



# COLLECTING

## BRUSSELS • ZINNEKECITY

*Zinneke: representative of Brussels' cultural mix*

### **ONE OF BRUSSELS' GREATEST ASSETS IS ITS MULTICULTURALISM!**

Brussels has always welcomed foreigners, but the phenomenon has become more pronounced since the 20th century, and since the 1950s in particular. Nowadays, **3 out of 4 residents of our region are foreigners or of foreign origin. Brussels is a world city heavily influenced by immigration** in its neighbourhoods, its gastronomy, its economy, its culture and all its urban characteristics.

But, **first and foremost, immigration in Brussels is represented by hundreds of thousands of individual stories.** Stories of hope and escape, of travel and tragedy, of struggle and integration, of success and disappointment, of building a new life and a new identity.

### **CALL FOR DONATION OF OBJECTS THAT SHOWCASE BRUSSELS' DIVERSITY**

**Brussels City Museum, in conjunction with the City Archives, is launching a call for the donation of objects bearing witness to the cultural diversity of the population of the Brussels region.**

The Brussels City Museum is a museum that, through its collections and activities, tells the story of Brussels and its inhabitants from the city's origins to the present day.

**This call for donations is aimed at individuals, businesses and associations** with ties to immigration, immigrant communities and foreign cultures represented in Brussels.

**The programme looks to collect items that preserve the memories and lives of the town's inhabitants.** These should be objects that represent their experience of immigration, their integration process, their journey once arrived in Brussels, the links they retain with their culture of origin, the way they enrich the city through their actions. Objects linked to individual stories that have a general resonance.

Whether your organization is involved with the reception of new arrivals to the country, integration or cultural promotion, whether it provides services to a single community or to all, **its memory deserves to be preserved.**

Whether your family comes from Western Europe or from the other side of the world, whether they arrived in Brussels under bi-national immigration agreements, through European free movement, as refugees, students, expatriate employees or illegal immigration, **make sure that your experience and your community's experience are represented in the City Museum by donating objects!**

**You can also help us by telling us which easy-to-find objects you feel represent your experience of immigration to Brussels or the experience of your community.**

## **WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE LOOKING FOR?**

You are invited to take part by donating personal objects and documents to the museum that bear witness to your experience, or that of your relatives, of settling in Brussels and the way in which your culture of origin shapes and influences the city. You are also invited to tell the stories behind these objects and documents, and why they are important to you.

Examples of the sort of objects we're looking for include administrative documents relating to immigration or professional experience, association or business archives, posters, flyers, correspondence, photographs, advertisements, handicrafts, everyday objects, works of art, souvenirs, collections, packaging, signs, trophies, medals, prizes, membership cards, postcards, flags, clothing, badges, records, brochures, books, magazines, videos, etc.

**The theme touches on a wide range of subjects, such as:**

### **The arrival in Brussels**

Objects relating to the journey to Brussels, the places you first stayed or the difficulty to find a reception place, the administrative procedures involved in obtaining a residence permit in Brussels (documents, obstacles, support associations, etc.).

### **Integration**

Objects related to finding accommodation, learning the language, finding a job or social assistance, as well as any experiences of racism or rejection encountered.

### **Professional activities**

Anything to do with employment, whether as a salaried employee or self-employed. Objects that bear witness to industries that rely heavily on immigrant labour, international companies, shops, cafés and restaurants linked to foreign cultures, etc. Testimonials of a particular professional success or an inspiring career path.

### **Leisure and cultural activities**

Objects relating to the enhancement and promotion of foreign arts and cultures in Brussels, meeting places, community leisure and cultural clubs (sports, games, music, dance, etc.)

### **Religion**

Objects relating to religion, reverence and places of worship.

### **Family**

Objects relating to family reunification, raising children and schooling.

### **The links maintained with the place of origin**

Objects relating to links with family and friends who remained in the place of origin or emigrated to a country other than Belgium, means of communication with the place of origin, trips and holidays to the country, etc.

### **Cultural identity**

Objects that embody the way in which immigrants construct a dual identity or sometimes reject their identity and culture of origin in the hope of facilitating their family's integration. Identity crisis and generational divides.

### **The community in Brussels**

Objects that symbolise the community's place in Brussels: high-profile places and districts, iconic shops, restaurants, cultural venues, as well as emblematic figures.

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER

From among all the objects brought in and on the basis of the information gathered during the interviews, the Museums and Archives will identify the objects that will be added to their collections by applying the following elements of selection:

- how well they fit the theme of the call for donations;
- the existence of documentation or an account by the donor enabling the provenance, use and history of the object to be identified;
- power of evocation and testimony;
- absence of redundancy with other pieces of their existing collection;
- state of conservation of the object;
- the museum's storage capacity.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE SELECTED OBJECTS?

The objects that enter our collections **will become the property of the Museums and Archives of the City of Brussels**. They will be subject to the **principle of the inalienability** of public collections, meaning that they cannot be donated or sold and will be preserved for future generations. When your objects and memories enter our collections, they are preserved for the long term!

Donated objects will be inventoried and published in the City Museum's online inventory (on the **collections.heritage.brussels** platform) or in the Archives' online catalogue.

The Museums and Archives of the City of Brussels reserve the right to choose whether or not to include them in temporary or permanent **exhibitions**.

A temporary exhibition displaying the results of the BRUSSELS, ZINNEKECITY collecting programme will be held in early 2025 in the "Espace Parenthèse" at the Brussels City Museum.

Each donation will also be formalised by the signing of a **donation form or agreement**.

## IN PRACTICE

To propose a donation, share a testimony, ask a question or request an appointment, please contact us at **cjs.zinnekecity@brucity.be**.

You can also call us on **02 279 43 64**.

**Alternatively, you can bring us your objects** and tell us the stories behind them:

**WHEN? Wednesday 5 June, between 2pm and 7pm.**

**WHERE? Centre Culturel Bruegel, 1F rue des Renards, 1000 Brussels.**

**The call for donations will run until 31 July 2024.** However, holders of objects and documents will still be able to come forward at any time after this date.

An initiative of the Office of the Councillor  
for Culture of the City of Brussel

**#BXLOVE**

