disinfection before and after volunteers, visitors, & contractors enter and leave Museum spaces;
- coordination with St. Mark's Church procedures and practices; and
- communication with stakeholders.

We are looking forward to connecting more with our Museum supporters and stakeholders as we progress through the different re-opening phases and provide updates on our website and through emails.



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