



# 50 years after the 1972 Round Table in Santiago de Chile: a current assessment of the inclusion of social, participatory and critical museology

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**ACTAS**

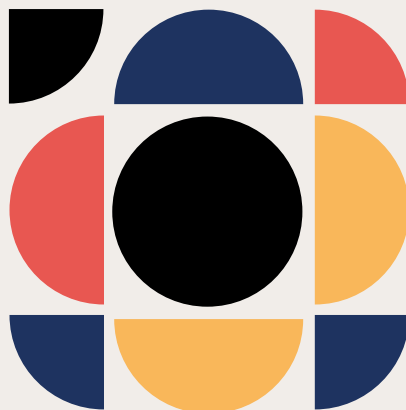
# **COLOQUIO INTERNACIONAL**

Museología Social, Participativa y Crítica

Coordinadores

**Yves Girault**

**Isabel Orellana Rivera**



**18, 19 y 20**  
**NOVIEMBRE**  
Santiago de Chile

**2020**





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## **Actas. Coloquio Internacional de Museología Social, Participativa y Crítica.**

### **Museo de la Educación Gabriela Mistral.**

Santiago de Chile, 18, 19 y 20 de noviembre de 2020.

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## 50 years after the 1972 Round Table in Santiago de Chile: a current assessment of the inclusion of social, participatory and critical museology

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The global field of museology currently witnesses a surge of patrimonial requirements resolving in: multiple community demands seeking to identify, assess and evaluate widely diverse types of heritage; the evolution of private and state museums; and deep-going changes connected with widely different socio-political contexts. All this originates in experiments that first took shape in Latin America out of various scenarios connected with the socio-political situations of the 1960's, 70's and 80's (revision and reaction to European cultural models, military dictatorships and democratic transitions etc.), giving rise to new theoretical trends such as new museology, social museology and critical museology. The cultural scene was thus progressively transformed through the creation of university museums and centres of scientific, technical and industrial culture (Orellana, 2011); and eventually as a result of economical crises as well as globalization and the associated migrations. This uncertain and changing social and cultural background has promoted innovative initiatives in areas whose populations suffered the consequences of those evolutions; one such case is Mexico, where these initiatives began in the '60s, particularly with the creation of the National Museum of Anthropology in 1964. However, only since the 1972 Round Table in Santiago de Chile have we witnessed the development of a host of community museums and school museums calling for more local autonomy and cultural devolution.

In this context, in the wake of the first ecomuseums in France (1969) and in order to claim the social relevance of museums and their impact on everyday life, the concept of “integral museum” was put forward to the signing parties of the Santiago Round Table Charter<sup>1</sup>, expressing their wish to work towards

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<sup>1</sup> See: UNESCO (1973). The Role of the Museum in Latin America Today. UNESCO Round Table, Santiago de Chile, 1972. *Museum*, XXV(3), 129-133. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001273/127362fo.pdf>

“opening the museum to other, hitherto unrelated disciplines so as to foster a consciousness of the social, economical, cultural, anthropological and technical development of Latin American countries, by involving consultants in the overall orientation of museums”. The goal was to contribute to community development by pushing for a renewal of mainstream museographical approaches towards better dialog between museum pieces and “visitors”. The Round Table also called upon museum operators to develop review procedures to assess their actual contribution to the public, and stressed that they should “increase the collection of cultural heritage so as to put it in the service of society and avoid its being disseminated abroad”. Other important aspects, some of which are still to be met by museums today, include the relation to rural or urban environment and life-long education, particularly in the line of the work of Paulo Freire<sup>2</sup>.

In the wake of the Round Table, several international seminars have allowed specialists and researchers to further reflect on participatory museology. The 1984 Declaration of Québec has thus stressed the participants’ desire to disrupt the monopoly of museums on the preservation of objects by extending their classical function through the inclusion and development of populations. That same year also witnessed the creation of MINOM (Mouvement International pour une Nouvelle Muséologie), an organization –later affiliated to the International Council of Museums (ICOM)– which advocates a socially committed museology, the democratisation of museum institutions, a critical approach, as well as solidarity and precedence of the human element over objects in the handling of exhibitions. We also wish to emphasize the work of Mario Vásquez at la Casa del Museo (Ordóñez, 1975) and that of Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (2005, 2011) at the Museo Nacional de Culturas Populares, which introduced a clean break with the nationalistic, Europe-centred museology that informed the origin and development of Latin American museums. Heritage, according to the definition of the 1976 Charter for the Defence of Mexican Cultural Heritage<sup>3</sup>, actually includes “all artistic, craft or technical artefacts, and literary, linguistic or musical expressions of the ways and customs of past and present ethnic groups” (p. 1). Also worth mentioning is the 1992 Declaration of Caracas, which, 20 years hence, reaffirmed the proposals of the Round Table in Santiago in the light of the experiments developed in Latin America in the meantime. Besides giving a fresh

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<sup>2</sup> See more in Freire, P. (1971). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Herder & Herder (in Portuguese: *Pedagogia do oprimido*, 1970; 1968 manuscript).

<sup>3</sup> <https://ipce.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:ac2be1f7-0204-4153-a77a-19d4e580bac9/1976-carta-mexico.pdf>

impulse to social involvement in the context of post-dictatorship Latin America, this international meeting also had a major role at the level of international institutions, in that, as emphasized by Hugues de Varine (2017), “UNESCO, after allowing the Round Table in Santiago and including certain papers in its journal *Museum*, will refrain from addressing the “new museum” again until the Caracas conference in 1992” (p. 44).

However this trend is in no way restricted to Latin America. In France, Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine, drawing their inspiration from existing open-air museums in many countries, established the concept of the ecomuseum, a twofold, integrated combination of an “open” museum of space and an “interior” museum of time (Rivière, 1992; Varine, 2017). Amongst many open-ended definitions of the ecomuseum, the following deserves quoting: “An ecomuseum is a tool jointly conceived, created and operated by an authority and a community (...). [It is] a mirror in which this community observes and knows itself, in an attempt to explain the territory which is home to it as well as the communities of the past and the generational continuity or discontinuity between them. It is also a mirror that the community presents to its visitors to help them understand and appreciate their own work, behavior and personal life” (Rivière, 1985, p. 183). This groundbreaking concept would be further enriched from 1973 through Marcel Evrard and Hugues de Varine’s creation of the pioneering Écomusée du Creusot, which was to become highly influential in the sphere of museology. In his own, more political approach, de Varine has theorized the current trend of “museum revolution” in order to de-colonize it. “This liberation can only proceed through raising awareness, allowing man, by his own power, to develop from an object into a subject” (Varine, 1976, p. 235).

This theoretical approach also deeply affects two pillars of museology: on the one hand, the relationship with heritage: “the museum’s permanent collection will gradually make way for the collective community heritage” (Varine, 1992, p. 451); and on the other hand, the relationship with the public: the ecomuseum has no visitors, only inhabitants. Yet, as de Varine himself underlines (2020), the concept of the ecomuseum is multifaceted and contextual, and therefore cannot be limited to any set criteria: “the ‘official’ definition propounded by the 1972 ICOM Committee for Conservation seems too environmental, while Rivière’s is too anthropological, and that promoted by Alexandre Delarge at the Fédération Française des Écomusées, while interesting, includes ‘society museums’, a specifically French concept. Moreover, all three definitions are inconveniently worded in French, reinforcing the all-too widespread idea that the ecomuseum is orig-

inally a French phenomenon, while it is only one denomination in the worldwide trend towards New Museology" (p. 257). This is why de Varine, in promoting the concept of the ecomuseum, insists on a precise framework for action rather than certain restrictive defining features, thus stressing that "a common feature of all ecomuseums is the more or less visible occurrence of three aspects of the prefix 'éco': ecological (i.e. environmental), eco-social and economical, based on the assumption that the museum is a cultural instrument in the service of the land. It must or should therefore strive to simultaneously interpret and manage the heritage and be active in local development, working on all three aspects in gradual combination according to their necessity, opportunity and context" (p. 258).

In his opening speech at the International Colloquium on Social, Participative and Critical Museology in Santiago de Chile (November 18, 2020), de Varine considers retrospectively that the concept of the "integral museum" has brought two major innovations to the museum world. One is linked to the process of "inculturation", i.e. creating and developing types of action impelled by populations themselves, in close partnership with museums. The other is "décentration" [off-centering] regarding the present-day world, taking into account the contributions of specialists in land use planning, agriculture and environmental education with respect to the organization of the museum's tasks.

The first North American ecomuseum was created in 1979 in the Haute-Beauce area of Québec province, Canada, under the impulse of Pierre Mayrand's wish to promote among the community the wealth of rural heritage, both material and immaterial (i.e. belonging to the oral tradition). Following the acquisition by public subscription of Napoléon Bolduc's collection of 600 ethnographical pieces on local history and traditional crafts, the ecomuseum was established in an old village presbytery. From there, Pierre Mayrand, who styles himself as a self-manager, has elaborated a theory of the ecomuseum concept that is no less political but much more in keeping with the context of the decentralisation of Québec, under the impulse of René Lévesque (1976)<sup>4</sup> and integrating the interpretational approach of Parcs Canada with that of the ecomuseum. His first key contribution is highlighted in the process of museum triangulation (Mayrand, 1989), identifying three stages in building public awareness. Phase one, dealing with territorial interpretation, aims at local awareness of community identity. Phase two seeks to jointly identify common reference points, allowing the

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<sup>4</sup> After heading the Separatist Party Quebecois, René Lévesque became Prime Minister of Québec from 1976 to 1985, organizing the first referendum on the independence of the province in 1980.

transfer from territory to ecomuseum. Phase three, which Mayrand calls the “para-museum”, is probably the most complex and is intended to lead to action.

Lastly, it is essential to keep in mind that the concept of the ecomuseum has been widely emulated on every continent (Davis, 1999; Desvallée, 1992, 2000): in Senegal, Africa (Enda, 1991); in Quebec, North America (Rivard, 1985); in Mexico, Latin America (Arroyo, 1984); in China at the Suoga Miao Ecomuseum (Nitzky, 2012); and in Spain, Europe (Alcalde & Rueda, 1990). As a victim of its own success and of the passing vogue of the theme, it has sometimes been used inappropriately.

In the wake of the community museum trend, Québec will give rise to another trend, called social museology, under the impulse of Michel Vallée as head of the Société du Musée des Deux Rivières in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. “My major objective was to bring practical help to those confronted with poverty and other social issues and help them change their life, while opening the eyes of their fellow citizens on the less amenable realities of city life” (Vallée, 2008, p. 69). More precisely, he wanted to “show the young school drop-outs that they belong in the community; to restore their pride, self-esteem and confidence; to make people reflect on how the adults treat those so-called marginalized youths; to reveal the region’s heritage in a different, surprising manner (...); to bring to light the darker aspects of the region and reflect on our responsibilities as citizens” (p. 69). At MINOM’s 12th International Workshop on New Museology (Setúbal, 2007), Pierre Mayrand put forth the overarching concept of “altermuséologie” [alternative museology], which he defined as a museology of empowerment, of combat over indifference, based on solidarity with individuals and peoples aspiring to freedom and human dignity.

Independently, researchers and professionals in various countries have gradually taken their inspiration from postcolonial studies (Saïd, 1978; 1993), which emerged in the United States and later on in Europe as a reaction to the cultural legacy of colonial times, questioning the notions of heritage, museum, preservation and memory. In Africa, for instance, museum operators have gradually developed a confrontational stance regarding both the older African museum institutions, which were undeniably “associated with the West and its former colonial venture” (Bouttiaux, 2007), and what may be described as a second, post-colonial wave of newly established or reformed museums.

Indeed, the newly-created states’ enthusiasm with museums was not without its own political agenda. The generally recognized objective was to construct a national identity by erasing the historical, linguistic and ethnogra-

phical features representing original communities whose former territories often differed widely from the new boundaries created as part of the decolonization process. Museums have thus become instrumental in creating a “collective imagination” (Anderson, 1996) that sought to foster a sense of belonging.

In reaction, many minority populations or communities without access to prevailing power structures have developed their own museums with the purpose of defending their cultures, asserting their identities, gaining visibility or simply surviving as such (Bouttiaux, 2007; Paillalef, 2015; Girault, 2016). From the decade of 2000 onwards, village communities in Africa have also explored extremely novel forms such as culture banks, i.e. small scale units run directly by local villagers and chiefly intended to develop from within measures to protect and promote the local material heritage, as well as income generating activities. According to Girault (2016), this is a highly innovative experiment for the preservation of heritage in Sub-Saharan Africa, in that it provides an alternative to the sale of cultural goods to tourists: the depositors provisionally entrust one or several cultural objects to the bank and, in return, are offered a loan to finance some local development project benefiting the entire community; but they can still reclaim those objects for the purposes of some culture-specific activity. Significantly, a large majority of those loans have been fully repaid.

In Latin America, too, we see that such conceptual disagreements are also prevalent between specific theoretical currents in museology and the activities and tasks undertaken by museums. Considering, for instance, archaeological museums in Chile, Correa-Lau et al. (2019) show that they have made it their main museological proposition to “get dead mouths to speak” or, as pointed out by Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (2011) in Mexico, to “get the Indian into the museum”. What you get then is a process of encapsulation of cultural expressions from a remote, extinct past, with no relation to the wealth of living cultures struggling to maintain their identity or even sometimes to gain recognition from the country where they belong.

However, we also encounter some very successful experiments, such as the restitution effort undertaken since the first semester of 2019 by the Ministry of Culture, the Arts and Heritage and its subsidiary, the National Department of Cultural Heritage, following the requests of the Rapa Nui and Yagán communities for the return of their valuable cultural heritage. In this context, the Martín Gusinde Anthropological Museum (the planet’s southernmost museum) now makes this heritage available to the native Yagán in whom it originates. The director claims that, through this remedial action, the community, now engaged in



close links of co-operation and cultural exchange with the institution, has been able to recapture forgotten types and techniques of basketry by examining ancient objects.

Today many widely different projects are being carried out by researchers and operators –not all of whom represent the typical context which we have described or were initially aware of such experiments–, giving a fresh impulse to museology through promoting actions such as territorial contact, social involvement, criticism of the state and its institutions and cultural democracy. Indeed, many museum scholars and technical staff have endeavoured, though not always with the expected degree of success, to assume participatory and/or critical strategies based on exchanges with the final recipients of their activity (residents, users, officials, community or association leaders, members of the diaspora etc.). Throughout, the themes of participatory museology, social museology and critical museology appear as a sort of backbone supporting a wide range of experiments, often along the principles set out at the Round Table in Santiago –“integral museum” and “action museum” (Chagas, 2007)– and in the 1976 Charter for the Defence of Mexican Cultural Heritage, but also in response to the trauma of dictatorships, de-colonisation or extreme poverty affecting the local environment of the projects.

While various trends currently occur in museology, there is agreement between a number of authors (Orellana, 2007; Simon, 2010; Correa-Lau et al., 2019; Florencia & Ramírez, 2020) on the need to involve local populations in various aspects of the operation of museums, particularly in considering the limits and the rights of communities to select what objects they regard as part of their own heritage, to be involved in the interpretation of such collections, to investigate, preserve and exhibit the cultural goods of their own making. In this, as stressed in Correa-Lau et al. (2019), museums can become essential actors as spaces where alternative interpretative keys can gain expression: “In the context of this struggle between a restrictive view of heritage leading to homogenising and artificial actions on territories, objects and people, versus a vision of the land as a living organism with demands for multiple and inhabited heritage, museums can play a significant part in reducing “heritage dissatisfaction”. Participatory approaches, interdisciplinary teamwork and the inclusion of communities all stem from late 20th century museological innovations such as ecomuseums and community museums” (Correa-Lau et al., 2019, p. 198).

It is worth mentioning that these new types of heritage management have also seen a significant development in North America, notably in the creation of

museums relating to native populations (Shannon, J., 2009) and minorities. As a result of such thinking and of the changes that it has produced, the themes of heritage and social inclusion in museum institutions have become enormously diversified and enriched, showing the impact of their incorporation of grassroots experience and knowledge (Bounia, 2017).

As we have underlined, resistance and/or experiments have emerged over the last decades that deeply question the crucial concepts from which Western museology has evolved. However, it needs to be pointed out that not all museum professionals aspire to or agree with this evolution. In 2019, some officials of ICOM, undeniably in keeping with the spirit of the Round Table in Santiago, have sought to evolve the museum framework towards taking better account of populations by submitting a new definition whose second paragraph read as follows: “Museums are not operated for profit. They are participatory as well as transparent and work in active partnership with and for various communities to collect, preserve, investigate, interpret, exhibit [heritage] and improve the understanding of the world, as a contribution to human dignity and social justice, equality and global welfare.” Apart from the very brutal way in which the proposal was submitted, leading to strong dissent from many ICOM<sup>5</sup> members, its very contents have also been sharply criticized. This, according to Chaumier (2019), is because it contrasted two versions of the main task of museum institutions: building and presenting collections on the one hand, or serving society and the public on the other. Obviously the actual involvement of museum institutions in public life remains at the centre of numerous discussions.

\*

Considering both the evolutions effected in the museum world, as we have shortly described above, and the deep-going changes in environment, social justice, health etc. that affect our societies, and as a tribute to the Round Table in Santiago of nearly 20 years ago, we wanted to reconvene in the same venue an International Seminar on Social, Participatory and Critical Museology. It is our belief that no critical analysis of the work achieved in community museums over the last decades is possible without reference to the rights of individuals. Therefore we have deemed it crucial to include communications that analyse –through the lens of gender, of the cultural diversity of populations and of the territories wherein identities are emerging– a variety of proposed endeavours

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<sup>5</sup> In the introductory table to the colloquium, François Mairesse and Yves Bergeron addressed this subject in depth.

to jointly build a society where heritage is perceived not merely as a sounding board of what goes on at a local level, but also as a potential contribution to a more just and equal society.

All contributors, mostly from Latin America, share a common interest in investigating and/or furthering inclusive, community-based approaches to help improve actions on the process of assessment and presentation of the heritage of communities, their territories, resources and knowledge. The various contributions, which we will here outline, provide an overview of recent initiatives and investigations, also inviting us to look into the commercial and/or political manipulation of heritage, from the quest for identity to nation-building, and the resilience of museums in these times of pandemic.

The first communication in these proceedings completely meets these objectives. Indeed, while Latin American museology widely calls to mind many novel, sometimes even revolutionary experiments, thus actively contributing to the development of critical and participatory museology, it seems that the major role of Latin American women, even well before the Round Table in Santiago, is often much less familiar. Based on an analysis of various historiographical sources, Yocelyn Valdebenito's paper helps fill this gap by describing and analyzing the museological concept of Chilean artist, educator, feminist thinker and museologist Laura Rodig Pizarro (1901-1972). After pointing out how the artist introduced her own approach, first in an art exhibition created in solidarity with the victims of the 1939 earthquake at Chillán, then at an art museum in Magellan, the author considers her political interests (commitment to children's art and empowerment as a reflection of the intrinsic value of people) and her tireless struggle to bring social justice for the most deprived, stating that she has promoted a museology which opposes the notion of the museum as a necrophiliac institution, full of lifeless objects, static and disconnected from their daily significance. Indeed her innovative stance is rooted in a "biophilic" museology in which communities have played a leading part in assessing what she describes as public heritage, including folk art, mostly by marginalized individuals such as peasants and children.

We will hereunder present separately four types of contributions. (1) Those that examine some recurring, short, medium or long term obstacles to the practice of partnership in museums. (2) Those investigating the involvement of communities in museum activities: identifying local communities relevant to the creation or renovation of a museum, setting up the mixed work teams (museum and communities or minority groups), decision-making on the collection and in-

terpretation of objects, the setting of objectives and proposed actions. (3) Those examining community involvement in the selection and treatment of topics that raise conflict in society (women, migrants, slum residents, LGTBIQ+ groups, prison inmates): institutional limits on addressing such controversial, community-related topics, and whether the communities are actually involved or used as mere instruments. (4) Those that, in the wake of the advances of the ecomuseum trend, look into community involvement in the acquisition and requalification policy for collections and/or their management (especially in dealing with ritual or contemporary objects), into the definition of heritage to such communities, and into the attitude regarding “non-heritage” items as witnessing evolutions in the materials used in creating and designing cultural objects?

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## **1. SOME RECURRING OBSTACLES TO PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES IN MUSEUMS**

Since the emergence of the New Museology trend<sup>6</sup>, whose major innovation was to place audiences at the heart of museum issues, operators have gradually diversified their procedures for the involvement of visitors, making them central players in the design, implementation and even dissemination of cultural content. Rebecca Lemay-Perreault's paper underlines the transformation of all museum functions and the sometimes painful ongoing metamorphosis of the occupational culture. Surveying various case studies in the Québec province of Canada, the author describes how the public are invited to participate in the curatorship of exhibitions, to contribute to plans to renew public spaces and their layout, or to get involved in a participatory survey of the geographical distribution of the Canadian Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). This new participatory approach implies a twofold change for cultural institutions: having museum operators gradually turn into network facilitators, maintaining the coherence, relevance and aesthetic quality of the public's contributions, also in-

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<sup>6</sup> As pointed out by André Desvallées (1992), it is hard to pinpoint the emergence of this trend. It may be seen to originate in France in 1966 at the Journées de Lurs which will lead to the first on-site museums in natural parks ; and/or in the US at the 1969 MUSE Seminar on Neighborhood Museums “A Museum for the people” in Brooklyn; and/or at UNESCO's 1972 Round Table in Santiago de Chile; and/or at the creation of the association “Muséologie nouvelle expérimentation sociale” in 1982. Considering these various, deep-going roots, André Desvallées wonders whether the real international starting point could possibly be set at ICOM's 9th General Conference in 1971 (in Paris, Dijon and Grenoble) on The Museum in the Service of Man: Today and Tomorrow (p. 17).

volves moving from a hierarchical work organization to transverse management with responsibilities shifting according to the specific demands of each project. The author, however, relaying the critical views of Lynch (2011), points to the often cosmetic relationship between the museum and visitors, still anchored in a consultative rather than collaborative approach. Despite this mixed view of visitor involvement in the implementation of various museum projects, she sees both the flexibility of the institutional framework, and the willingness of the professional expert to start sharing his authority, as obvious signs that changes are gradually advancing.

The next two contributions examine, from two different angles, the specific situation of Spain, where the dictatorial regime of the years 1936-1975 resulted in isolation from foreign intellectual influence. Both authors testify to a real surge of museum creations following the demise of Francisco Franco in 1975, while observing that some operators have moved away from mainstream museology, with the public, the collection and the museum as its key concepts, and turned to more innovative approaches designed in terms of communities, heritage and territories.

Óscar Navajas Corral's paper presents the research and literature on museology and heritage, and describes the museum experiments that were allowed to flourish after the return to democracy, pointing out that the first experiments directly connected with the principles laid out by the Round Table in Santiago and the New Museology trend, were in three "historical areas" with deep-set cultural identities: Galicia (Allariz), Catalonia (Valls d'Àneu) and Aragon (Molinos). While such experiments are now dwindling, the author underlines a growth in the number of local museums driven by civil society actors. By way of example, it is worth noting that roughly a hundred of these emerging projects claim to belong with ecomuseums while they do not necessarily comply with the fundamentals of that trend. While the "integral museum" advocated in Santiago thus often boils down, in Spain, to a territorial vision rather than an inclusive one, the author concludes that the trail that is thus being opened nevertheless appears founded on a utopian aspiration to the creativity, initiative and cultural activity of communities.

Dealing more specifically with the Spanish Basque Country, yet in keeping with many observations made abroad, regarding ecomuseums in particular, Iñaki Díaz Balerdi shows how local political authorities have attempted to use their financial support to regain control of effective innovative experiments. Several decades after their creation, the author examines the current outcome of various

circumstances on three museums whose promoters took their inspiration from the Round Table in Santiago, taking into account the environment (whether rural or urban), the nature of the project initiators (association or municipality) and the type of management (professional or mixed). While all three projects have significantly contributed to social cohesiveness and economical dynamics in marginalised or declining areas, in each case, as the monograph study points out, political powers have sought to take control of facilities and operation. Such take-over of innovative museum projects by local political authorities, the author states, reflects their mainstream assumption that independent cultural projects cannot flourish enduringly and sustainably outside fashion trends or attitudes narrowly focused on the “wow-factor” and the mimicry of neoliberal capitalism. A second group of papers concentrates on analyzing the social function of museums and various strategies to take the public into account in implementing cultural activities.

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## **2. PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNITIES IN MUSEAL ACTIVITIES**

Mario Vázquez, in his capacity as head of Mexico’s La Casa del Museo from 1972 to 1980, without doubt initiated the trend toward social involvement in Mexican museology, and participatory and community museology in Latin America at large, by applying the concept of “integral museum” as put forward in the proceedings of the Round Table in Santiago. Examining the complete archive available as of 2014 and through interviews with members of the work team and through ethnographical field visits to the towns where the exhibitions were staged, Leticia Pérez Castellanos identifies some lasting effects of La Casa del Museo’s off-site activities. In analyzing more specifically the evolution of the holistic cultural involvement of populations in the design of specific exhibitions, and without disparaging the pioneering work of La Casa del Museo, she tends to demystify the concept of participatory museology, bringing to light its limitations and hindrances.

Laura Evangelina Dragonetti, Raquel Elizondo Barrios and Olga Bartolomé extend this theme in analyzing some experiments in community involvement around the reconfiguration and reconstruction of the school museum of the Normal Superior School Dr. Agustín Garzón Agulla in Córdoba (Argentina). While pointing at first to certain tensions and obstacles relating to forms of

participation and duration, generational biases regarding the actuality of gender issues and inclusive language, as well as a proposed museographic concept that was deemed too academic and amateurish, the authors recognize that the collaborative approach has doubtlessly helped develop a sense of ownership of the museum as a meeting space and a forum for learning and building relationships. In reference to the work of Mario Chagas, they also insist on the need to seek a consensus on decision-making, as shown through their analysis of exhibitions, posters, workshops, scenarios and other activities.

Such a critical look at the practices of participatory museology is also that of Laura Moreno Barbosa in examining her voluntary service at Bogotá's Museum of Glass. Analyzing the contrasts between institutional requirements and the limitations of local actors in the face of national legislation, the author finds that despite the mutual benefits expected by both the institution and the volunteers, the projects often lead to mixed results through premature disengagement on the part of the volunteers. Judging from her own experience, the author goes on to suggest alternatives to increase resources and optimize the relation, and provides a five-fold set of guidelines for other museums in similar situations: planning the strategic actions on hand; seeking and selecting candidates; training and fostering motivation; performance monitoring and evaluation; planning disengagement. It is necessary, she concludes, for any independent community museum to make the most of the involvement of the community, including the development of voluntary work, provided that this is done in compliance with the principle of mutual benefit, and with provision to the needs of personal growth, learning and recognition so as to establish lasting, profitable relationships.

As a counterpoint to these critical presentations, five more contributions testify to the impact of user participation in museums to foster a sense of belonging and/or strengthen a (new) community identity. Fernando Ossandón dwells on a case study at Chile's San Miguel Open Air Museum, created in 2010 to promote urban/street visual arts, with an emphasis on local participation. From the results of a qualitative survey of the impact of 65 monumental murals made in neighbourhood houses and at the Villa San Miguel, the author acknowledges the open air museum's positive contribution in creating a collective imagination, while pointing to mixed reactions and even contradictory positions, presumably connected with the presence of a new residential community, since the results show both a strong collective identity rooted in a shared history and a popular tradition, and the coexistence of widely contrasting ideological views and gene-

rational visions of the future. In closing, the author emphasizes that the reputation of the museum, which now attracts tourists from home and abroad, strengthens the villagers' sense and spirit of belonging and even their self-image.

Anamaría Rojas Múnera, Karin Weil González and Kémel Sade Martínez introduce and discuss the Aysén Network of Museums in Chile's province of Patagonia, numbering 27 existing or projected museums in 8 out of the region's 10 municipalities as of 2019. The authors begin by emphasizing how the territory's complex geophysical structure of islands, island groups, channels and inlets has historically determined its social makeup and general sense of isolation and influenced the creation of community museums. The main results of the study point to how the rural museums, in focusing on the partnership with communities, have strengthened a sense of Patagonian identity through original narratives. In closing, the authors believe that the museums' exhibitions and activities assist in de-colonizing the representation of Aysén, no longer seen as a "frontier" of civilization.

The next two contributions emphasize the impact of involving local residents as docents of heritage on developing a sense of belonging, while allowing some of them to earn income.

Luz Helena Oviedo and Isabel Acero present and discuss in full how a group of young people of the Tatacoa desert in central Columbia have been trained by workers of the Smithsonian Institute for Tropical Research and of Parque Explora to become "Guardians of heritage", carrying out activities and projects for the preservation, protection and dissemination of natural heritage through awareness-building and social ownership directed both at their own community and future visitors. Each partner group has contributed to an exhibition titled "Fossil territory, living stories": the Guardians, through the collection of fossils, replicas, photographs and personal stories (recorded or written) on their connection to paleontology, with the Smithsonian acting as scientific curator and Parc Explora in charge of museography. The authors show how the project has not only contributed to raising awareness of the exhibition's visitors on the value of protecting the local heritage, but also provided a source of development for the community. In closing, and with reference to Espacio Visual Europa (2016)<sup>7</sup> they specify that by involving the community in the identification, management and dissemination of cultural or natural heritage, the project focuses on the notion of the museum as a collective project.

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<sup>7</sup> Visual Space Europe (EVE), an entity combining teachers and lecturers in various areas of museology, institutional communication, museum marketing and management, institutional identity and technical innovation in exhibitions at local museums.



Denise Pozzi-Escot, Carmen Rosa Uceda and Rosangela Carrión examine a range of activities provided at the Pachacamac archaeological sanctuary, which is ranked among the foremost in Peru. We find it essential first to recall how in enhancing archaeological heritage, relationships with local populations can be difficult and even problematic when sites are located in territories where as a result of multiple migrations, the current populations show no interest in the cultures uncovered by archaeology (Valdez, 2019). Yet it is noteworthy that highly fruitful participatory processes can sometimes be established between local populations and archaeologists, as in the work of Ottino (2006) in the Marquesas Islands. In light of this, Denise Pozzi-Escot, Carmen Rosa Uceda and Rosangela Carrión show that the outreach strategies to promote the Pachacamac archaeological sanctuary have resulted in activities that favour a respectful integration of the community by reasserting (the) identity and preserving (the) local culture. The authors chiefly consider the impact of having a group of 19 younger people join some 2,000 visitors on a bicycle tour of the sanctuary's archaeological circuit, which encouraged them to identify with the site while also procuring them some small earnings. Aside from this, they claim that by jointly selecting one area within the sanctuary for ceremonies and offerings, the delegates of the local population and the museum team have improved social cohesiveness and promoted a harmonious, discrimination-free co-existence between residents and visitors.

Aldana Fernández Walker deals with a totally different approach in describing programs dedicated to either elderly people or vulnerable teenage girls at Museo Evita in Buenos Aires. From 2016 to 2019, this museum, in partnership with various other institutions, has developed a program intended to train elderly people as volunteer tour guides. The initial objective of the operators of the museum, a biographical institution celebrating a highly controversial political figure, was not just to provide the participants with appropriate training as docents but mostly to allow them to articulate a creative, critical outlook. The author describes the planning, objectives and development of this program, as well as those of another project titled "New Struggles, Same Inspiration", addressed to teenage girls and young women on the occasion of the centenary of Evita's birth. In this case, the reflective work covered the right of access to culture and gender issues, through a participatory program designed to give the subjects access to the city and its cultural spaces. The participants were also invited to produce photographs, videos, drawings or texts to be shown on the museum's social networks. In asserting their identity, they were to connect Evita's legacy

of work with their own everyday life. The author concludes that the project was successful in that it promoted a reflection on the museum and its collections, not for the knowledge imparted but for the interpretations of the participants.

In the last of this group of papers, Raúl Dal Santo describes and analyzes the permanent participatory process developed at Italy's Parabiago Landscape Ecomuseum in accordance with Rivière's (1985) definition of ecomuseums. Here community heritage has been investigated through a complex network of institutional, economical and non-profit agencies as well as individual citizens, then managed and rejuvenated through cooperative arrangements implemented with extensive human resources. This is indeed - the author claims - a sound governance model as well as a territorial project that can tackle and harness the practical, managerial and procedural aspects of heritage and integrate general interests with those of the private sector. In closing, the author asserts that the results obtained at the Parabiago Ecomuseum can be viewed in connection with a wide range of changes occurring or being induced in the community, new working approaches, cultural changes mostly in the relational and social dimension, and lastly physical changes in qualitative improvement of the landscape, both cultural and perceptual, as well as in health matters and a safer agro-ecosystem.

As we have already pointed out in reviewing the work of community museums, the main objective of the movement for social and inclusive museology has been to offer practical support to those affected by poverty or social ostracism (LGBTI+, migrants, persons deprived of liberty, native populations etc.) and to help individuals and communities aspiring to freedom and human dignity to change their life. There have been initiatives to promote communities that were historically never featured museums and allow them to freely raise such controversial issues as they deemed relevant to their communities. The next section presents the contributions of those authors who have sought to address these issues.

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### 3. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING CONFRONTATIONAL ISSUES IN CURRENT SOCIETY (LGBTIQ+, MEMORY WORK, MIGRATIONS, RACISM)

The 2007 Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights (2007) reasserts that those rights are stated mainly in the context of the rights of minorities and native peoples, and that it is essential that they should be guaranteed for all and most particularly regarding the most ill-favoured. Acting upon this premise, some museum institutions pledge to bring to light populations that are mostly rejected, by highlighting their cultures and/or memories.

Introducing in this context the women's group "Las Arpilleras de La Ligua", Darío Aguilera Carmen Muñoz and Viviana Zamora survey the benefit of a "shared museum" approach at the Museo de La Ligua. The authors show how this group has made social segments visible to the community that never featured in cultural spaces, such as women, migrants, workers, children and native peoples. Through the expressive artistic medium of jute canvas painting, they were able to address social-environmental issues affecting the territory (water management etc.) and other issues important to the community. Through two original travelling exhibitions – "Mining Camps", presenting a past type of settlement of the land, and "The Hunger March", describing a struggle that led miners and their families to embark on a 13-mile journey –, they vindicate the presentation of their histories and the role of women in the province of Petorca. This, the authors claim, is a concrete example of the potential benefit of the "shared museum" approach to museum work, with a local community involving itself actively, authentically and voluntarily in the social and educational contribution of the museum to the territory.

Favela museums, such as they are emerging particularly in Brazil, pursue relatively similar aims. One instance of this is the *Museu dos Quilombos e Favelas Urbanas* established in 2012 in the Santa Lúcia borough of Belo Horizonte (Brazil). The *Memorial do Quilombo* was first created following a debate among a group of young local residents on the importance of preserving the archives collected around the social-cultural project *Quilombo do Papagaio*; four years later, Father Mauro Luiz da Silva turned the memorial into the current museum, seeking to present a historical perspective on the black and poor communities of Belo Horizonte favelas, who are seldom featured as characters or involved as partners in the city's memorial institutions. Samanta Coan shows how the museum team has worked with the dual concepts of race and class identity

to re-interpret objects by approaching them as mediums for the recounting of stories and the expression of living memory of the land. With an emphasis on oral history, the exhibition “Domestic, from Slavery to Extinction – An Anthology of the Maid’s Room in Brazil” was designed to examine the place of poor black women in the country. Samanta Coan analyses the contributions of a de-colonized approach to the social representation of these women. In disclosing a wider range of traumatic memories of exploitation and of struggle, she endeavours to question the dominant narratives in Brazil’s social imagination and look at new types of domestic social intercourse.

Mauricio Soldavino, Pablo Soto, Kareen Standen and Marcela Torres introduce some museums which have worked with the transgender community as well as others which have included LGBTI+ themes in creating virtual museums. They begin by reviewing the literature on the main stages of addressing the LGBTI+ issue in American and European museums through the collection and exhibition of archives, artefacts and graphic art pertaining to the subjects, then go on to describe a joint project of the Education, Mediation and Citizenship Department of the National Museum of History in Santiago de Chile and the Amaranta School, a private, self-managed institution created by Fundación Selenna to serve mainly transgender boys and girls who have suffered bullying in the mainstream education system. The curricular approach and activities of the project include themes of personal identity (who are the children? what are their dreams? what do they think? how do they live? etc.), authority (making visible certain “powers” that seek to enforce the general rule and deny diversity) and discrimination (discussing the prevalence of abuses in Chile). Interviews conducted by the authors in 2019 show that the activities have a positive effect on the students. In one instance, they have abstained from taking part in the traditional dances that are a feature of National Day in Chile’s schools and have freely chosen instead to concentrate on their favourite objects and personal histories “to show how their experience and learning through the activity has allowed them to transmit much of a long-denied reality”.

In every country, prison populations, who are often denied the most basic human rights, including the access to culture, are undeniably the most “invisible” and socially undesirable groups. As a result of experience gained at the educational centre of the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, Gabriela Aidar relates a series of socio-educational experiments directed at inmates (youths and adults, both male and female) in partnership with Fundo Casa Socioambiental (from 2008) and with the penitentiary authority of São Paulo state (from 2017), through which

she was prompted to make a critical assessment of the connection between mainstream museum practices and the themes of a more socially committed museology, emphasizing the limitations and potential of this relation. From 2017 to 2019, three separate programs have been conducted in partnership with the penitentiary authority: a series of meetings with some 20 inmates; five group meetings in a women's prison involving artistic experimentation and discussion of identity issues; and 18 silkscreen printing workshops where personal and collective identity issues of the participants were also addressed. Unfortunately, less than half of the workshops scheduled for 2020 could be carried out due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, workers of the Pinacoteca who were involved in the experiments have acknowledged the participants' keen interest to discover the artistic language and their delight with the results, as well as the happy or painful recollections evoked in discussing their emotional or territorial identities.

It is worth noting that despite our call for papers, no contributions have been forwarded that deal explicitly with institutional limitations on addressing specific issues, although this is currently at the centre of an animated debate among professionals, as seen in the intense conversation on the concept of "universal museum" or the wish reiterated by many museum operators to keep to the mainstream neutral position rather than engage in any real political, economical or social debates connected with the environment, health and other issues at hand. As emphasized by Zwang & Girault (2019), might not, as a result, such a normative and subjective stance, widely removed from the aims of any emancipatory education, take the place of a critical reflection emerging from the confrontation of different viewpoints?

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#### **4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLICY FOR ACQUISITION AND/OR REQUALIFICATION OF COLLECTIONS**

Thus there is a requirement for museums with non-Western collections depicting foreign societies, who wish to address the issue of recognition, to change their practices regarding the current heirs to such heritage, which raises numerous political, ethical, epistemological and methodological issues (Delaître, de Robert, 2019). The various presentational approaches of ethnographical collections in museums are revealing with respect to the historically determined nature of relationships between different human groups. For instance, observing

that the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History in Washington (as some other museums) was still showing and interpreting such collections in much the same mode from the onset, JoAllyn Archambault, in charge of rearranging the Seminole section in 1990, has introduced a process of dual interpretation by inviting a Seminole couple and one of the museum's curators in anthropology to independently select from the collection those objects that they deemed most representative of the culture and to provide their own interpretations (Selbach, 2005). Upon analysis, it appeared that the criteria for both selections were quite different: the curator's choice was oriented by scientific and anthropological considerations while the Seminoles' selection was determined by their life-experience and memories.

Working from the realization that Montreal's McCord Museum, sixty years after its creation in 1921, likewise still presented its hoard of hundreds of objects pertaining to the First Nations of Canada in exhibitions that solely reflected the views of non-native specialists, a succession of curators have reversed their professional practice by building upon native knowledge and know-how. Analyzing the representations featured in 22 exhibitions at the museum since 1992, Marie Charlotte Franco identifies three presentational approaches that she deems particularly fruitful: native knowledge, collective or individual, is sometimes included but not quoted as such in the presentations; or on the contrary it may be presented more explicitly; or in some cases the multiple perspective may be highlighted. In closing, the author states that the inclusion of the native perspective does away with hackneyed First-Nation stereotypes and that showcasing native knowledge and thinking through collective storytelling, cosmology, idiom and creative know-how promotes the transfer and re-appropriation of ancestral knowledge in today's world.

The same principle of dual interpretation has also been favoured to deconstruct stereotypes of the life of early 20th century populations in Tierra del Fuego in a participatory investigation involving researchers at the Martin Gusinde Anthropological Museum and women of the Yagán people. Centering on gender issues, Alberto Serrano Fillol's paper deals with the analysis of information contained in the complete collection of ethnographic photographs made by priest-anthropologist Martin Gusinde in Tierra del Fuego from 1918 to 1924, which has enabled local populations to obtain accurate biographical data on their ancestors and to share the knowledge of their heritage by accessing and including individual and collective perspectives as descendants of the world's southernmost native people.

Other avenues for research, which are not addressed in the contributions to our conference, must nevertheless be distinguished, such as that advocated by Delaître & de Robert (2019), which consists in the investigation and historical deconstruction of viewpoints underlying the acquisition, museum interpretation, and patrimonialisation of collections. One instance of this is the investigation undertaken regarding important early 20<sup>th</sup> century collections pertaining to the Mebêngôkre-Kayapó and Baniwa peoples, in collaboration with native consultants (Shepard Jr. et al., 2017). Apart from the difference between scientific museological concepts and native approaches to the collections, the authors emphasize certain cultural discrepancies in the way both groups have addressed objects originating from their traditional past. While both communities endowed the objects with subjective qualities, these were such that the Mebêngôkre-Kayapó did not quite dare to handle what were considered as war trophies historically taken from fearsome enemies and mostly expressed these qualities in terms of potential threats to museum visitors; the Baniwa, on the contrary, expressed great fondness for such “grandfather’s stuff” and felt safe to deal with the inheritance of their patrilineal clans. As observed in Shepard Jr et al., ethnomuseology highlights a diversity of native concepts, attitudes and expectations regarding museum collections, and therefore also the need for a dialog-based approach to co-operative research. Similar experiments are now increasingly conducted along various lines more or less systematically, depending on the country; in Brazil, for instance, numerous such projects have been implemented (Françoze et al., 2017; Athias & Gomez, 2018; Oliveira & Santos, 2019).

With a similar aim to disrupt the “museum illusion” (Pacheco de Oliveira, Santos, 2019) by bringing native American peoples closer to their cultural heritage and by carefully re-examining former methods for the collection of objects and the building of collections, the operators of the University of São Paulo’s Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology have engaged in collaborative curatorship with the Araribá, Icatu and Vanuíre peoples in São Paulo State, leading to the exhibition *Resistência já! Fortalecimento e união das culturas indígenas – Kaingang, Guarani Nhandewa e Terena* (Resistance now! Reinforcing and uniting the native Kaingang, Guarani Nhandewa and Terena cultures). Marília Xavier Cury analyses the full process leading to the requalification of the museum collections (in part originally from the former Museu Paulista, the São Paulo State Museum), describing how each native community, with no interference from the museum, selected groups of participants, mostly elderly and knowledgeable persons who were able to establish a connection with the younger generation through the

objects. The author shows how the requalification has informed the choice of objects in the exhibition, and how the natives have decided on the research, the drafting of the texts and display labels and the structure of the self-representational narrative connecting past, present and future. While the main benefits of the collaboration for the communities involved were in the capacity to trace their own narrative, the author reminds us that one must keep dealing with obstacles in the collections management policy, the colonial-minded bottleneck of anthropological museums and acceptance criteria for such collaborative requalification of the exhibits.

A similar approach to the requalification of museum collections is also advocated by the operators of the Gabriela Mistral Museum of Education in Santiago de Chile, who collaborate with various communities in order to “become an instrument in the service of society and accommodate themes contributing to the expansion and reconsideration of its collections” (Orellana, 2014, p. 132), out of a desire for the museum to “become a place to revitalize the history of education, where visitors can construct, deconstruct and reconstruct a variety of identities, recovering informal memory in the process as a key to an in-depth understanding of social processes” (MEGM, 2020). *Memories of the marginalized*, one of the most emblematic projects developed by the museum from 2008, “aims to reveal and formalise the voice of a segment of society that is usually not represented in the museum space” (Orellana, 2014, p. 134). Fernanda Venegas Adriazola presents and describes one part of this project –the Workshop on heritage and school memories for students deprived of liberty, launched in 2017 to invite relatives of disappeared detainees and individuals affected by mental handicap or drug-abuse to engage in the joint construction of the museum’s collections and contents–, stating that the pupils participated in the patrimonial adoption of their school memories, which they were able to retrieve and develop as relevant voices to complement and question the museum’s narration. The detainee students have also enriched the collections by donating some personal possessions, which in turn –as a survey shows– led other visitors to change their stereotypes with respect to them.

What of the impact of these various approaches in Africa? One contribution examines the cultural and tourism development program initiated by the Cameroonian diaspora in Nantes (France) with support from the French embassy and from local actors in Cameroon (traditional leaders, private donors, municipalities etc.), aiming to allow Bamiléké populations to reclaim their heritage and also contribute to social and economical development through the creation



of community museums, locally called “chieftaincy museums”. Heumen Tchana, working on data collected in ten such community museums as well as direct interviews with curators, cultural mediators, traditional chiefs and museum partners, examines the methods chosen for selecting and collecting objects, some of which are sacred and therefore cannot be exhibited.

In a totally different context, and following the advocacy of social museology to establish connections between museums and the society around them, Leonardo Giovane Moreira Gonçalves examines the conception and creation of the Museo do Assentado by a group associated with the Rosana campus of São Paulo State University. The author describes the extensive assessment of heritage conducted over the three years following the conception in 2015, involving visits and interviews conducted at the farms of 27 local settlers, collecting data that led to the identification of various cultural profiles, expressed in food, dialects, clothing, relationship to the land, etc., stemming from knowledge, actions and expressions with regard to lifestyle. In the process, a little over 500 photographs from the settlement-camp period were collected and digitalized, illustrating childhood, teenage years, religious functions and other key moments in the personal histories and life experiences of the persons, as well as some sixty objects (irons, lamps, flags, sickles, ploughs, kitchen tools etc.) that tell the story of the residents of the four villages in Rosana municipality. In closing, the author considers that Museo do Assentado goes against the global trend of mainstream museums in that, while the proposal originated with the university, the settlers have assumed curatorial functions in collecting and documenting histories, objects and memories.

In yet another context, and following the definition of the ecomuseum as a promoter of community involvement to enhance the “total” or “integral” heritage of a territory in the service of local development (Rivière, 1985; Varine, 1992), Viviane Ribeiro Valença and Gelsom Rozentino de Almeida ascertain four types of influence (theoretical, community-related, institutional and territorial) that affect the various stages of creating an ecomuseum. Their case study examines the museological process developed in partnership by the Ilha Grande Ecomuseum, the local community and a department of the State University of Rio de Janeiro, and describes the three conceptual phases identified at the Vila Dois Rios experimental laboratory: analysis of representations of environmental heritage and the ecomuseum by members of the community; contextualized appropriation of the three basic dimensions of the ecomuseum as defined by Rivière and de Varine; and eventually act of museal institution itself. The

authors describe the whole process, conducted in a strong relationship with the community, as a prime example of democratisation, reformulation and cultural appropriation.

In closing, the contributions presented in this collective work all seek to improve the environment and the quality of life of communities through local development. The new museological trends address the populations of a given territory not merely as spectators, but also, and above all, as co-operators actively engaged in the building of collections and their re-examination, in the design of exhibitions and/or cultural initiatives, thus contributing to the joint creation of discourses that bring to light the identities, struggles and aspirations of these subjects\*.

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Muchas innovaciones museológicas, realizadas inicialmente en América Latina, se basan en escenarios heterogéneos derivados del contexto sociopolítico de los años sesenta, setenta y ochenta (revisión y reacción a los cánones culturales europeos, dictaduras militares, procesos de transición a la democracia, etc.) y en nuevas corrientes teóricas (museología social, nueva museología y museología crítica, entre otras) que calaron profundo en esta parte del mundo.

Si bien muchas de estas iniciativas venían gestándose desde antes, no fue sino hasta la Mesa Redonda de Santiago de Chile (1972) que asistimos al desarrollo de un sinnúmero de museos comunitarios y escolares que reivindicaban una mayor autonomía y descentralización de las culturas locales. A casi 50 años de este hito museológico, a través de estudios de caso contemporáneos realizados principalmente en contextos latinoamericanos, esta publicación interroga -desde la perspectiva del género, la diversidad cultural de sus habitantes y los territorios donde se ponen en escena estas identidades- las prácticas que se proponen para construir entre todas y todos una sociedad en la que el patrimonio sea percibido no sólo como una caja de resonancia de lo que sucede a nivel local, sino también, y sobre todo, como una posibilidad de contribuir a una sociedad más justa e igualitaria.

