

# AMIA Advocates for: UNESCO'S MEMORY OF THE WORLD

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The Memory of the World Program, developed by the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has as its mission three fundamental directives:

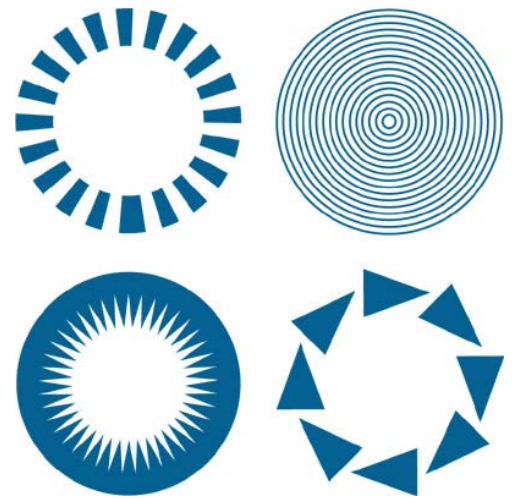
- To facilitate preservation, by the most appropriate techniques, of the world's documentary heritage.
- To assist universal access to documentary heritage.
- To increase awareness worldwide of the existence and significance of documentary heritage.

Beginning with the inscription of its first documents in 1997, the International Register today contains nearly 240 rare and precious documents and collections that illuminate the diverse history of our world cultures. A quick browse through the Register reveals an astonishing collection of precious documentation of mankind's history on this planet:

- *The Bayeux Tapestry*, an embroidered pictorial history of the Middle Ages stands as the 11<sup>th</sup> century counterpart to the *John Marshall Ju/'hoan Bushman Film and Video Collection, 1950-2000* an anthropological record documenting fifty years in the cultural evolution of one group of indigenous people.
- *Lumière Films* of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and the *Desmet Collection*, a rare compendium of unique film prints, company documents, posters and film stills documenting the 1910s are counterpoints to the *Archival Documents of King Chulalongkorn's Transformation of Siam (1868-1910)*, each tracing the evolution of specific societies as they grapple with a rapidly changing world.
- *Anne Frank's Diary*, the touching record of a young girl's thoughts, feelings and reflections on life while hiding from the Nazi regime, is a counterpoint to Paraguay's *Archives of Terror*, the official record of thirty-five years of repression, assassination and torture in that country.
- *Los olvidados* (1950), director Luis Buñuel's unflinching examination of the lives of children in a Mexico City slum, forgotten by society and oppressed by the world around them, stands between the fantasy world of beauty and happiness dreamed by Dorothy Gale in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), and that of the robotic, rigid and regimented vision of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926).

Maps, books, paintings, manuscripts, music, sound recordings and films are among the profusion of cultural artifacts that resonate with the power to speak to all peoples of the world.

AMIA has been granted Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) status with UNESCO which formalizes the relationship between the two bodies. NGO status is designed to facilitate the exchange of information and documentation relevant to matters of joint interest to both institutions. It gives AMIA observer status at a variety of UNESCO functions including selected plenary meetings of the UNESCO Conference and its commissions, and offers the opportunity for AMIA to take part in discussions of interest to its membership. NGO status also allows AMIA to be



invited to send observers to the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organizations and the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee.

In recognition of this new level of international collaboration with UNESCO, AMIA advocates for its members, as keepers of the cultural memory through the medium of the moving image, to nominate significant items for inscription in UNESCO's Memory of the World Registers (international, regional and national). We believe this program offers a unique opportunity for institutions that collect and preserve moving images to bring public recognition, honor and awareness to culturally significant film and sound recordings in their holdings that speak to all peoples of the world. Inclusion in the Memory of the World Registers is prestigious, and can be a unique tool with which an institution can build public interest and participation in the preservation of moving image collections.

The Memory of the World International Register and its application, guidelines and instructions can be found on the web at: (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/homepage/>)