

## CASE STUDY: Institut del Teatre Barcelona

## An online museum of theatrical objects

*Putting the collections of the research centre and Museum of the Stage Arts in Barcelona on view worldwide immediately increased traffic*

### Situation

The Barcelona based Catalan Institut del Teatre is a cultural institution with a long history of training in the various specialities of the performing arts and the research, promotion and dissemination of theatre.

The Institut del Teatre is one of the most dynamic and influential performing arts institutions in Europe. The school's own Research Centre and Museum of the Stage Arts (MAE) contains a wealth of information related to the world of theatre.

The Research Centre holds a library of approximately 130,000 printed documents; including 5,500 manuscripts and around 500 'own' publications.

The MAE – founded in 1921 – has a magnificent collection of theatre paraphernalia consisting of posters, designs for scenery and scenography, costumes and puppets. Since the MAE does not have a permanent exhibition, it would have to pursue an active policy of lending items to exhibitions in other museums and countries in order to display their collection. However, to avoid the risk of damage to the often fragile objects, they decided to use the newest techniques to digitize and catalogue the MAE collections and put them on the Internet for the entire world to research and admire.

### Solution

“Unfortunately,” says Anna Valls Pasola, director of the Documentation Centre and the Museum of performing Arts, “in the past we have recorded all bibliographic and descriptive information, images, pictures, photos etc. in an MS Access database, which was useful for keeping track of our collections, but it proved impossible to give the users of our Research Centre access to the information.”

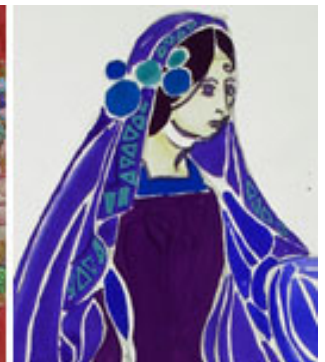
#### AT A GLANCE

- Full name: Centro de Documentación y Museo de las Artes Escénicas del Institut del Teatre
- Founded 1921, 235 employees
- Holds 103,000 printed documents and 5,500 manuscripts
- Collections of theatrical objects consisting of posters (> 5,000), scenographic and figurinistic designs (> 8,000 & >7,300), costumes (> 700) and puppets (300).
- Can be browsed worldwide at <http://escenadigital.institutdelteatre.cat/>

Since the Institut del Teatre did not have the technical nor the financial resources to develop custom-made software to digitize their beautiful collections of theatrical objects and publish them on the Internet, they decided to use a turn key solution. OCLC's CONTENTdm is promoted by the National Library of Catalonia and as such is the most commonly used tool for managing digital collections in the libraries of Catalonia, as a result it was only logical that the Catalanian Institut del Teatre also chose CONTENTdm.

***“Thanks to CONTENTdm we can display our collections without moving them an inch or risking damage to the fragile items”***

Anna Valls Pasola, director of the Documentation Centre and the Museum of performing Arts



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As the majority of 3D objects in the MAE collections already had a digital copy available, it was possible to upload these into CONTENTdm reasonably quickly and cost-effectively using a semi-automatic process with the support of the MAE's own technical staff.

The benefit of this approach meant that if any problems or questions arose, they could always turn for help and support to one of the other Catalan institutions using CONTENTdm such as the Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya.

### Result

So far, approximately 20,000 objects are already on display on the MAE's free and public website [escenadigital.institutdelteatre.cat](http://escenadigital.institutdelteatre.cat).

"We were very pleased to see that one of the expected gains of this huge digitization project, which was to increase the number of queries via our website on our collections, became visible almost immediately," Anna Valls Pasola proudly says.

The MAE will continue adding objects to the existing digital collections – puppets, costumes, posters, scenographic designs – and also open up new collections like photos, audiovisual materials, programmes etc. to students, researchers and a worldwide public.

CONTENTdm enables the MAE to organize a permanent, never ending exhibition of its beautiful collections without having to move them an inch or risking damage to the fragile items.

***"The number of visits to the MAE's website has increased by 40%!"***

Anna Valls Pasola, director of the Documentation Centre and the Museum of performing Arts

