

Calouste Gulbenkian Museum: Making Connections

A very good afternoon to you all. I would like to thank the kind invitation from the Museu dos Transportes e Comunicações to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation to take part in the 40th IATM Conference. It gives the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum great pleasure to be associated with this series of presentations in the recently inaugurated Museu Nacional dos Coches, designed by the architect Paulo Mendes da Rocha who has endowed the city with a new 21st-century facility.

Photo of the museum hall

But the reason I am here today is to talk to you about the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, a museum which is very different from that we find ourselves in today. Nevertheless, common ground can always be found, such as in the area of the safeguarding of heritage and its conservation – issues which are increasingly relevant in a world where these values are under constant threat – and the dissemination of knowledge and the participation of the public within the scope of educational programmes, amongst many other aims.

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The Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, together with the headquarters of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, is part of the exceptional project conceived by the team of Portuguese architects consisting of Ruy Athouguia, Pedro Cid and Alberto Pessoa. (Museum 1969 photo)

Opened to the public in 1969 and listed as a national monument in 2010 (aerial photo), this huge and multifunctional cultural complex represents a significant milestone in Portuguese architecture from the first half of the 20th century. The headquarters and museum buildings occupy a built area of roughly 25,000m² ensconced in a 7 and a half hectare park whose landscaping, interior gardens

To achieve this, he also sought documentary evidence, obtaining opinions from different specialists, art dealers and people in whom he trusted and whose discernment he prized.

The list is very long, as we can see, but there are names which help to understand the scope of his activity and the reach of his influence. What for some would have been no more than a hobby, or a confirmation of power, for Gulbenkian was of capital importance, a true passion which, like any other, could in some cases turn into an obsession. By obsession here we do not imply anything morbid, but rather a steely determination which was one of his most outstanding qualities. There were some artworks which he yearned for his entire life but which he was never able to acquire (image of “Salisbury Cathedral” by Constable / image of “Countess of Chinchón” by Goya), while there were others where his perseverance paid off (coins from the Jameson Collection N318 / Aboukir medallions, Pierpont Morgan 2425).

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No collection of such breadth could exist without an impressive network of expertise and contacts enabling the finest acquisitions within relatively short timeframes. Of course there were variable factors which history takes responsibility for bringing into play – such as the acquisitions from Soviet Russia (pieces from the Hermitage, Hermitage Gallery/Rembrandt/Rubens/German) – in which Gulbenkian drew up a careful programme involving a very small number of close assistants and contacts which allowed him to achieve one of the most remarkable transactions of *objets d’art* in the first half of the 20th century.

And what of today, when we are all networkers? (Different Networks) Besides the **world wide web** and social and specialist networks, we also talk about the ICOM, Art Museum Network, MCN-Museum computer network (in Indianapolis) and NEMO, an independent network of national museum organizations representing the museum community of the member states of the Council of

Europe, amongst so many others including national networks. What role are museums to play and how can they best make the most of these networks?

It seems obvious that “**together we do better**”, while programmes like “2020 Strategy” launched by the EU may represent more than just sought after “European funds”; in other words, it is a chance for us to work together: institutions, museums, universities, communities, associations, the list goes on... However, the focus should not be forgotten – **museums will continue to be the repository of memory** – and so it is fundamental to ensure the conservation and study of the collections, while it is essential to hold exhibitions and other events to achieve a return on an accumulated knowledge which it is our aim to be as broad as possible, in order to reach out not just to a specialised audience but to the general public as a whole. (Visitor numbers slides)

However, the pressure to increase revenue from ticket sales or merchandising from blockbuster-type initiatives (Still-Life exhibition, 2011), though a source of prestige for the organisers due to the number of visitors they attract, have to be assessed in terms of their impacts. What, after all, is their legacy? The publications they spawn will certainly be one aspect of their inheritance, fruit as they are of multiple collaborations. The digitalisation of the specialised bibliography, online libraries, image repositories and the databases of which the Getty Research Institute serves as an example to be copied, have opened up excellent perspectives for collaborative ventures within the museum community.

(2013 Annual Report Data) Through its museums, multiple programmes and services, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation **promotes** internal networking as a means to boost the benefits of the know-how specific to the different areas it works in and **fosters** the emergence of joint projects.

In the case of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, the international nature of its collections is a source of great openness towards collaborative initiatives with external organisations within Portugal and overseas. The more than 3,000 years of history and art history, from ancient Egypt to the pinnacle of Art Deco

modernity, represented within them allows the museum to dialogue with other collections and to establish projects, partnerships and activities. The recent establishment of the Collector Museums Network in 2014 is proof of this (CMN Slide). The Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon, The Benaki Museum in Athens, The Burrell Collection in Glasgow, The Museu Frederic Marès in Barcelona and The Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan have decided to pay tribute to the men that made their existence possible by working together on projects that focus on the figure of the collector. This is but one of the myriad possibilities for collaboration.

(Museum façade – slide 1)

As we have already mentioned, focus must be kept at all costs. We are a collector's museum; a "closed" collection which brings together the exceptional objects which Calouste Gulbenkian assembled throughout his life and which he wished to keep intact after his death. We must, therefore, continue the constant challenge of adapting to modern times while ensuring that Gulbenkian's collector's spirit is maintained intact, and that his legacy not only remains alive but is able to dialogue with other collections and with art through the ages.

João Carvalho Dias

Curator / Advisor (Calouste Gulbenkian Museum)

Lisbon, 1st July 2015



Museu Calouste Gulbenkian: Making Connections

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Curator-Advisor
Museu Calouste Gulbenkian



Museum Hall. The statue *Apollo*, by Houdon, 1790



Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, 1969



Foundation headquarters and museum



Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian (1869-1955)





Üsküdar



Constantinople.

Caserne Selimie à Haïdar Pacha.

51, Avenue d'Iéna, Paris
The house as museum that never was



Hall and Grand Salon





Dining room



Calouste Gulbenkian Library, Jerusalem



The statue *Diana* by Houdon, main staircase at avenue d'Iéna, Paris,
and at the museum galleries, Lisbon



Late acquisitions (1955): Prayer rug, Asia Minor, 19th century
and a carpet from Kirman, Iran, 19th century

Calouste S. Gulbenkian

A. Chester Beatty

André Aucoc

Arthur Ruck

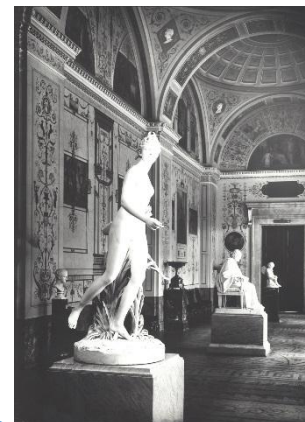
Arthur Upham Pope

J.G. Pollak

A. Della Robbia



The Holford Hours



Diana



Burne-Jones



Rodin



Iznik dish



Calouste S. Gulbenkian

Bernard Quaritch

Graat & Madoulé

Duveen

Armenian Bible

Carpeaux

Georges Wildenstein



Timurid jug



Egyptian torso



Fragonard

P. & D. Colnaghi



Dürer

Calouste S. Gulbenkian

René Lalique

Paul Rosenberg

Christie's



Renoir

Mme Petrocchino



Guardi



Riesener



Dragonfly

Greek vase

Knoedler & Co.

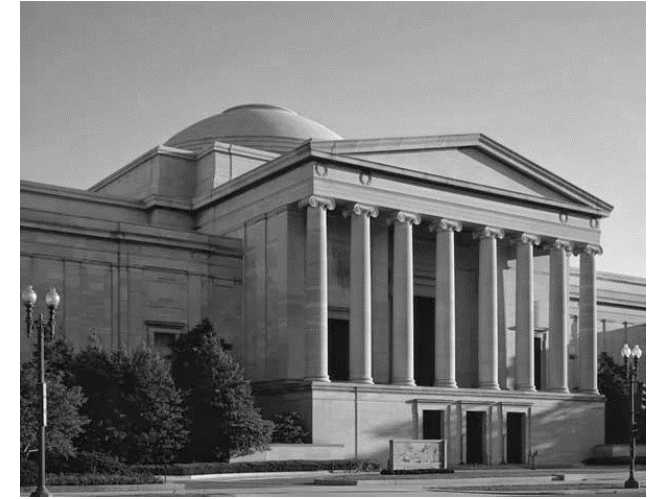


Turner



British Museum
Sir John Forsdyke,
Director (1936-50)

Major Loans



National Gallery, Washington DC
John Walker
Curator ; 2nd Director of NG (1956-69)

Major Loans

1936

Egyptian Coll.

Paintings

National Gallery, London
Sir Keneth McKenzie Clark
Director (1934-45)



Significant gifts 1949-52

Museu Nacional de Arte
Antiga, Lisbon
Director (1938-1962)





John Constable, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, 1831
Tate Britain, London



Goya, *Countess of Chinchón*, ca. 1800.
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

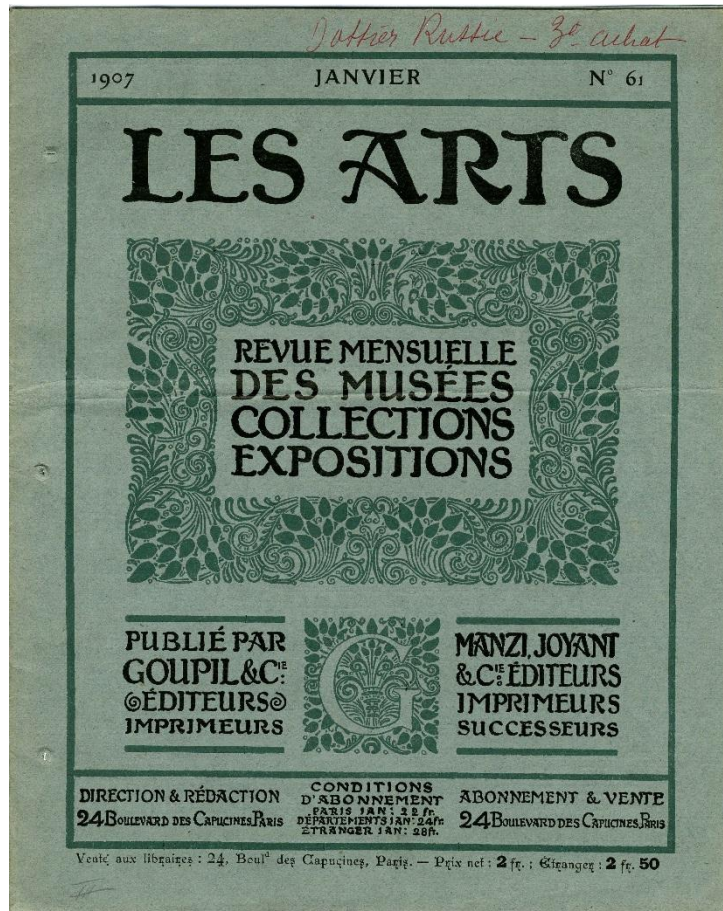


Decadrachma from Siracuse, ca. 395 AD, from the Jameson Collection
purchased by Calouste Gulbenkian in 1946

Gold medalion from the hoard of Aboukir (Egypt). Roman Eastern Empire, 3rd cent. AD.
Part of a set of eight pieces bought from the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York in 1949. Further 3 medallions come from the James Loeb collection.



The statue *Diana* by Houdon at her setting at the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, published by *Les Arts*, 1907



Acquisitions from the Hermitage, St Petersburg



Rembrandt, *Portrait of an old man*, 1645



[illegible]

Acquisitions from the Hermitage, St Petersburg

Rubens, Portrait of Helena Fourmont, ca. 1630-32

The Daily Telegraph, November 11, 1931

SOVIET SALE OF ART TREASURES

£1,600,000 FOR SET OF OLD MASTERS

By R. B. TATLOCK

From an English source I am informed that Mr. Andrew Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury in the United States Cabinet, has paid for a small collection of old Masters from the Hermitage, Leningrad, the vast sum of £1,600,000 sterling. It now seems that the Soviet Government deranked some time ago £250,000 for Raphael's "Madonna and Child".

Mellon has said it for some time past that the Soviet Government has been quietly selling Russia's art treasures. Investigations which I have had the opportunity of carrying out during the past few days have corroborated the truth of the allegations.

I am in a position to state that over twenty pictures have now been sold from the Hermitage collections. These include some of the greatest masterpieces of the world. It further seems that about thirty pictures have been disposed of in London recently. Though these are works of art, they cannot be regarded as art treasures, but as some industry or other business in the following list:

"The Descent from the Cross" by Van Dyck.
"Portrait of Philip, Lord Wharton," by Van Dyck.
"Portrait of Helen Fourmont" (the artist's wife), by Rubens.

These three pictures and certain others were brought through the custom at a well-known London firm by Sir. Mellon, who paid a visit to Europe during his service.

The list of sold pictures so far as the company concerned are concerned, are completed as follows:

Dutchman's "Adoration of the Magi."
Vermeer's "Girl with a Mirror."
Durer's "Horse Leaping."
Rembrandt's "Pallas Atheneas."
Raphael's "Madonna and Christ Child."

There is also one fine portrait of a woman, the "Borghese Venus," and of course, the famous "Mona Lisa."

"PAWNEE" FOR MACHINERY

An interesting sidelight on the situation comes to me from a reliable Central source. About a fortnight ago a very large manufacturing concern in the Soviet Government sent a great mass of machinery, received from the Soviet Union, to a warehouse in Moscow. This was an offer of a number of very important machines from the Hermitage on exchange. Negotiations continue.

The operation of the move, right and of the machine of the Soviet's breaking up, so very great a collection, has been in the air for years. It may be of interest to quote from a letter which I received in 1924 from the then chairman of the Trade Delegation of the U.S.S.R. to Great Britain, Mr. Ph. J. Kozlovsky:

"In 1924, the Soviet Government decided upon the sale of its art treasures, especially the Russian masters, to the British Museum. In London, we met the Director of the British Museum, Mr. C. H. F. Bell, and he expressed his willingness to accept such a collection. He stated that the collection of the Hermitage, which he stated that those countries are already without pictures. The collection of the Hermitage and our museum have not the same value of art, but they are of different kinds of art."

In my report I shall say correspondingly what I saw and the one idea, a French plan, was given to me for the sale of large quantities of artworks and whether as currency. The result of this was not actually in the press. I received no reply. The picture was published some months afterwards, and the silver was sold in Vienna and elsewhere.

That it was a case of money exchanged with the Hermitage for the sale of one of the most famous collections of art in the world is clear.

Two of the pictures which have been sold are reproduced on Page Thirteen.

Hermitage Gallery, Leningrad - Rembrandt's "Portrait of a Man" the Artist's Wife." The latter is one of a small collection for which S. Treasury, is said to have paid £1,600,000. Article on Page Thirteen.

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Acquisitions from the Hermitage, St Petersburg

Rubens, Portrait of Helena Fourmont, ca. 1630-32

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Rumour has said it for some time past that the Soviet Government had been quietly selling Russia's art treasures. Investigations which I have had the opportunity of carrying out during the past few days have corroborated the truth of the allegations.

I am in a position to state that over twenty pictures have now been sold from the Hermitage collections. These include some of the greatest masterpieces of the world. It further seems probable that thirty pictures have been disposed of in London recently. Though these are works of art, they cannot be regarded as art objects, but as mere commodities as there named in the following list:

"The Descent from the Cross" by Van Dyck.
"Portrait of Philip, Lord Wharton," by Van Dyck.
"Portrait of Helen Fourmont" (the artist's wife), by Rubens.

These three pictures and certain others were brought through the custom at a well-known London firm by Sir. Moles, who paid a visit to Europe during his service.

The list of sold pictures so far as the present time are concerned, are completed as follows:

Dutchman's "Adoration of the Magi."
Velázquez's "Pope Sixtus."
Rembrandt's "Old Man with a Beard."
Dante's "Beast Leaning."
Raphael's "Philip Wharton."
Raphael's "Madonna and Christ."
Rubens's "Interior."
Rubens's "Minerva."
Rubens's "Helen Fourmont and Her Daughter."

There are also two fine masterpieces of Watteau ("The Refreshing Proprietor") and of Goya.

"PAWNEE" FOR MACHINERY

An interesting sidelight on the situation comes to me from a reliable Continental source. About a fortnight ago a very large manufacturing firm in the Soviet Government sent a great mass of machinery, received from the Soviet Union, to a warehouse in very important old machine from the Hermitage on one side. Significant statement.

The operation of the novel right and of the purchase of the Soviet's breaking up so very great a collection last year in the six years. It may be of interest to quote from a letter which I received in 1924 from the then chairman of the Trade Delegation of the U.S.S.R. to Great Britain, Mr. Ph. J. Kozlovsky:

"In 1924 we were able to obtain such a large amount of machinery, especially by the Russian engineers, naturally by the Russian Museum in Leningrad, we let it come to us. This was done because a letter, dated Oct. 11, 1924, from Mr. P. V. Kozlovsky, Director of the Hermitage, in which he stated that these paintings are absolutely without value. The acquisition of the Russian and other museums have not the slightest intention of selling any objects of their collections of art."

In my reply I shall say correspondingly what I was told the day after a period of time, see every day about the day and force ourselves to do whatever and whether as currency. Therefore no intention was not actually in the past. I received an answer. This picture was exhibited some months afterwards, and the silver sold it in Vienna and elsewhere.

And if even was a case where it coincided with the Hermitage break-up of one of the most famous collections of art in the world.

Two of the pictures which have been sold are reproduced on Page Thirteen.

Hermitage Gallery, Leningrad - Rembrandt's "Portrait of a Man" or "The Artist's Wife." The latter is one of a small collection for which U.S. Treasury, is said to have paid £1,600,000. Article on Page Thirteen.

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Acquisitions from the Hermitage, St Petersburg



Silver centrepiece by François-Thomas Germain, 1766



ICOM

MCN-Museum Computer Network

**ART MUSEUM
NETWORK**

NEMO _ Network of National Museums

MUSEUM VISITORS
2013 203 000





MUSEUM VISITORS

2013

203 000

2014

273 439



Still-life exhibition
100.000 visitors

Partnerships

2 385 998 €
INICIATIVAS PRÓPRIAS

O MUSEU CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN tem como missão preservar, divulgar e promover o estudo da coleção de Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian e contribuir para o enriquecimento cultural dos públicos através da realização de exposições, atividades educativas, encontros, conferências e publicações. A diversidade das iniciativas que promove tem como ponto de partida o seu acervo, na procura de novas perspetivas, tanto através da complementaridade, como do confronto com outras obras e/ou coleções, num espírito de abertura, diálogo e cosmopolitismo. Através da sua plataforma digital, o Museu proporciona uma visibilidade das suas coleções e da sua programação junto do público, que se pretende cada vez mais alargada, fidelizando e conquistando visitantes de todo o mundo.

Parcerias

A SAMSUNG cedeu equipamentos para aplicação para *tablets* de conteúdos da exposição *O Traço e a Cor*.

Apoio à divulgação: MEO, El Corte Inglés, Valverde, FNAC e Ticketline.

Patrocínios e Financiamentos Externos

"La Caixa" Foundation - Exposição *A História Partilhada*

Credit Suisse - Catálogo *Desenhos e Aguarelas. Coleção Calouste Gulbenkian*

ITI - *Concertos de Domingo*

Visabeira - Exposição *O Brilho das Cidades*

Colaborações

COM OUTRAS unidades orgânicas da Fundação:

Programa Gulbenkian Qualificação das Novas Gerações - exposição *José V. de Pina Martins. Uma Biblioteca Humanista*;

Programa Gulbenkian Língua e Cultura Portuguesas - remodelação do Museu de Rachol / Santa Mónica, Goa;

Serviço das Comunidades Arménias - exposição *Mais do que o Sr. 5%: Os primeiros anos da vida de Calouste Gulbenkian*;

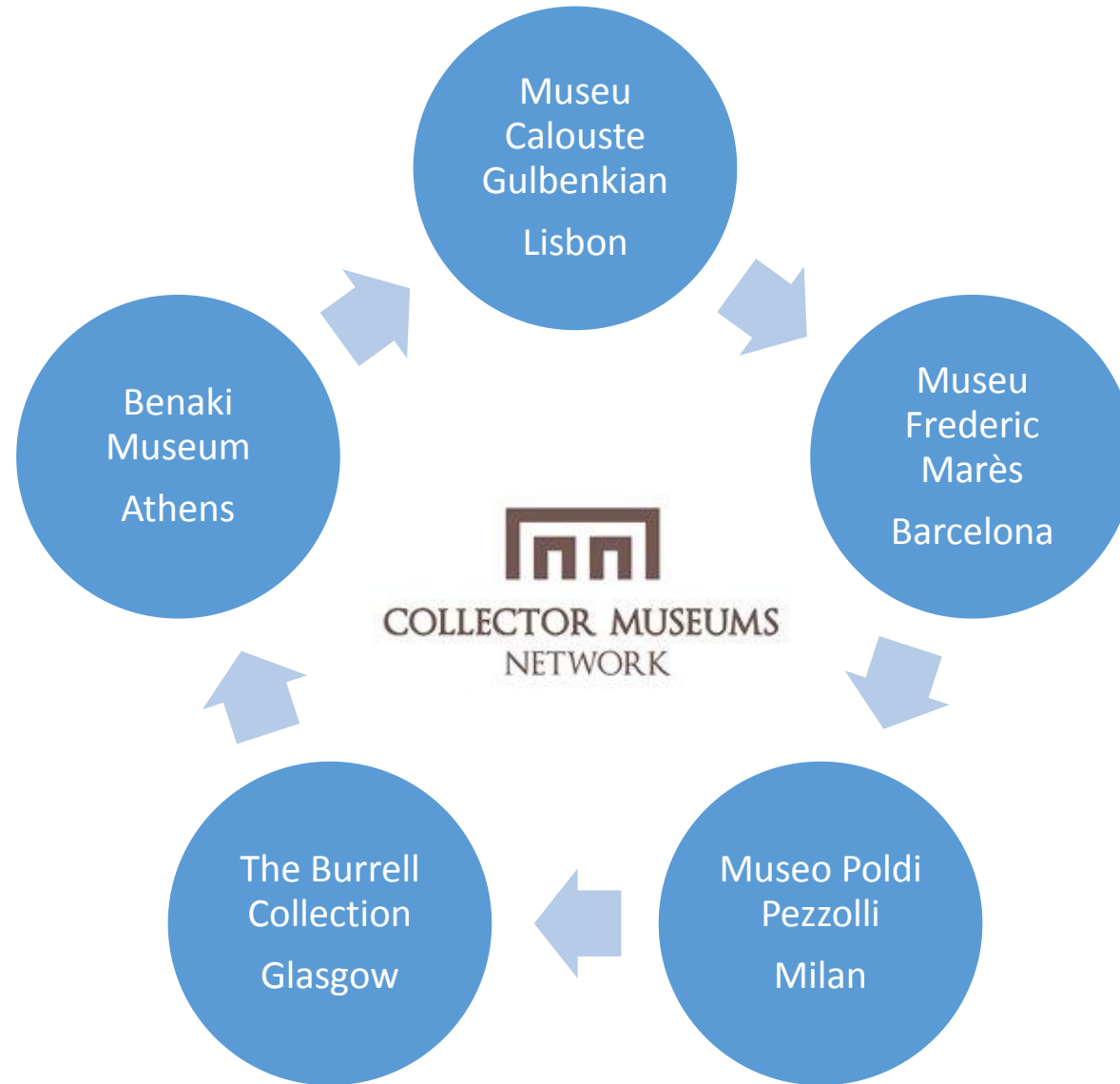
Serviço de Música - Concertos de Domingo;

CAM - exposição de *Lida Abdul* na Delegação em França, e exposição *Meeting Point*;

Programa Gulbenkian Próximo Futuro - exposições *Pieter Hugo, Artistas Comprometidos? Talvez* e *Present Tense* no Palácio da Cultura, Porto.

E com:

Aga Khan Trust for Culture/Câmara Municipal de Lisboa - exposição e catálogo *Arquiteturas. Testemunhas islâmicas em Portugal*, Castelo de São Jorge, Lisboa.





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