

# History of Museum Education in Brazil

Mauricio André da Silva and Andréa Fernandes Costa (Eds.)

ICOM  
International  
Council of  
Museums  
Brasil

CECA  
International committee  
for education  
and cultural action

CECA LAC

ICOM Comité de Educación y Acción Cultural  
para América Latina y el Caribe

## History of Museum Education in Brazil

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# Prefaces

**Marie-Clarté O'Neill**

*President ICOM-CECA*

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*Responsible for the History of Museum Education for CECA*

## Museum education in Brazil: a model for Latin America

**T**his second volume in the series devoted to the World History of Museum Education takes us this time to Latin America, and more specifically to Brazil, a pioneering country in its determination to make its museum collections accessible to all publics.

After the historical analysis in the first volume of the evolution of museum mediation in Belgium, from key figures to more in-depth reflections on the whereabouts and the future of mediation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Brazilian work follows a similar path, presenting successively personal accounts of professional careers, the role of the pioneers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, leading on to the different directions taken by museum mediation today in terms of accessibility, the social function of museums, inclusion, the fight against racism, heritage education, and finally the world of cyberculture.

As with the first volume, this is an “in-depth historical review of a museum function, education, long considered by museums as a sympathetic and indispensable function, without recognition by the professional environment as a scientific discipline in its own right, just as research into collections or their material care”<sup>1</sup>. Today, museum education is regarded as one of the essential functions of the museum, even if recognition of the profession of educator has not reached that of the curators and directors of the institutions that employ them.

<sup>1</sup> M.-C. O'Neill, *Foreword*, in N. Gesché-Koning (ed.), *History of Museum Education and Interpretation – Belgium*, Liège, 2021, p. 3.

This volume, dedicated to museum education in Brazil, devotes an important chapter to the importance of research and the evaluation of educational activities, disciplines which have been the subject of numerous papers by Brazilian colleagues at CECA international conferences. The creation within this vast country of numerous networks of educators at both federal and national level was fundamental to the publication in 2017 of the National Education Policy. However, Brazil's presence within ICOM and CECA goes back much further, respectively to the founding years of the committees in 1948 and in 1958, when UNESCO organized the International Seminar on the Educational Role of Museums in Rio de Janeiro. CECA did not yet exist as such – it was then called the Committee for Education - but the presence of Brazilian educators at this meeting had a definite impact on the development of educational services in the country. Moreover, since its creation in 1965, CECA has counted active members taking part in the committee's annual conferences and intercontinental exchanges of professionals, participating in the committee's board and in the first issues of *ICOM Education* without forgetting the organization of two CECA international conferences in 1997 and 2013.

We are delighted to see the challenge taken up by CECA Brazil to continue the work accomplished in 2021 for the CECA international conference in Leuven. Our thanks go to CECA LAC and its manager Silvana Lovay, who initiated the project for Latin America, convinced that Brazil would rise to the challenge. Without the enthusiasm and tenacity of the two editors, Mauricio da Silva de Santos and Andréa Fernandes Costa, supported by the authors who contributed by translating their own texts into Spanish, this book would never have seen the light of day. Our warmest thanks to all of them. Finally, our thanks also go to ICOM Brazil and the *Instituto Brasileiro de Museus* (Brazilian Institute of Museums, IBRAM) for their support in publishing an edition in Portuguese for the International Museum Day in May 2024, and to CECA international for the the online publication of the three versions in French, English and Spanish.

Silvana M. Lovay  
Coordinator of ICOM CECA LAC

## Museum education in Brazil: a significant milestone for Latin America and the Caribbean

When I passed on the proposal to carry forward the research and writing of the history of education in museums to the CECA Brazil Correspondents, Maurício André da Silva and Andrea Costa, I was convinced of what we would achieve. Hence the celebration of the birth of this book.

CECA Brazil leads our region in terms of quantity of members; its commitment in setting this publication counting twenty five authors is to be praised. CECA international received all texts in the two main languages of our region: Spanish and Portuguese.

The diverse words and the plurality of views give special meaning to this great work. Through their research which is an art and a premise that the professionals of this country permanently consider of an utmost importance in their day-time, emphasizing and giving special relevance to education as a value and a substantial right of people.

As Paulo Freire, one of the most prominent Latin American figures of the 20th century, expressed in his book *Education as a Practice of Freedom*: “true education is praxis, reflection and action of mankind on the world in order to transform it”, those of us who are part of this collective construction are convinced as he was that education makes us free both as individuals and as social subjects.

And if “the reading of the world precedes that of speech”, we feel that this is both a motive and a motivation, as it allows us to show thanks to educational research and the multiple narratives expressed here, different feminine educators’ professional careers; but also, the work of those who forged and contributed to the history of museum education, leaving a true legacy for future generations. Likewise, through the communities’ value of its rights and the role of the museum as educator and promoter of practicing citizenship, this publication carries us on a journey along various fully accessible and inclusive activities having an impact on the communities.

Knowing about the committed Network of Museum Educators that Brazil has, it is remarkable to read about the hierarchical importance they place when building content from different horizons to achieve meaning making; over time their common work have allowed them to discuss different aspects of museum education, the role of democracy in the museological field, as well as the actions carried out in favor of heritage together with more central themes related to educational research and the irreplaceable tool in this process to give to evaluation.

We can then move forward from contemporary perspectives and navigate through the experiential aspects of educational programmes engaged with different communities, from actions focusing on the fight against racism to the role and current trends of cyberculture within the museum life.

Brazil is the leader in Latin America and the Caribbean in its number of museums, and that since their first creations in the 19th century. Therefore, This arduous

and prolix research material gathered in this publication in an accomplished and rigorous way will therefore allow to disseminate the long journey this country has gone through regarding the history of museum education.

For all these reasons, I am convinced that both education and culture are values of transcendence, of transformation and of high impact on societies, that define us as people in our diverse identities; therefore, researching and writing about our own history places us in the position of protagonists positioning themselves as social actors committed to its museums, to education and projects with its communities.

Finally, I would like to thank those who allowed me to manage this bibliographic edition within our great Latin American network: Maurício and Andrea from CECA Brazil for their immeasurable work and responsibility; Nicole Gesché-Koning, a member of the CECA International Board, who carried out a work of immense professionalism in her translations in French and English; let me also highlight her immense empathy towards the members of CECA LAC; and all the authors who dedicated their time to research and meticulous writing, not to mention their individual commitment to translating their texts from Portuguese to Spanish.

The publication has been possible thanks to the support provided by CECA International, ICOM Brazil, the *Instituto Brasileiro de Museus* (Brazilian Institute of Museums, IBRAM), and especially to the efforts of all of us who have taken on the challenge of expanding the word not only in our region, but also allowing it to reach the whole world.

**Vera Lúcia Mangas**  
*President of ICOM Brazil*

## **History of Museum Education in Brazil**

**I**t is with great pleasure that the Brazilian Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM-BR), together with its partners, presents this book that will contribute to the international community's knowledge of the trajectory of museum education in Brazil.

The publication promotes the international dialogue that is so characteristic of ICOM. As an organization focused on improving the quality of museum professionals' work, ICOM counts more than 45,000 members from 138 countries. ICOM-Brazil was one of the first national committees, created in 1948, and today has more than 800 individual and institutional members.

ICOM's international committees deal with different areas and CECA, created in 1965 at ICOM's 7th General Conference, is dedicated to Museum Education. Today it is ICOM's second largest international committee with over 1,500 members from more than 80 countries.

This publication coordinated by CECA-Brazil and supported by ICOM-Brazil was produced on the initiative of the International Committee for Education and Cultural Action (ICOM-CECA) in conjunction with CECA Latin America and the Caribbean (CECA-LAC).



The invitation to produce this book, as the second volume in a series that began with the history of museum education in Belgium, indicates the fundamental role played by Brazilian museum education in the international sphere.

CECA members already know a lot about the work carried out in Brazil, since Brazilian educators have been taking part in international conferences for several decades presenting individual papers, experiences from museum education sectors and collective documents from CECA-Brazil members.

The quality of Brazilian museum educational activities has been recognized by CECA through awards (Best Practice Awards) received in 2012 (*Centro de Memória Dorina Nowill*, Dorina/Nowill Memory Centre - Viviane Sarraf), 2014 (*Museu Lasar Segall*, Lasar Segall Museum - Paula Selli), 2015 (*Museu da República*, Museum of the Republic - Magaly de Oliveira Cabral), 2016 (*Pinacoteca do Estado*, State Pinacoteca - Mila Chiovatto), 2019 (*Museu Histórico do Instituto Butantã*, Butantan Institute Historical Museum - Adriana Mortara Almeida), 2021 (*Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia da USP*, USP Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology - Maurício André Silva), as well as Mila Chiovatto's participation in the selecting award jury and as president of CECA (2017-2019).

ICOM-CECA has played and continues to play a fundamental role in museum education in Brazil, since it allows international exchange of experiences and research in museum education by professionals and students in training. If, for a few decades in the second half of the last century, Brazilian professionals used to “drink” from foreign sources, since the 1990s there has been a real shift. Educational activities carried out in Brazilian museum institutions began to occupy a greater place at international meetings. The creation from 1996 onwards of “CECA-Brazil”, bringing together CECA Brazilian members to exchange and prepare a joint presentation at CECA's annual international conferences gave room for more exchanges between Brazilian museum educators gaining greater international visibility.

However, the history of museum education in Brazil predates the creation of ICOM and CECA. This publication provides some reports, experiences and reflections on this long history, revealing part of the broad universe of educational activities to be found in museums in Brazil since the 19th century.

Publishing in ICOM's three official languages - Spanish, French and English - makes it possible to reach a wider range of international readers. The support of the *Instituto Brasileiro de Museus* (Brazilian Institute of Museums, IBRAM) of the Brazilian Ministry of Culture has enabled the publication of a Portuguese version so that access can be extended to Brazilians and professionals from other Portuguese-speaking countries.

ICOM-BR congratulates everyone involved in the conception, organization, drafting of articles and editing for the excellent work that represents an essential contribution to the international dissemination of Brazilian museum education. We know that there are many other stories of our museum education to be disseminated internationally and this path had already begun with the strong participation of Brazilian educators in the CECA conferences and publications and will certainly continue with other initiatives like this book.

# Foreword

**Fernanda Castro**

*President of IBRAM-BR*

## FOREWORD (or how to get excited even before reading this book)

**I**t is with great joy and honor that I received the invitation to write one of the forewords of this book thanks to the Committee for Education and Cultural Action of the International Council of Museums (ICOM-CECA) and to the editors, my dear friends and colleagues Andréa Costa and Maurício da Silva, coordinators of CECA Brazil. Colleagues who managed to have this important publication in the three official languages of ICOM, but also (and equally important) in our mother tongue.

Having Brazilian experiences circulating around the world is important for the authors and for the dissemination of the knowledge it involves. But it is also, modesty aside, a great opportunity for colleagues from other countries to get to know the magic circulating in this continental country that is Brazil.

Initially I thought of participating in the publication about the History of Museum Education in Brazil “História da Educação Museal no Brasil” as an author, since I received with enthusiasm the call made by the Committee to contribute to it.

The work dynamics, militancy and interest for museums and museum education in Brazil made me realize that my contribution was to be made in no other way than through this foreword, opening the way for those who read these pages to access the tradition, history, innovation and criticism present in the texts of the diversity of authors, teachers and friends who offer us here their excellent and necessary reflections.

It is essential to announce in this foreword that despite being written from my experience and knowledge as museum educator, teacher, researcher, activist and now first woman president and employee of the *Instituto Brasileiro de Museus* (Brazilian Institute of Museums) (a museum educator, although repeating myself), this foreword is that of a museum visitor. I who as a child was amazed to enter the National Museum, in Rio de Janeiro, and smell the “mummy room”, see the colors of the butterflies, hear the creaking of the wooden boards on the old floor, see so many different people, in its corridors and in its surroundings.

I have been a museum education passionate since I was a child, even not understanding it as a profession, but rather seeing it as a form of enchantment. Walking through museums, sitting on the floor, where you can feel the texture, the smell, the shine of the floors more closely, as - I was told - so many illustrious feet have trodden; museum educators were like great oracles, masters and mistresses, enchanted beings full of knowledge, fantastic words and affection.

To educate in a museum means to captivate, to interest, to share, to communicate, to discover, to experiment, to meet people; seeking knowledge, and contact with different peoples and cultures. Although all this is the essence of museums, educating in museums remains a challenge.

It is necessary to recognize the educational function as a museum's primary function. It is essential to value their professionals, recognizing the profession. It is essential to create the conditions for educational activities in museums.

As this is a challenge, part of its solution involves knowing the history of museum education, understanding its foundations, its traditions, who its people are, who this social action reaches, what worlds, memories, and heritages it encompasses. After all, there is no museum without education.

So, I think the first people concerned by museum education are those who take it up as a profession - which I believe is the majority of those who will read and enjoy this book.

It deals with children and the elderly, academics and trainees, elites and the people, the latter being the vast and diverse public that educational activities and the development of the educational potential of museums in Brazil have been trying with difficulty to reach for almost a century.

There are currently more than 4,400 Brazilian museums and Places of Memory, distributed, albeit unevenly, throughout the country. The National Survey of Educational Practices of Brazilian Museums shows that more than 90% of our museums carry out educational activities.

The History of Museum Education in Brazil, narrated here by its creators, shows that museum education activities have been taking place in Brazil for more than a century as the reflection on these actions, the research and the search for innovations, as well as their institutionalization in the country's museums.

We can say that doing and thinking about museum education in practical, theoretical, and political terms is a Brazilian tradition that needs to be known and disseminated throughout the world. We do and think about educational activities in museums, with quality and in the purest "Brazilian style".

We base ourselves on international and national theories, as well as on the inspiration of internationally recognized Brazilian creativity, in order to consolidate educational processes aimed at comprehensive training, transformation and social justice.

The pages of this book show that museum education is, above all, carried out by people. Dedicated individuals, people who study, human beings who are passionate about what they do and who do it with aesthetic, political, social, and cultural sense. People we find today in museums and Places of Memory, in academic and professional events, in the streets and in political spaces of social transformation, forged through our own struggles and achievements.

People who though no longer among us, have made history and the History of Museum Education, often combined with the feminist struggle, with the struggle

for the defense of native people's cultural heritage, the need for sex education for children, or for the integration of art, science and health.

Here we read not only about people's stories, but also about their battles to develop museum education, such as the struggle for accessibility. We confirm the plurality of research - and therefore practices - of Brazilian Museum Education: politics, networked activity, archaeology, religiosity, decoloniality, arts, curatorship and cyberculture. A diversity as great as, like the Brazilian culinary tradition, leaves in search of knowledge and eager to get to know closer each of the museums and educational experiences presented here.

In Brazil, we often use the expression "complexo de vira-lata" (vira-lata complex or mongrel complex with my apologies to the translators) to describe the feeling we get when we imagine that what others do is better, more original, more technological, or innovative than what we do, especially when it comes to theory and technology produced by foreigners from the North.

But not in Museum Education! We have for a long time been organizing ourselves in networks and collectives. The first network of museum educators is more than 20 years old. Already in the past and even more so today, we must say we live in an exciting moment of self-empowerment, questioning the validity of oppressive and colonizing practices, theories and policies, while paving the way for ourselves (Museum Education, with its majority of female members) to realize our dreams.

What you can see in this book, dear people who read and study Museum Education, is that, above all, the people who work in Brazilian Museum Education are people who dream. Who dream together. And, as they say around here, a dream that is dreamt together comes true.

This book is a dream that we offer to our readers.

# Editorial

Andréa Fernandes Costa and Maurício André da Silva

*CECA-BR correspondents*

## The history of Brazilian museum education by CECA-BR

This publication entitled “History of Museum Education in Brazil” is the result of an invitation from the *Committee for Education and Cultural Action* (CECA-ICOM) to the *Comité Educación y Acción Cultural América Latina y el Caribe* (CECA-LAC) to organise a book on the history of museum education in Latin America and the Caribbean. In turn, we in Brazil received this challenge with great joy and called on members of CECA-BR as well as other networks and organisations to contribute to the material. We would like to thank all the people who got involved in this process and made it possible for these reflections and works to be disseminated around the world: to the indefatigable Silvana Lovay, for encouraging and supporting us, to Marie Clarté for opening up the possibility of Brazil producing the second volume of the series at the for CECA, the first country to launch it was Belgium, to Nicole Gesche-Koning, for the mammoth job of translating all the texts into French and English, to Vera Mangas and Adriana Mortara from ICOM Brazil for supporting this initiative, to Fernanda Castro from the *Instituto Brasileiro de Museus* (Brazilian Institute of Museums, IBRAM), for welcoming the initiative and endeavouring to disseminate it in Portuguese; and to the Brazilian educator colleagues who were part of the Scientific Committee to evaluate the texts received: Adriana Mortara, Denise Grinspum, Karlla Kamylla Passos dos Santos, Magaly Cabral and Mona Nascimento. We would also like to thank the 25 authors and 7 authors of the 19 unpublished chapters that make up this book for their contributions.

Building the history of museum education in Brazil, a continental and diverse country, is challenging, but also very stimulating. More and more efforts have been made to narrate and understand the trajectory of the field in our country. Important work carried out over the last four decades shows the creation of the first museums in the country in the 19th century, accompanied by an educational aura, and the process of institutionalising education in Brazilian museums, denoting the recognition of the educational function of these institutions. This institutionalisation process began in 1927 with the creation of the Natural History Teaching Assistance Service, the National Museum's educational sector, which has been active ever since. The second half of the 20th century was important for consolidating the educational function of museums, especially with the organisation of international events on the subject, promoting the flow of people and ideas, as well as boosting the publication of books in the field. The educational character of museums became the subject of important discussions, for example within UNESCO, with the organisation of International Seminars on the educational function of museums, the first held in 1952 in New York City and the second in 1954 in Athens. Brazil was not left out and in 1958 hosted the Regional Seminar on the same theme, organised by UNESCO, in the city of Rio de Janeiro. This period also saw the structuring of educational sectors in different museums; the arrival of debates around heritage education in the country, from the 1980s onwards, and especially the consolidation of academic research and public policies for the field, with emphasis on the creation of the National Museum Education Policy (PNEM) in 2017.

The term museum education was introduced in Brazil by Mario Chagas at the beginning of the 21st century, but still without a conceptual definition. This definition was presented in 2018, as one of the entries in the National Museum Education Policy (PNEM), by Fernanda Castro, Ozias Soares, Milene Chiovatto and Andréa Costa, who conceptualised museum education as a theoretical, political, practical and planning field, understood as a "part of the complex functioning of the general education of individuals in society", with actions "fundamentally based on dialogue" and which contribute "so that subjects, in relationship, produce new knowledge and practices mediated by objects, knowledge and actions", with a view to promoting "a critical and integral formation of individuals, their emancipation and conscious action in society



with the aim of transforming it". Museum education in the country is very plural and has a number of theoretical and practical inspirations, which can be translated into actions entitled art education, dissemination and popularisation of science, heritage education, museum education, cultural mediation, among many others. This work is committed to maintaining and expanding the dialogue between institutions and their museum collections and society, reinforcing the social role of these spaces.

A recent diagnosis of Brazilian museum education, presented by the Pesquisa Educação Museal Brasil (Brazilian Museum Education Survey) *Instituto Brasileiro de Museus and Observatório da Economia Criativa da Bahia* (Brazilian Institute of Museums and Observatory of the Creative Economy of Bahia), reveals a strong presence and intensity of educational practices in Brazilian museums, but it also reveals their weak institutionalisation, since most museums don't have educational sectors and only half of them have professionals who dedicate themselves exclusively to this work. The lack of recognition for museum education professionals is reflected in their very low salaries, which contrast with the high qualifications of those working in the field, the majority of whom are women with postgraduate qualifications. Thus, we see that despite the long history of the field in the country, there are still many barriers to overcome. Revisiting our history can provide us with keys to a better understanding of reality and its transformation.

The texts in the publication are organised into five thematic blocks. The first of these, entitled "**Self-narratives and personal trajectories**", brings together texts that present different aspects of the history of museum education intertwined with the authors' life stories. The first text, by Magaly Cabral, entitled "*Dilemmas and joys of a professional career in museum education*", reflects on forty years of the author's history and work in different museum spaces in Rio de Janeiro and internationally, involving ICOM and CECA. Denise Grinspum, with the text "*The role of education in museums in times and territories*", links some moments in international museological reflection and the impacts on her career, especially in the art museums where she has worked for over forty years. Maria Cristina Oliveira Bruno, Camila Azevedo de Moraes Wichers and Karlla Kamylla Passos dos Santos, in the text "*On education, museums and Museology: specificities*

and reciprocities from three generations of educators”, trace almost five decades of work in the field of museology, communication and education, crossed by the issues of each era and generation, which indicate the advances in the field, as well as the challenges in the 21st century. Finally, the authors Denise Cristina Carminatti Peixoto, Márcia Fernandes Lourenço, Carla Gibertoni Carneiro, Andrea Alexandra do Amaral Silva and Biella, with the text “*Museu Paulista, Museu de Zoologia, Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia and Museu de Arte Contemporânea: o olhar de quatro educadoras*”, present the institutional history of the four university museums linked to the Universidade de São Paulo (University of São Paulo, USP) and the commitment to include the educational areas within the curatorial processes and their diversified actions for different audiences.

The second block of texts, entitled “**Historical Characters**”, features four texts highlighting the careers of professionals who have contributed to the development of the field. Andréa Fernandes Costa, with the text “*Victor Stawiarski and the Museu Nacional: considerations about Museum Education in Brazil between the years 1940 and 1970*”, presents the trajectory of this professional who worked at the Museu Nacional (National Museum, UFRJ), promoting bold and very popular actions around themes such as sex education, Egyptology and the evolution of species. The text chapter “*Waldisa Russio’s Contributions to Museum Education in Latin America*”, by Viviane Panelli Sarraf, Camila Seebregts, Sophia de Oliveira Novaes and Taís Costa Monteiro Freitas, traces the connections between the work of this important museologist and museum education work in three projects: the Museu da Criança (Children’s Museum), the Museu Mobral (Mobral Museum) and the Museu da Indústria, Comércio e Tecnologia de São Paulo (Museum of Industry, Commerce and Technology of São Paulo). Denise Studart and Carla Gruzman, in the text “*Art, Science and Health in the Museum: contributions to Brazilian Museum Education in the work of Virgínia Schall*”, present the trajectory of this educator from the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation/Fiocruz, who idealised and coordinated projects focused on scientific dissemination, museum education and art, with working with the public’s emotions at their core. António Luciano Morais Melo Filho in “*Dom José Museum: educational legacy and transformations during the management of the museum Universidade Estadual Vale do Acaraú (UVA)*” presents the changes in the institution, with management by the University and the work of Giovana Saboya, who prioritised working with the public, especially

schools. It also highlights the collection's problems, which reinforce an elitist local vision, and the challenges of working with new approaches.

The third set of texts, entitled “**Accessibility as a mission**”, presents reflections on the commitments made by some institutions and their professionals to enhance the social role of museums and their commitment to enjoyment with different segments of the public. Maurício André da Silva, in his text “*Who has the right to touch Brazil's archaeological heritage: the MAE-USP Educational Area and the democratisation of the enjoyment of the past/present through the hands*”, presents the four decades of educational work at the *Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia da USP* (USP Museum of Archeology and Ethnology), focusing on the creation of the Archaeology and Ethnology Educational Kit at the end of the 1980s as a way of enjoying archaeological heritage through touch. Gabriela Aidar and Milene Chiovatto, in “*Reflections on access, inclusion and the social function of museums*”, broadly analyse access to culture in museums, and especially address the current challenge of ICOM's new definition of a museum. The authors defend how educational areas have always been at the forefront of this debate, due to their direct contact with different audiences, and address the importance of the involvement of all professionals for the effective transformation of museum spaces. Finally, Isabel Portella, in her text “*Experience as a learning process: between accessible museums at the Museu da República*”, recounts her work with accessible projects at the institution where she works and in partnership with the Museum of Tomorrow, reflecting, from the position of a disabled professional, on the challenges of accessibility for expanding the social function of the museum.

The fourth block “**Plural Approaches**” brings together four chapters that deal with different aspects of the history of museum education, reinforcing the diversity and richness of the area in Brazil. Mario Chagas and Marcus Macri in “*Unesco Regional Seminar on the Educational Function of Museums (1958), 65 years later: between celebrations, reflections and disputes for a democratic museum education*” discuss the changes that have taken place in the field of museums and education since the event in 1958, to the one organised at the *Museu da República* in 2018, as well as the challenges of promoting a democratic education today, with the advance of conservatism. In the chapter “*Considerations on Research and Evaluation in the Field of Museum Education in Brazil*”, Adriana

Mortara Almeida and Denise Studart present a survey of research carried out between the 1990s and 2020 with different approaches and their contributions to a greater understanding of the work carried out and its appropriation by the public. Camilo de Mello Vasconcellos, with the text *“Heritage Education and Archaeology in Brazil: discussions and controversies”*, traces the development of archaeological research in the country and its socialisation, from the end of the 19th century, with a perspective still bound by prejudiced views of indigenous peoples, to the consolidation of institutions in the second half of the 20th century, the implementation of Heritage Education from the 1980s onwards and its overwhelming entry into the field of archaeology with environmental legislation. Finally, Mona Nascimento, in her text *“Networks of Museum Educators: the historical social participation in Brazilian museum education”*, presents the history of the creation of the *Redes de Educadores em Museos de Brasil* (Networks of Museum Educators in Brazil, REM), from the first, created in Rio de Janeiro in 2003, to the emergence of others through the articulation of their professionals and the promotion of public policies by the Brazilian state. The Networks are horizontal spaces for mobilising the field, which in Brazil contributed strongly to the creation of the National Museum Education Policy in 2017.

The fifth and final block entitled **“Contemporary perspectives”** brings together reflections on current museum education practices, but which bear traces of a previous history of articulation and mobilisation in the field. Mario Chagas, Maria Helena and Thiago Botelho with the text *“Learning from Nosso Sagrado: The strength of the orixás, the caboclas and caboclos, of the vovós and pretos velhos against racism”* present the process of receiving the Afro-religious collection that had been in the possession of the police since the beginning of the 20th century for the *Museu da República* in Rio de Janeiro, through collaborative work with religious leaders, enhancing its communicational potential and combating structural racism. Elaine Fontana’s text *“What do museums and the Bienal de São Paulo share through their permanent educational programmes?”* reflects on the educational work carried out by the *Bienal de São Paulo* (São Paulo Biennial),

which is the second oldest international art exhibition in the world. It shows how, since 2010, the educational programme has become a permanent part of the institution and is seen as an integral part of the curatorial process as a whole. Denise Peixoto and Isabela Arruda, in their text “*Curatorial actions: the role of the education team in the ‘New Ipiranga Museum’ project*”, present the process of participatory restructuring of the institution’s educational work with the reopening of the Museum in 2022, by listening to different segments of the public and connected to the process of expanding the institution’s social vocation. Finally, Júlia Mayer de Araujo and Nicolas Januario dos Santos, with the text “*Museum Education and Cyberculture: mapping history and trends*”, present the challenges faced by museums during the Covid-19 pandemic and the efforts of institutions to develop actions in the context of digital culture.

Most of the authors who have contributed to this book were educated in and come from the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, historically favoured by public and private investment and benefiting from a strong cultural apparatus, which is reflected in the high concentration of museums compared to other cities in the country. Their gaze and reflections, consequently, turn to characters, institutions, events and practices of indisputable relevance, but which are far from representing Brazilian museum education in its completeness and diversity. It’s worth noting that CECA-BR made a huge effort to publicise and invite people from all over the country.

So, what this publication offers readers is a glimpse into the rich history of museum education in the country. It also aims to be a stimulus for more and more professional colleagues to reflect, write and produce other narratives. This book is not intended to be definitive, but rather an invitation for new stories, characters and experiences to be recognised and told, further strengthening the field of Brazilian museum education.

Let’s move on!!!

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## **PREFACES**

Marie-Clarté O'Neill / President ICOM-CECA

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Vera Lúcia Mangas / President of ICOM Brazil

## **FOREWORD**

Fernanda Castro / President of IBRAM-BR

## **EDITORIAL**

Andréa Fernandes Costa and Maurício André da Silva /  
CECA-BR correspondents

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# Self-narratives and professional trajectories

# Dilemmas and joys of a professional career in museum education

Magaly Cabral

*Teacher, Pedagogue and Museologist*

I've been a member of ICOM-CECA since 1979, when I attended its Annual Conference in Sezimbra/Portugal. I am its oldest member in Brazil and, according to our esteemed Belgian colleague Nicole Gesché, whom I met that year, we are the youngest old members of CECA, after the English Alison Heath and the American Elaine Gurian.

This report on my work as a museum educator covers 40 years of my work in the world of museums - from 1977 to 2017<sup>1</sup>.

I entered the world of museums<sup>2</sup> as a professional in February 1977, when I was invited to lead the Cultural and Artistic Department of the former Rio de Janeiro State Museum Foundation (FEMURJ). My job was to organise and coordinate courses, events, lectures and arrange buses for schoolchildren to

visit the FEMURJ museums located in the cities of Rio de Janeiro (04), Niterói (03) and the interior of the state (02).

I realised that I could do more than only simply offer buses to schools. I proposed to the museums to produce some very simple material to hand out to the teachers, informing them about the museum they were going to visit, its collection, highlighting one object or another.

In November 1979, I was introduced to ICOM-CECA by the new FEMURJ board, and, as already mentioned, I took part in the Annual Conference in Sezimbra, Portugal. Through my teaching background and work in public school classrooms, I was always concerned about taking my students on museum visits. That same year, when I came back to Brazil, I had no doubts about the path to follow: I changed

1 In fact, until March 2018, when I finally left the directorship of the *Museu da República* (Museum of the Republic) once the new Director took over.

2 As a primary school teacher, I took my students to visit museums.

from the Faculty of Communication to the Faculty of Pedagogy.

In April 1980, the Rio de Janeiro State Arts Foundation (FUNARJ) was created, and the FEMURJ team became part of the FUNARJ Museums Superintendence. I became head of the Museum Dynamization Department of the Superintendence. My job was no longer just to book buses for schools because the resources had diminished considerably, but to work in the museums themselves with their teams to develop educational activities.

In November 1980, I again took part in the ICOM-CECA Annual Conference in Mexico City, as part of ICOM's 12th General Conference.<sup>3</sup>

In December 1980, I was nominated by the management of the Superintendency of Museums, along with other colleagues and other professionals from other institutions, to take part in the selection, by the United States Consulate - RJ, of the Multi-Regional Project "Education in Museums", promoted by the Smithsonian Institution, the International Institute for Education and United States International Communication. Having been selected, I travelled from 23 January to 24 February 1981 through Washington, New York, San Francisco, Denver, Fort Worth and New Orleans, visiting museums in these cities and getting to know their educational services, along with five other educators from different countries. It was an enriching experience, as well as an interesting exchange with the other participants.

Also in 1981, in September, I took part in the ICOM-CECA Annual Conference in Svendborg, Denmark.

From then on, I attended the ICOM-CECA Annual Conferences almost every year, except for three years as I shall mention later. So, from 1979 to 2017, I took part in 25 CECA annual conferences, 10 of which were part of the ICOM General Conference. And I organised two CECA conferences in the city of Rio de Janeiro: in 1997 and in 2013, the latter within the framework of the XXIII ICOM General Conference, having been part of its organising committee.

From July 1995 to July 1998, I was the ICOM-CECA Regional Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean.

I also took part in six ICOM-CECA Regional meetings for Latin America and the Caribbean (1991, 1993, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2014), organising the 1993 meeting in Rio de Janeiro and helping to organise the two meetings in São Paulo (2004, 2005), coordinated by the regretted Sonia Guarita do Amaral, former ICOM-CECA coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean.

## A PARENTHESIS

I'm opening here a parenthesis to talk about my training in Museology. As a teacher with a degree in Pedagogy and working in the field of Museum Education, I was constantly told that I wasn't a museologist and therefore couldn't make any suggestions, even though I was in permanent contact

<sup>3</sup> Every 3 years, ICOM holds its General Conference, attended by all the International Committees (or Study Committees). International Committees meet annually in one country.

with the public - for whom, after all, the Museum opens its doors - registering their questions, their wishes. To be a museologist was a recognised profession, but colleagues in the field of Museum Education were not recognised as museologists, despite the Law regulating the profession and stating that educational action is part of a museologist's duties (Article 3, item II). So, I decided to study Museology. I haven't regretted it, I think it was great to combine Pedagogy with Museology, although I don't think a museum educator needs to have a degree in Museology. But I do think that there should be a postgraduate course in Museum Education, with a course dedicated to understanding the museum institution. Likewise, museologists who are interested in Museum Education should take this course, as the Museology degree does not prepare them for museum education.

But it was the Master's in Education that broadened my reflections on Museum Education. Learning about the Russian author Vygotsky was here fundamental.

## BACK TO MUSEUM EDUCATION

As the Superintendence of Museums occupied a space in the *Museu do Primeiro Reinado/Casa da Marquesa de Santos* (Museum of the First Reign/ House of the Marquesa de Santos), the team in the Dynamization Department began to take direct care of its educational activities, without though neglecting its other duties. This happened until 1987, when, having

graduated in Museology, I applied to become director of the museum, a position I held from June 1987 to May 1991.

In March 1988, I was invited to take over the Superintendence of Museums at the Rio de Janeiro State Arts Foundation, which lasted until April 1991, taking over the direction of the *Museu do Primeiro Reinado*, nevertheless keeping its educational activities. In mind

In September 1990, I was elected Councillor of the Federal Council of Museology, where I served as Treasurer and then President.

When I left the directorship of the Museum and the Superintendency of Museums, I remained working in the museum education field of the *Museu do Primeiro Reinado*, from June 1991 until September 1993, when I decided to accept the invitation, I had already received previously from the director of the Celso Kelly State Library, to work in the Cultural Dissemination Sector. I had decided to do a Master's in Education and could take some time off to study. However, I only stayed at the library until February 1994, when I was invited to become head of the *Museu Casa de Rui Barbosa* at the *Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa* (Museum House of Rui Barbosa/Casa de Rui Barbosa Foundation), a position I held from February 1994 to February 1997, when I was invited to take over the direction of the Foundation's Memory and Documentation Centre, which included the museum, where I remained until March 2003.

At the *Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa*, I was always at the forefront of museum

education, even when I ran the Memory Centre. The *Museu Casa de Rui Barbosa*, which had previously a team of museum educators, no longer had any. Only one museologist not really interested in museum education still did some work with schools. Sometime later, thanks to a recruitment competition, the highly qualified approved museologist Aparecida Rangel accepted my invitation to work together in Museum Education although it was not really her field of interest. She still works there today doing an excellent job. Even if she says she is not a museum educator, she really is and a very competent one.

In December 1993, together with two other colleagues, I took over the management of the Brazilian National Committee of the International Council of Museums, acting as Treasurer until April 2000.

In 1995, at an assembly held in São Paulo over the seminar “Brazilian museology and ICOM: convergences or mismatches”, the ICOM Brazilian committee proposed to the Brazilian members of ICOM international committees to form groups to discuss specific issues related to their field. CECA members in Brazil agreed that it would be important to have a coordinating body representing the committee in the country to promote a greater exchange of information and ideas between CECA members, hence the creation of CECA-Brazil. Adriana Mortara Almeida took over the coordination. I was the coordinator of CECA-Brazil still active today from March to August 2001 and then from February 2005 to 31 August 2007, which is still active today.

## CECA IN STAND-BY MODE

The DEMHIST International Committee of Historic House Museums (Comité international des Demeures Historiques) was created In October 1998, during ICOM's 19th General Conference in Melbourne, Australia. Working at the *Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa*, the first house museum in Brazil, I signed up as a non-voting member of this newly created Committee.

It's worth mentioning here that, first as head of the *Museu Casa de Rui Barbosa* (1994 - 1997), and then as director of the *Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa's* Memory and Documentation Centre (1997 - 2003), I had already organised four seminars and a Conference on House Museums, the first in the country, all of which had published Proceedings.

In November 2000, with the support of the Board of the *Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa*, I took part in the Annual Conference of ICOM-DEMIST Committee in Genoa, Italy. I then applied to become a member of the board and was elected as Regional Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, which I remained until October 2002. But I remained a CECA non-voting member.

So, in 2001 and 2002 I took part in the DEMHIST Annual Conferences. I didn't renew my candidacy in 2002 for the coordination of the Committee because I had already told the management of the *Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa* my intention to resign from 2003, which I did. At the time, I had the wishful thinking of living on a farm in Paraíba do Sul, a town in the interior of the state of Rio de Janeiro.

## BACK TO CECA

In 2003, when I left the *Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa* I changed my voting membership becoming again a CECA voting member and a non-voting member of DEMHIST.

The last ICOM-CECA Annual Conference I attended was in 2017, in London, organised as a joint conference with the DEMHIST Committee. So I said goodbye to the conferences, joining the two Committees in which I had been active in, never having stopped to take care of house museums and participating in related conferences, the *Museu da República* (Museum of the Republic) being the residence of presidents of the Republic.

## INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

When I left the *Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa* in March 2003, I started working as a Museum Education Consultant. And from April 2003 to 2005, I volunteered at the *Museu Casa*, continuing the meetings with teachers at the Museum/Teacher/Student: A Way of Seeing project held once a month mornings and afternoons and followed by a visit to the museum. The volunteer service didn't take place in 2006 due to building work at the museum. In June 2007, I took over as director of the *Museu da República*.

From 2003 to June 2007 many activities and workshops related to Museum Education were organized in various states of the country, from north to south, from east to west.

A constant activity was the monthly gatherings of the Network of Educators in Museums and Cultural Centres of the State of Rio de Janeiro (REM-RJ). This network was born in May 2003, during the Museum Week<sup>4</sup> held at *Museu da Maré* (Museum of Maré). I took part in the Round Table on the theme "Cultural Heritage and Education", together with my colleagues Luciana Sepúlveda, from the *Museu da Vida/Fundação Oswaldo Cruz* (FIOCRUZ) (*Museum of Life/Oswaldo Cruz Foundation* FIOCRUZ), and Arilza de Almeida, from the *Museu do Índio* (Indian Museum); with Mário Chagas, a professor at *Universidade do Rio de Janeiro* (UNIRIO) (*Rio de Janeiro University* (UNIRIO)), as mediator, we had many discussions. At the end of the panel, we discussed the important idea of creating systematic meetings between museum educators, like the one that had already taken place a few years earlier at the *Museu Histórico Nacional*, in which Mário Chagas and I had taken part, but which had unfortunately been interrupted. Luciana Sepúlveda decided to encourage such gatherings managing some months later to invite us to a meeting at the *Museu da Vida*; we were put in contact with her colleague Marcelle Pereira, who worked there and could bring our proposal to fruition. What she did! Thanks to her, not only did REM-RJ grow, but other REMs came to light; today we even have a Brazilian Network (REM-BR). In September 2003, we held the first REM-RJ meeting at the *Museu Nacional de Belas Artes* (National Museum of Fine Arts). It was created, "with the purpose

4 The Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM)/Ministry of Culture instituted Museum Week in the country to commemorate International Museum Day.



of providing systematic meetings between museum educators in the city of Rio de Janeiro, desiring to share ideas, getting to know more closely their colleagues' work, reflecting on the practice of the profession, and, above all, forming a study group in the area of museum education, contributing to the development of the professional field". (2010, p.9).

## THE MUSEUM OF THE REPUBLIC

In June 2007, I took over as director of the *Museu da República*, where I remained until March 2018. I had asked to leave after 10 years as director, in June 2017. But I accepted to stay until the arrival of the new director, my guru and dear friend and advisor Mario Chagas.

## DILEMMAS AND JOYS ALONG THE WAY

All in all, the joys in my career outnumbered the dilemmas. Education is always a source of pleasure.

My first dilemma came during my Pedagogy degree, when I began to question whether I should continue working in a museum, which at the time was a very elitist institution, or return to teaching in a classroom, where I could better contribute to society. Until a

lecture by the Northeastern museologist Aécio de Oliveira changed my perception of the possibilities of the museum. Aécio spoke of "museologia morena", a Brazilian museology, far removed from European standards. Then I met Maria Célia Santos and Waldiza Russo Guarnieri, two museologist teachers who Paulo Freire's disciples concerned about the social function of museology. It was possible to think of Paulo Freire in museums.

The dilemmas that followed were not so philosophical: financial difficulties in realising projects, for example. Or, since I was a director, I sometimes wanted to take an active part in the educational activity, but I had to deal with administrative processes.

The joys, however, were many: the participation of the boys from the Mangueira Samba School in the Holiday Workshop at the *Museu do Primeiro Reinado* and their claim to act as coordinators in the Workshop, working on the preparation of the samba school<sup>5</sup>, as they had experience and mastered the subject. They were also delighted to see that the children who had been attending the *Museu da República's* Holiday Workshop had become visitors and regular participants at the Museum's activities, one of them even becoming a general museumgoer.<sup>6</sup>

5 The theme of the holiday workshop was the assembly of a samba school, whose plot was related to a theme of the Museum; the children made costumes, allegories, and samba songs. They visited a samba school shed and interviewed samba school members. On the last day of the workshop, they paraded in the Museum's street.

6 See "Active Cultural Action in the Museu do Primeiro Reinado: Serving the Community", in ICOM Education nffl 14, "Museum Education Towards 2000", 1992, p. 41-43; "Does a summer camp favour the relationship with the museum?", in ICOM Education nffl 26, Special Issue on Research, 2015, p. 201 - 208.

Joy and emotion at the end of the presentation of the paper “The Brazilian museum educator confronting contemporary social and economic challenges”, at the ICOM-CECA Annual Conference, in July 2001, on the occasion of the 20th ICOM General Conference in Barcelona, Spain, with a standing ovation from international colleagues, when I presented a collective text<sup>7</sup> from the members of CECA-Brazil, which I was coordinating at the time.

A permanent joy in dealing with the public in museums, especially children and teenagers.

Another joy is to see the consolidation of the Museum Educators’ Networks in the country and the establishment of the Brazil Network and its activities.

I was delighted to see that the *Museu da República* received the 2014 Ibero-American Museum Education Award and the 2014 CECA Best Practice Award, with a project aimed at educating young people and adults, which led to the museum opening at night once a month to welcome these evening students.

It was a great joy to see the completion of the postgraduate course in Museum Education, thanks to the great efforts of Fernanda Castro, the current president of IBRAM/MinC, and Kátia Frecheiras. It’s a pity it did not go on. I’m still waiting for it to happen again, because I think it’s fundamentally important for the training and professionalisation of Museum Educators.

It was a great joy to accompany and participate in some way in the formulation of the National Policy for Museum Education in Brazil, opened to all interested parties in the country, and to see it launched in 2018 and being implemented and discussed.

I was delighted to see the *Saber Museu - Educação Museal* (To Know Museum - Museum Education course), promoted by the Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM)/MinC, go live in 2023, which I took part in together with Fernanda Castro and Aparecida Rangel. I hope it can help fellow museum educators in their actions and reflections.

Finally, it is a great joy to be able to tell you about my journey and see it reflected in this publication.

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7 Since the creation of CECA-Brazil, members have written texts related to the theme of the CECA/ICOM Annual Conference, coordinated and organised by the coordinator.

# The role of education in museums in times and territories

Denise Grinspum

*PhD in Education*

The idea of this article is to present the trends in museum education in Brazil, affected by the waves of museological thinking since the 1970s. At the same time, it sets its focus on art/education movements, above all to examine their impact on the actions and theories about museum education and mediation in art museums. Looking back at my journey as a museum educator, I can see how these waves affected my practice influenced by reflections gathered both academically and through the literature available. This text presented in a sort of biographical narrative is therefore filled with my experiences over a period of around 40 years.

The starting point of my analysis goes back to the Round Table organised by UNESCO in Santiago de Chile in 1972. Hugues de Varine (2012, p. 96), one of the mentors of the meeting, believed that what had been for two centuries the museum's vocation - collecting and conserving - had to evolve. Two main

ideas circulated: that of the total or integral museum, considering all the society's problems, and of the museum as action, i.e. as a dynamic instrument for social change.

Brulon (2020, p.17) states that the most immediate echoes of the Round Table in Santiago held in the special context of Latin American dictatorships, led to new museological experiences emphasizing education and communication, together with an unprecedented decolonial turn in museology as result of at least these two distinct and parallel movements. While in France, from the early 1970s onwards, ecomuseums were being developed - in which the social groups were the actors of their own musealisation - other innovative experiences of "subaltern museology"<sup>1</sup> were being presented in the former colonies: these were popularly based and aimed at communities on the margins of official heritage regimes, with the aim of breaking at local level with the hegemonic European museum model.

Personally, I was affected by the recommendations of the Round Table in Santiago when I set up the Department of Museum Education Action at the *Museu Lasar Segall*<sup>1</sup> (Lasar Segall Museum), which was part of the Museology Department. We worked in an interdisciplinary way, immersed in the discussions brought up by the former students of the specialisation course in Museology coordinated by Waldisia Rússio<sup>3</sup>. The museum, which at the time was run by Maurício Segall, had a board of directors and comprised a general staff meeting in its organisation chart, which allowed us to reflect on the total institution which made the working environment extremely educational. That's how, in 1987, we applied for an award at the 1st International Museum Triennial<sup>4</sup>, and received the "Total Museum" Award.

The scenario that began to take shape in the 1980s is in line with Paulo Freire's ideas, which had already been widely disseminated and used in the 1960s, before the military coup and after the period of re-democratisation, when they became a reference in formal education and were also adopted by socio-museology, both in the creation of community museums and ecomuseums.

Brayner establishes a relationship between the ways of thinking of both

Waldisia Rússio and Paulo Freire. She stated that Rússio discussed the role of the museologist as a social worker, whose conscience would be able to build critical, complex and reflective thinking leading to the point of assuming a transformative social role. For Freire, change and stability were the result of action, that of man's work on the world; these two contradictory categories could not happen independently from the human world nor from the historical-social world in process. It is therefore important for the social worker who opts for change to reflect on the social structure in general, at the same time both changeable and stable (Brayner, 2022, p. 34).

In the Brazilian artistic environment from the 1950s to the mid-1980s, Lowenfeld's Free Creative Expression, and Herbert Read's, Education through Art ideas were widely disseminated and adopted in formal education and in art museums. Many of the workshops set up by educators and artists aimed to free the expressiveness of children, young people and even adults who could break free from the constraints of the technical education system.

In the 1950s, the artist Ivan Serpa set up the Art School of the *Museu de Arte Moderna* (Museum of Modern Art) in Rio de Janeiro. According to Zink (2023),

1 A term coined by Mexican historian and museologist Luis Gerardo Morales Moreno.

2 The educational policy and *modus operandi* of the Lasar Sagall Museum's educational work, after its incorporation into IPHAN, can be better analysed in my master's dissertation *Discussion for a proposal for the educational policy of the Lasar Segall Museum's Educational-Cultural Action Division* (1991).

3 In our department, there were three former students of the Specialisation Course in Museology at the São Paulo School of Sociology and Politics, held between 1978 and 1980, under the coordination of museologist Waldisa Rússio Camargo Guarnieri: Marcelo Mattos Araújo, Maria Pierina Camargo and Rosa Esteves.

4 Event organised by ICOM Brazil in Rio de Janeiro in 1987.

Ivan Serpa's work with his students was like his artistic work, praising in the same way "loving". From 1973 onwards, under the coordination of Paulo Portella Filho, the *Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo* (Pinacothèque of the State of São Paulo) set up drawing workshops in addition to visits to exhibitions. Calling himself an artist-educator, he assumed that in order to teach art, whether at school or in the museum, the educator would have to go through the paths of doubt, uncertainty and decision-making all typical of the creative process<sup>5</sup>.

From the 1980s onwards, schools that worked within the paradigm of free expression began to structure art teaching within the paradigms of the post-modernity constructivist school which considered the child's interaction with the social and historical production of art as their source of creation and learning (Iavelberg, 2017).

Regarding the educational processes in art museums, there was a growing concern about the learning content surrounding the image. Professor Ana Mae Barbosa brought some scholars of aesthetic appreciation theories (Ott, 1989; Parsons, 1992) to develop courses at the *Museu de Arte Contemporânea* (Museum of Contemporary Art) - USP, from which I learnt about methodologies of approach that I had already adopted intuitively in my mediation work with visitors in the exhibition.

But it was after meeting the art historian, educator, and essayist Amelia

Arenas, who was coordinating the Education Department at the MoMA<sup>6</sup> that I learnt about Abigail Housen's research (1983). Housen had been invited by Philip Yenawine<sup>7</sup> to carry out research on the effectiveness of the educational programmes at the MoMA. Years of field research led to refining the strategy known as Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), which instead of getting visitors to listen to one-way speeches, started by asking basic questions, listening, paraphrasing comments, and linking ideas related to what they saw (Yenawine, 2020). Among the various actions to spread the mediation strategies in the MOMA, I took part in 1993 in a workshop for Latin American educators, coordinated by Amelia Arenas, where we critically analysed wall texts and leaflets from various exhibitions in order to adapt them to a more accessible language.

In 1996, the Lasar Segall Museum invited Amelia Arenas to organise a course<sup>8</sup>, which was attended by museum professionals from various parts of Brazil. The starting point was Abigail Housen's research presented in her doctoral thesis, whose approach was based on investigating how a person faced with works of art elaborates meanings to understand them, what their ideas are and the questions they ask themselves moment by moment building thus their aesthetic experience throughout their lives (Grinspum, 2014).

5 Testimony given to the author by telephone on 1 September 2023.

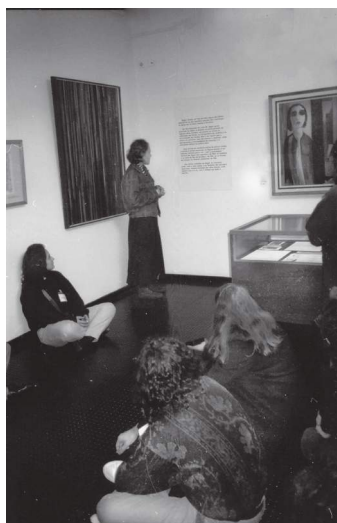
6 Museum of Modern Art in New York.

7 Director of Education at MoMa from 1983 to 1993.

8 The course was called Education and Evaluation Methods in Art Museums.



The backdrop for the course was the exhibition *Construction and poetics of a work*<sup>9</sup>, made up of 130 works by Lasar Segall, displayed chronologically and going through all his phases. The participants started by learning about the stages of aesthetic understanding<sup>10</sup>; they then analysed the exhibition texts and, in groups, proposed new formulations that were sent to the museology team. Some of their criteria were taken in consideration, like the fact that a text should not estimate that a reader is above the third stage<sup>11</sup> or that the works referred to should be very close to it.



@archive Museu Lasar Segall-IBRAM  
Photos from Amelia Arenas' course

- 9 This exhibition, inaugurated in 1995, was the result of two years' work by the Museology Department team, and the final drafting of the wall texts was the responsibility of the researcher Vera d'Horta.
- 10 The stages of aesthetic understanding proposed in Housen's research can be found in her doctoral thesis and in the article *The observer's gaze: research, theory and practice* (2011).
- 11 In Housen's research, she found that the average visitor who reads wall texts is in the third stage of development.

## THE SCHOOL IS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

As teachers began to teach art content, museums developed an important training space for basic education. At the Lasar Segall Museum, we organised monthly training meetings. As well as visiting the exhibition, the teachers received the support material and had to make proposals, in groups, for their hypothetical students. At the end, each teacher took part in an art-making activity. This was all because we were based on research premises that indicated the more students were prepared beforehand, the better their learning conditions would be during the visit (Falk & Dierking, 1992).

Based on the hypothesis that the school is of fundamental importance in the formation of audiences, I dedicated my doctoral research to investigating in 1999 the coexistence and museum-going habits of the families of students who visited the Lasar Segall Museum.

As a result, it became clear the little habit of visitation and the little value that families attributed to the museum as a space for leisure and learning for themselves and did not feel responsible for providing the frequency of their children to museums.

One of the highlights of the research carried out was the results obtained by the school with which we had an ongoing project; in other words, the same class made multiple visits to the museum, interspersed with our trips to the school. A similar project was carried

out in 2016 under my coordination<sup>12</sup> by the Education team at the Moreira Salles Institute (*Instituto Moreira Salles - IMS*) and at the André Urani Municipal School in Rio de Janeiro. The results of the evaluation showed that the IMS became a familiar place to everyone, there was a strong desire to return, there was learning about the formation of the photographic image and, finally, despite a lot of resistance, the students ended up really enjoying being part of the project (Grinspum, 2022).

## 21ST CENTURY MUSEUMS IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Monica Hoff Gonçalves (2014, p. 19) points out that in the early 2000s contemporary art experienced a *boom* in new practices and theories, which began to operate and nominally include educational experiences, contexts, formats, and methods, generating what she calls an educational turn in contemporary artistic and curatorial production. The turn presupposes a “dismantling” in the structures of art institutions, especially in the hierarchical curatorial spheres and in their experimental educational practices generated by artists who have taken on a new role in the educational sphere. She points to the Mercosul Biennial as the Brazilian institution that managed to establish a change from its 6th edition, under the educational curatorship of the artist Luis Camnitzer, who in addition to implementing a permanent educational

12 I was Education Coordinator at the Moreira Salles Institute at the venues of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Poços de Caldas - from 2016 to 2019.

programme, incorporated a latent 'state of education' into the institution, which the presence of educational curators in the following editions who were as important as the general curators confirmed. (Gonçalves: 2014, p.174)

At the same time in Europe, the 12th edition in 2007 of the Documenta in Kassel promoted a similar turn. Ulrich Schötker and Carmen Morch conceived the Documenta educational programme as a self-reflexive practice, which opposed the most prevalent models of mediation practice, such as the affirmative discourse - which fulfils the function of communicating the museum's mission according to the standards of classical museology - and the reproductive discourse, which has the function of educating the public of tomorrow and finding ways to introduce them to art (Morch, 2016). The discourses they adopted were deconstructive and transformative. The first aims to debate with their audiences that museums and exhibition spaces function as mechanisms that produce distinction/exclusion and construct a truth. The second has the task of expanding the exhibition institution and constituting it politically as an agent of social change.

In this proposition there is a clear association with the thoughts of Paulo Freire, Waldísia Russio, added to the doing/thinking of Hélio Oiticica, who assumes the artistic experience

as a certain transmission, as "the emergence of a spark that ignites and passes through us, based on a previous history, that of our common past. This circuit of transmission dematerialises the object, while 'de-essentialising' the identity positions at play with it, transforming me and the world, with the other " (Rivera, 2017).

The educators' voices who develop transformative projects can always be cut down by directors who disagree with them. As Maurício Segall used to say, "museum education only happens if there is a political will on the management's side". That's why it's important for institutions to make structural changes based on new policies, as is the case at the Moreira Salles Institute<sup>13</sup>.

The museum educator is also a social worker. The pedagogical space is, as Paulo Freire (1996) says, a text to be constantly read, interpreted, written and rewritten. In this sense, the more solidarity there is between the educator and the students in the "handling" of this space, the more possibilities the school has for democratic learning, and I would add here in the museum. Freire also said that educators must show to the learners the ability to analyse, compare, evaluate, decide, choose and break away. Teaching requires understanding that education is a form of intervention in the world.

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13 Since 2020, when announcing its new vacancies, IMS has prioritised black, indigenous and LGBTQI+ people, and there is already a much greater diversity in the staff, as well as having recently appointed the Education coordinator, a black woman, as one of the directors.



## Acknowledgments

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# On education, museums and Museology: specificities and reciprocities from three generations of educators

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## INTRODUCTION

Written by six hands, this text brings together reflections on the relationship between education, museums and museology based on our trajectories as museologists, educators and researchers in a field that has been referred to, especially in the last decade, as “Museal Education”<sup>1</sup>.

We will reflect on how theories and methodologies such as educational

action in museums, scientific dissemination, museum education, art education, heritage education and museum pedagogy, among others, shape the historicity of museum education. Our writing will be constructed through situated knowledge (Haraway, 1995), since we are part of different moments in the field, as well as experiencing the potentialities and challenges of the present. These are three authorial speeches, three generations who have

1 NT: The term “Museal Education” names the National Policy of Museal Education of the Brazilian Institute of Museums. In this way, we use “Museum Education” for educational practices in museums, in a broad sense, and “Museal Education” for the field of Brazilian public policies but highlighting that the latter term has been many times affirmed as the only legitimate field within the debate, position that the authors contrast based on the diversity of perspectives of education in museums.

in common a vocation for the museum field and three perspectives that meet and problematise different issues, from different experiences and times with specific challenges, but focused on the present.

The text is therefore structured in three parts: the first part brings the experience of the first author in museum education since the late 1970s, which allowed her to follow different moments in the theoretical debate and its practical developments: at first on the 'front line' of educational action and then as a lecturer, contributing for more than three decades to the training of new generations in the field of museum communication.

This is followed by the experiences of the second author, who entered the field in the years 2000 through heritage education projects in the field of archaeology. Almost a decade ago, the author moved into teaching, also working on extension and cultural projects that have reciprocities with an intercultural museological pedagogy.

Finally, the experience of the third author, who has been part of educational teams since graduating a decade ago, is here described. These experiences have taken place in different institutions and parts of the country, also involving teaching and the completion of a doctorate, the subject of which was the examination of decolonial and intersectional feminisms in Brazilian museum education.

We thus sought to explain how different generations of educators in the Brazilian museum field have experienced specific and reciprocal views on the subject of museum education.

## EXPERIMENTS IN MUSEUM EDUCATION ROUTES

**Cristina Bruno**

My inclusion in this text, which brings together representatives of three generations, seeks to leverage professional memories and academic paths showing the constitutive and referential part of museum education.

In the first section, it is essential on the one hand to clarify that my outlook is moulded by my training in Museology at the *Fundação Escola de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo* – FESPSP (São Paulo School of Sociology and Politics), where Waldisa Rússio Camargo Guarnieri's thinking (Bruno, 2010) represented the fundamental foundation; in this sense, the social function of museums was always placed as the structuring basis and, from my point of view, this function was (and still is) to be considered as a synonym of museum education. On the other hand, the professional need and commitment to draw up museological programmes for the structuring of a new museum at the *Instituto de Pré-História da Universidade de São Paulo* – IPH/USP (Prehistory Institute of the University of São Paulo) led me to experience the day-to-day confrontation and coexistence with different audiences, from the educational action applied in mediations at exhibitions, workshops, seminars, visits to archaeological sites, among other possibilities experienced daily. During the first ten years which structured my professional career, I also looked for conceptual and methodological inspiration to help me find the specificities of museum education, focused on archaeology and prehistory,



1. Educational activity at the Prehistory Institute of the University of São Paulo (IPH-USP).

Source: IPH-USP

since it was a very fertile period for the emergence and affirmation of the principles of art education, education for science and heritage education, applied to museums, but which were far removed from the educational potential we were experiencing. This period also saw the start of another very strong vector in this context, the possibility of receiving university students to carry out professional internships based on museum activities, particularly in educational projects. It's worth noting that this vocation for professional training became a long-standing tradition and even today the *Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia da Universidade de São Paulo* – MAE/USP (Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology of the University of São Paulo), which is heir to IPH/USP, still has a strong presence in this field.

This period of strong experimental expression also saw two very important reinforcements: (1) the participation in the “Workshop Museum and Education”, for Latin American professionals, organised by the Regional Project for Cultural Heritage and Development / UNDP/UNESCO, held in 1982 in Quito, Ecuador, when it was possible to

dialogue with colleagues from different countries and meet with teachers committed to the social perspective of museums, in a framework about the educational potential of museum activities; (2) organising and participating in the course “Communication Process in Museums”, given by John Reeve and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, held in 1987 at the *Museu de Pré-História Paulo Duarte*/IPH/USP (Paulo Duarte Museum of Prehistory) and the *Museu Lasar Segall*/MinC (Lasar Segall Museum), with theoretical and practical approaches to Heritage Education, according to the English Heritage Education matrix.

This first segment, which is only sketched here, was fundamental in developing and strengthening my convictions about the insertion of educational action in museums at the heart of the theoretical principles and methodological gears of museology as a field of knowledge. Throughout this period, and even up to the present day, we can see major changes in the concepts and practices of what we mean in terms of professionalisation by education in museums. We have seen the creation of specialized companies for these actions, the low number of

public tenders for educators and the lack of a structured career in the institutions, but in particular, we have sadly identified that the role of the educator in the institutions is rarely valued in terms of museum projects, management and institutional planning.

The second vector is my work as a teacher organising courses and carrying out academic work throughout my professional career. The daily body-to-body experience of previous years in educational activities was fundamental to the development of some of the principles that have guided this trajectory over the last twenty years. Just as an example, I would like to point out the optional undergraduate course I've been teaching at USP since 1994, entitled "Museology: Communication / Education". Teaching activities have been systematic and constant in the organisation of postgraduate courses and the supervision of master and doctoral degrees and, in these frameworks, the perspective of inserting educational action in museums and the educational vocation of these institutions are recurring themes.

Since then, I have coined some ideas that accompany my perception that education is essential and structuring for museological actions, but it is also part of a gear when applied to museums and institutions that deal with the construction of heritage. I'm referring more particularly to the proposals about the "museological operating chain" and the "museological pedagogy", which are the two sides of the same theoretical-methodological approaches. In these proposals, there is a clear search for collective paths and professional sharing

for museological actions in dialogue with external agents and representatives of communities, emphasising the presence of the "other", which is fundamental to the success of any museological action.

Based on these approaches and in the search for actions enabling collective professional practice, or collective working gears in museums, I have problematised the notion and practice of "curatorship". On the one hand, due to the trivialisation of the term itself and, on the other, to the strong colonising effect that this practice has imposed on us, an arrogant hierarchy between professionals who work in museums arose. I have therefore preferred to refer to "museological-curatorial" actions.

In all these perspectives, which have only been outlined here, educational action in museums is an integral part of the operational chain, museological pedagogy and museological-curatorial actions. From this perspective, museum education could be recognised as the peculiar philosophy of museums and the great power of these institutions at the heart of public policies.

## **DIALOGUES BETWEEN HERITAGE, MUSEUMS AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION**

**Camila Moraes**

My understanding of the diversity of possible routes in the field of museum education has been built up since 2001 when, as a history undergraduate, I was an "educational intern" at the MAE/ USP's "Herbert Baldus - humanist scientist" short-term exhibition, under the supervision of Judith Mader Elazari.

2. Exhibition mediation as part of the museological planning of the Museum of the Alto Sertão of Bahia (2011) Source: Zanettini Archaeology. Author: Zanettini Archaeology.



From this experience, I would highlight the fact that I received effective training for my work, involving the discussion of texts in the field and contact with pedagogical resources, such as the thematic guides for the long-term exhibition “Forms of Humanity” and the museum’s educational kits. It was important to realise the role of the training offered to primary school teachers, since the classes attended by the educational team at the exhibition were brought by teachers who had necessarily had a training experience at the museum itself. As my internship was in the field of history degrees, my contact with the educational programme was basically in these school contexts.

From 2003 onwards, I started working in heritage education for an archaeological company involved in the ambiental licensing of various projects, totalling dozens of projects (Moraes Wichers, 2014). From my experience at a university museum, I moved on to a very different, and certainly challenging, context: designing, developing and evaluating educational processes in the

context of implementing works that had a variety of impacts on the territories.

The obligation to carry out heritage education programmes in processes of this nature came about with the Ordinance 230/2002<sup>2</sup>. If on the one hand this legal instrument has enabled an unprecedented expansion of educational projects involving archaeological heritage - we’re talking about 25,000 projects carried out since 2003 to date, according to data from the *Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* – IPHAN (National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute) - on the other hand, it has led to a trivialisation of actions, categorised *a priori* as “Heritage Education”, but which involve everything from one-off lectures to integrated programmes with different pedagogical perspectives. In a previous text, I categorised the experiences in which I worked into: 1. Dissemination and Awareness Raising; 2. Integrated Educational Action and 3. Musealisation of Archaeology (Moraes Wichers, 2014).

This multifaceted scenario of education intertwined with archaeological studies is little known in the museological field,

2 Revoked by Normative Instruction 01/2015. It is currently Ordinance No. 137 of 28 April 2016, which establishes guidelines for Heritage Education within IPHAN.

and on several occasions, I've seen this distancing at museum and museology events. The fact that we are talking about projects that are often detached from museum institutions is one of the components of this distancing, but not the only one. The configuration of archaeological references as exiled memories within Brazilian social thought was already highlighted some time ago by Bruno (1995).

On the other hand, in the field of archaeology, it is also common to be unaware of the complexity of the field of education in museology. There is no understanding that heritage education is one of the components of this field, and not the only perspective. Professionals working in heritage education within the scope of these archaeology projects often restrict themselves to the recurring citation of the "guide" published by Horta, Grunberg and Monteiro (1999) or, more recently, the book published by IPHAN (2014), but without reflecting on the transformations in the field.

It is possible that the circumscription of heritage education projects (which, I insist, are given this name, but involve practices other than education related to museums and cultural heritage) to IPHAN, as the agent that provides opportunities and analyses these actions, and the fact that the National Museum Education Policy is developed by the *Instituto Brasileiro de Museus* – IBRAM (Brazilian Institute of Museums), creates a gap between these practices.

After almost a decade as a lecturer in a bachelor's degree programme in museology, I have seen how much this gap is still felt. This current position has shifted my work towards teaching, research and university extension. The notion of museological pedagogy (Bruno, 2006), which has inspired me since my previous experiences, has allowed me to combine perspectives from critical interculturality (Walsh, 2009) and decolonial and intersectional feminisms (Passos dos Santos; Moraes Wichers, 2021). These conjunctions go hand in hand with an understanding of museum education as a philosophy that is taking a central place in public policies in the field of museums, heritage and memory. This current context has been crossed by working and learning with the "Network of People Educators in Goiás" (REM-Goiás)<sup>3</sup> (Sá; Moraes Wichers, 2016), by inter-epistemic dialogue with the Iny Karajá people (Moraes Wichers et al, 2020) and by teaching, both in curricular subjects and in academic guidance. The latter establishes the bridge between me and the next author of this text.

## AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF THE LAST TEN YEARS IN MUSEUM EDUCATION: A MIGRANT FROM GOIÁS

**Kamylla Passos**

I've been following museum education for the last 10 years, since I graduated

3 The network was called "Rede de Educadores em Museus de Goiás" (Goiás Museum Educators Network) until 2021 when, during the Assembly held at the XII Seminar, it was decided to change the name to "Rede de Pessoas Educadoras em Museus de Goiás" (Network of People Educators in Goiás) keeping the acronym REM-Goiás. This change was aimed at broadening the reception of people with different experiences and gender identities.





3. First educational performance at the 'Archipelago' exhibition at CCU-FG in 2013, together with Rayane Buenas. Source: personal collection of Karlla Kamylla Passos. Author of photo unknown.

in 2013. I got an opportunity at the *Centro Cultural da Universidade Federal de Goiás* – CCUFG (Cultural Centre of the Federal University of Goiás) in exchange for a grant of R\$400.00 from the university, which only came after I started working. My job was to welcome the public to the 'Video Art' and 'Archipelago' exhibitions. To do this, we had a chat with the curator and supposedly we were prepared for the job, myself, another museology student and a design student. There is a gap in training in the education practised in museums, especially in Goiás, as this experience illustrates. One often considers that ongoing undergraduate training is enough. The narrative of curatorship is not the same as that of education, in addition to other details that need to be noted, such as the flexibility of mediation for each group.

Then I got an opportunity at the 'Multiple Leminski' exhibition at the *Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Goiás* - MAC-GO (Goiás Museum of Contemporary Art). I took over - I can't say whether as a mediator, monitor or whatever - on the opening day of the exhibition, and my first job was to organise the public register. I joined students from Fashion Design, Literature and Social Sciences. That's when I put down roots

in education. We had a coordinator, Aluane de Sá, who taught us much thanks to her experience. At the end of every shift, we had to write a report and then exchange our reflections at meetings. Aluane, who has a degree in Visual Arts and Museology, taught me how to be an activist in the field, how to fight for better working conditions (in this experience we also earned R\$400.00 even with a delay). Museum educators in Goiânia are basically made up of trainees, and this is an important issue for our generational and regional reflection; when I go to the Rio-São Paulo regions, I see well established educators, like those at the *Instituto Butantã* (Butantan Institute). Even if they have training problems, have too many duties to do and too low salaries, they are in a structure.

Parallel to the contact with practice, theory took place during my undergraduate degree in Museology (UFG), in the subject 'Heritage Communication I - Educational and Cultural Action', taught by the teacher-educator - it sounds redundant, but believe me, these aren't always practices that go hand in hand - Camila Moraes Wichers. This was another decisive experience for me to pursue Education from the perspective of Museology.

I studied science communication during my master's degree, and that's why I got closer to biological, health and earth science museums, which aren't so common in Goiás. And I began to follow the discussions on Museum Education in Rio de Janeiro, through the meetings of the Network of Educators in Museums and Cultural Centres of Rio de Janeiro (REM-RJ) and the Museum Education Research Group (GPEM), where I realised what I now understand to be an erasure of Museology in Museum Education which seems to completely forget the other regions of Brazil, as the Rio-São Paulo region controls and leads the narrative.

This outsider's view generated reflections that can be found in the text by Passos dos Santos and Moraes Wichers (2021) and in the thesis by Passos dos Santos (2023).

In 2023 among one of the results of the Final Report (IBRAM, 2023) of the National Survey of Educational Practices in Brazilian Museums (PEMBrasil), one sees that among the three most cited authors, two are from Rio de Janeiro, but with significant work in São Paulo: Ana Mae Barbosa<sup>4</sup> and Martha Marandino. Moreover, according to this same report, three of the main approaches to education practised in museums are based on the Rio-São Paulo region: Heritage Education, Museal Education and the Triangular Approach. There is even a mismatch between the references and the respective approaches.

Many other reflections and in-depth studies on museum education are possible, but I'll end by mentioning

educators from other regions, who are often erased from the official narrative, but who are or have been in practice and defending museum education: Aires (Ceará), Carolina de Oliveira (Tocantins), Mona Nascimento (Bahia), Paola Maués (Pará), Moisés de Moraes (Acre), among others. As well as the museologist and educator Maria Célia Santos (BA).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Strong discussions can be seen nowadays in Brazil in the field of museum education. Those who have been involved in these debates for more than three decades have gone through ruptures, defending theoretical and methodological autonomy and seeking professional valorisation and recognition. This is an important movement that brings together young professionals who work in museums and public policy organisations in this field.

In this text, we have tried to bring together three perspectives full of reflections and practical experiences moulded by different generations. The paths taken are diverse, showing that museum education in Brazil is multiple, full of dynamism and challenging. It is heir to different perspectives and leads to new visions. Museum education also dialogues with regional and institutional vicissitudes. In common, we highlight education as a constitutive and referential part of Museology, as an inspiring power at the heart of public policies promoting the social function of museums, as advocated by Waldisa Rússio Camargo Guarnieri.

4 Ana Mae Barbosa was born in Rio de Janeiro, where she spent her early years, but she also lived in Recife and Alagoas.

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# Museu Paulista, Museu de Zoologia, Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia and Museu de Arte Contemporânea: Four Museum Educators' Views

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## A LITTLE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SÃO PAULO - USP

The history of universities in Brazil having only emerged at the beginning of the 20th century is rather recent when compared to universities in Europe.

The University of São Paulo (Universidade de São Paulo) was created in 1934 with the aim of forming a group committed to the country's scientific and political growth and was one of the first to incorporate research into vocational education (Mendonça, 2000).

Article 2 of the founding decree set out its aims: a) to promote, through research, the progress of science; b) to transmit, through teaching, knowledge that enriches or develops the spirit, or is useful to life; c) to train specialists in all branches of culture, and technicians and professionals in all scientifically or artistically based professions; d) to carry out the social work of popularizing science, literature and the arts, through synthetic courses, conferences, lectures, radio broadcasts, scientific films, etc.

As one can see, the university from its earliest years stated that, in addition to teaching and research, it was committed

to society to disseminate the knowledge produced by the academic world.

As one of the oldest public university institutions, the *USP* has over the years assumed a prominent and recognised position in scientific and academic production. It also has a vast scientific and cultural heritage, which makes it a unique space and a privileged source for the discussions on the theme of inclusion of museums in its organisational and academic structure. Regarding this point, numerous publications commemorating its creation reflect not only on the role of museological institutions in fulfilling their mission to society, but also highlight the importance of their contributions to the intellectual training and scientific production in the most diverse areas of knowledge and university extension (Monica Junqueira Camargo, s/d).

The current statute of the *USP* published in 1988 mentions four museums (Museum of Contemporary Art - MAC, Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology - MAE, Paulista Museum - MP and Museum of Zoology - MZ), as well as specialised institutes and research support centres. These are budgetary units that enjoy academic autonomy and are linked to the university programmes and proposals based on the three axes of research, teaching and extension.

As such, the work of the university museums covers very different and broad topics. In addition to the countless tasks of caring for the collections they are responsible for, the museums participate in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, develop internship programmes, offer

cultural dissemination and extension courses, promote educational activities, including pupils and students from kindergarten to university. Finally, let us not forget mentioning research, exhibitions, and publications.

Taking this in mind, as the university museum professionals' - professors, specialists and technical-scientific team - activities are focused on material cultural studies and the scientific care of the collections, as well as teaching and extension activities, their work differs significantly from that of the professionals working in the other departments of the university.

## USP ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS

The University of São Paulo has a rich cultural heritage in collections and centres for scientific and cultural dissemination, which play an important role in the construction of knowledge, scientific research, teaching, and the university extension.

The Centre for Cultural Preservation (*CPC-USP*) of the University of São Paulo (*USP*) carried out a survey on the funds and collections of the University to identify and publicise this heritage scattered throughout the state of *São Paulo*. There are currently 45 collections or centres for scientific and cultural dissemination accessible to the public. The survey consisted in an inventory of the funds and collections kept under the supervision of different units and organisations, to identify the various manifestations of production and preservation of these sets of documents.

The richness and complexity of the cultural heritage within the university life is evident. Aspects of management and governance need to accompany the multiple contexts related to the presence of collections, be it in departments, museum units or statutory museums.

Recognising the great diversity and specificities, both in terms of collections and administrative links, and assuming the impossibility of dealing in depth with this whole universe, we will here only present the statutory museums where the museum educators and authors of this text work.

## PAULISTA MUSEUM

The Paulista Museum, better known as the *Ipiranga* Museum, was the first museum created in the state of São Paulo and its history precedes that of the University of São Paulo itself. Its building was built as a monument to mark the place where the independence of Brazil was proclaimed and to celebrate Pedro I's memory, as person who freed the country from Portugal. It was originally planned as a natural history museum with collections of zoology, botany, archaeology, as well as among others, objects and "historical paintings".

Over the years, its collections were split and transferred to other institutions and the vocation of the museum as a history museum was gradually emphasized.

Between 1989 and 1994 under the direction of Ulpiano Toledo Bezerra de Meneses, major changes affected the institution. Its institutional mission was redefined, consolidating its

profile as a history museum, with an emphasis on the history of material culture, especially that of São Paulo between 1850 and 1950. Meneses not only reframed the lines of research and the profile of the collection, but he also established new benchmarks for the institutional management, with changed the configuration of its functional organisation chart.

In the Masterplan, Meneses proposed his definition of a museum which is still relevant: "This is a museum, not any other scientific, cultural or educational organisation. Therefore, it should be characterised by the mandatory and permanent reference to a collection of material things, the development of curatorship responsibilities, which include a whole set of activities: the formation and permanent expansion of its collections, their physical conservation, their study, and documentation, as well as their socialisation thanks to the fact that the collections are made available and that they generate and complete knowledge. The scientific, cultural and educational tasks are thus mutually supportive."

This definition had an impact on the way technicians and specialists began to work in the institution, especially considering this was a university museum. It shows that to fulfil their core activities both the museum and the university need to organize their various fields of activity, knowledge, and different specialisations in an articulated and organic way. To be successfully completed, its actions must be articulated and organised in a shared manner to see the curatorial cycle completed.

Regarding the educational area and considering when this definition was proposed, it breaks with the prevailing view about the role of the educator in many other institutions. Educational activities which were often seen only as an offshoot of what was mistakenly considered to be the primary function of a museum, i.e. the preservation of the collections, are now understood in terms of their specificities and potential, gaining relevance in the institutional life. Even if Meneses considered at that time the term “socialisation” as one of his curatorial duties, as a director he committed his museum to bring the public closer to the very diverse universe of museum practices and indicated education as one of the special “tasks” of the museum.

This vision had an impact on the creation of the Educational Activities Service (SAE). Even it was only established in 2001, this area was allocated to the Collections and Curatorship Division, which also housed services related to the collections, conservation and museography and the professors at the university museum. Including the education department in the curatorial department reflects the conceptual choices made in the process of redefining the Museu Paulista.

At the time of its definition, the SAE established lines of action aiming at broadening the institutional understanding of how to include its work in the curatorial cycle: *Production of Pedagogical and Mediation Support Materials; Audience Research; Participation in the conception of exhibitions; and Development of Mediation Strategies*. When analysing this choice, we realise

that it contributes to the curatorial cycle, especially when it comes to the planning of exhibitions, as the process that is set in motion is highly complex and involves several areas. It requires articulation between the participants, organic practices and, above all, the guarantee of solidarity, especially at times when various positions need to be combined to ensure a result of excellence for the whole institution.

## USP ZOOLOGY MUSEUM

The Zoology Museum was originally the Zoology Section of the *Museu Paulista*, which consisted in the enlarged zoological collections from the Sertório collection and the collections of the Geological and Geographical Commission of the State of *São Paulo*. In 1939, this section was transferred as the Zoology Department of what was at that time the State Secretariat for Agriculture, Commerce and Tourism. It then moved to its own building in 1941, where it is still today. In 1969, the Museum was incorporated into the University of São Paulo and renamed the Zoology Museum.

The Cultural Dissemination Division of the MZUSP was set up in 1997 and its educator was appointed in 1998 to establish programmes and activities for the museum’s internal and external public. Over the last 25 years, the Educational Activities Section has been improving its educational programmes with diversified activities aimed at promoting scientific education for citizens. Among the educational programmes offered to the public one briefly finds: a) Visits to the exhibitions,

which present the exhibitions and provide moments of reflection on the loss and conservation of biodiversity; b) Behind-the-scenes visits, which discuss the importance of collections for the conservation of biodiversity; c) Topics in Zoology offering lectures to the public attending the MZ; d) Educational materials on loan to improve the quality of science and biology teaching, helping students in their university biology course and discussing conservation and biodiversity issues; e) Animal Interaction, which seeks to enrich the visitor's experience with diversified activities with zoological themes and f) Holidays at the Museum, which aims to provide a leisure and learning environment for visitors.

We are presently experiencing a great expansion and diversification of visitors, rising to more than 210,000 last year. Educational activities to share the knowledge produced at MZUSP are fundamental to consolidate the curatorial process that takes place with the collection. The participation of the Educational Activities Section in all the curatorial activities is essential as this is the main area of contact with the visitors.

## MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY

The Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology was created in 1989 as a result of the fusion of the Institute of Prehistory and the former Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, the Plínio Ayrosa collection, the Anthropology Department of the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences and the archaeological and ethnographic collections of the

Museu Paulista. The main objective was to bring together the archaeological and ethnographic collections that belonged to the University into a single institution.

Over its three decades of existence, the MAE/USP has strengthened its position as a university museological institution, expanding its activities in the areas of research, teaching, and popularisation. Among its main institutional objectives one finds interdisciplinary research, with a wide recognition on the national and international scenes, undergraduate teaching, by offering a wide range of optional subjects, and postgraduate teaching, with the Postgraduate Programmes in Archaeology and the Inter-University Postgraduate Programme in Museology, and the full exercise of museological-curatorial procedures in the areas of safeguarding and communication.

The understanding of curatorial processes, the basis for the treatment of collections, indicates the complete cycle of technical and scientific actions necessary for the interpretation, conservation, and promotion of institutional collections. (Bylaws, 2011)

As such, the museum education area, institutionally known as Heritage Education, is an integral part of the curatorial process. It works to communicate archaeological and ethnological knowledge to promote and value cultural diversity and seeking to expand its activities through collaboration with various social segments.

The MAE's Education Department has a solid base of work built up since the pioneering experiments in museum



education in the country carried out since 1978 by the Institute of Prehistory of the USP and since 1981 by the former USP Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. With the merger in 1989, the articulation of educationalists and educators enabled the new MAE to strengthen and expand the field. The theoretical and methodological bases have always respected the centrality of material culture in the development of pedagogical proposals.

The current structure of the museum's educational activities takes the form of programmes that over the course of more than three decades have been aligned with contemporary demands, especially those of inclusion and accessibility. There are five programmes that articulate the diversity of audiences and different educational strategies, namely: the Mediation Programme, the Training Programme, the Pedagogical Resources Programme, Accessibility Programme and the Extramural Programme.

The importance of articulating museum education throughout the curatorial cycle lies in building a solid foundation that enables feedback between the institution and the public. It creates a communication channel through which the production of knowledge about the areas of research - in the case of *MAE/USP*, archaeology, ethnology and museology - circulates; it also runs through the technical knowledge that is essential for carrying out curatorial practices, both in the areas of safeguarding and communication; it is also where the perspectives and feedback from the public, our main interlocutors, circulate.

It is the team responsible for the educational practices in museums who has the most complete mapping of this broad flow of exchanges and who know best, mainly through experience, the power, and the possible flaws of communication strategies. From this educational perspective, it is both important to see how the museum prepares to share its productions with the public and how the institution adapts to review its practices based on the feedback from the society with which it is in dialogue.

To make these choices become a reality, it is essential to have a team of educators with specific training in the museum field and who can build a solid and valued professional career. In the case of *MAE-USP*, although there has been a significant reduction in the number of staff, the experience and commitment of the professionals has made it possible to carry out quality and innovative work. However, we are constantly on the alert, because to continue in this way, an institutional pact is needed.

## USP MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (MAC USP)

*MAC USP* was founded in 1963 following the donation to USP of the private collections of the businessman and patron Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho and his wife D. Yolanda Penteado, the collections of the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art (*MAM SP*) and the São Paulo Biennial Awards. Since 2012 it has been housed in one single building, designed in the 1950s by the important architect of the country's modern art period Oscar Niemeyer.

In 1985, the Art Education Department of the Cultural Broadcasting Division one of the benchmarks in the history of art education in the country, with its specialised technical team. However, in previous decades educational activities had already been carried out by professionals from other backgrounds in the Cultural Promotion Division, during which guided tours, workshops with artists and academic events were held. It is worth mentioning that didactic exhibitions have taken place since 1963.

At the end of the 1980s, under the management of Professor Ana Mae Barbosa, the creator of a contemporary proposal for teaching art in Brazilian primary schools, the Triangular Approach, the museum became a centre for disseminating teacher training.

A relevant and pioneering action, which began in 1989, was the service for the elderly, which became the Leisure with Art for the Third Age programme, which ran until 2016 and was later transformed into the cultural dissemination course *Encontros com Arte para +60* (Meeting with Art for the 60+). In the 1990s, the Museum, Education and Play programme (since 1995) and the Museum and Special Audiences programme (from 1991 to 2002) held exhibitions with works from the museum's collection, didactic resources, games, and accessible exhibits for visually impaired. Between 1991 and 1997, the Olharte Collection was published, with four volumes of art books for children and young people. Each edition featured an exhibition organised by the Education

Department, with original works from the museum. Of the many ongoing programmes, we would highlight *Interar-te - Families at the Museum* (since 2006), *Viva Arte! - Social Welfare and Health at the Museum* (since 2007) and *Art Stories for Children: Between Books and Artworks* (since 2012).

At present, various cultural dissemination courses are organised by the Dean of Culture and the University Extension for teachers and other educators, health, social education and social assistance professionals, the elderly, teenagers, and the public.

Today, the Educational Service has four educators responsible for planning, implementing, supervising, and evaluating educational activities for different audience profiles, as well as providing training in cultural mediation for undergraduate students, who receive scholarships from the university's annual social programme and assist the educators as assistants.

## FUTURE CHALLENGES

Considering the broad field of museum education in the context of university museums, we have tried in this text to reveal the main specificities regarding the way this area functions regarding research, teaching and popularisation and its developments in the curatorial cycle.

It is therefore necessary to strengthen the important role of museum educators, as they are the basis for structuring and developing both the educational actions and the other curatorial actions carried out in museum institutions.

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# Historical Characters

# Victor Stawiarski and the *Museu Nacional:* Museum Education in Brazil *Between 1940 and 1970*

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## MUSEU NACIONAL: A PIONEERING MUSEUM WITHIN THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

Founded in 1818 in the city of Rio de Janeiro by Don João VI, the *Museu Nacional* is the first and oldest museum in Brazil. Its creation is to be seen as one of the “first more organised initiatives for the dissemination of what is called modern science”, resulting from the transfer of the Portuguese Court to Brazil (MOREIRA, MASSARANI, 2002). It was initially housed in a building located in Campo de Santana and moved in 1892 to the São Cristóvão Palace, until 1889 the residence of the imperial family. Since the end of the 19th century, it is in the Quinta da Boa Vista, which for many decades has been one of the city’s most popular parks.

The Museu Nacional has been part of the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) since 1946. Its recent

history is marked by a world-wide tragedy. On 2 September 2018, a major fire damaged its exhibitions, as well as most of its laboratories and collections, significantly impacting its history.

Museum education is a theoretical-political-practical field which trajectory has been built over the last 200 years in Brazil. The *Museu Nacional* has been directly involved in two of its three main historical milestones (COSTA et al., 2020). The first milestone is the creation in the 19th century of Brazilian museums with an inherent educational dimension, the *Museu Nacional* being the inaugural experience in the country. The second refers to the recognition of the educational function of museums with the institutionalization of their educational processes through the creation of pedagogical departments, the *Seção de Assistência ao Ensino* (SAE), founded in 1927 by Edgar

Roquette-Pinto<sup>1</sup> at the *Museu Nacional* (MN), being the first one.

In accordance with the educational policies that existed in the 1920s in Brazil, the SAE started to dedicate itself to guiding schools in the setting up of school museums, promoting the preparation of collections and teachers' training. The MN auditorium was at the disposal for schools for their classes using the most modern means of the time, such as slide projectors and film projections.

The *Museu Nacional* has a long and close relationship with the network of schools, which started in the 19th century, but which received more attention from the end of the first decade of the 20th century. At that time, several sections of the MN produced mural panels that were sent to many educational establishments (SILY, 2012).

According to Bertha Lutz<sup>2</sup> (1922), in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> C. the Museum was "full of children" who "never stopped walking around" and even visited it beyond the context of school visits. Visits were especially popular on Sundays with the Museum receiving between 3,500 and 5,000 visitors. To quote Lutz at that time "the population of Rio is one and a half million and, on average, one in ten people come to the Museum at least once a year".

Also known as the *Museu de la Quinta*, the MN belongs to the social imaginary as a museum that is part of the population's childhood memories. Its visitors' memories are characterized by a fondness for family ties, feelings of happiness and amazement in front of the size and architecture of the palace and its collections as well as a deep sadness after the fire that destroyed a large part of its collections (COSTA et al., 2023).

Some professionals have indelibly marked the 96 years of the SAE's trajectory and contributed to the consolidation of museum education practices at the *Museu Nacional* and in Brazil. Victor Stawiarski (1903-1979) was one of the most important one. This chapter offers a brief historical overview of this museum educator's trajectory and his pioneering and avant-garde role between the 1940s and 1970s.

## VICTOR STAWIARSKI: EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAJECTORY

Victor Stawiarski was born in 1903 in the city of Orleans, Santa Catarina. He graduated as civil engineer in the Escola Politécnica da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ); in 1928, he took a master's degree in the Departamento

1 Edgar Roquette-Pinto (1884-1954), doctor, anthropologist, educator, science populariser and broadcasting forerunner in Brasil. Between 1926 and 1935 he served as director of the *Museu Nacional* and it was during his tenure that the Museum's educational function was institutionalized and strengthened.

2 Bertha Lutz (1894-1976), biologist, feminist, lawyer, and museum specialist. She worked at the *Museu Nacional* between 1919 and 1965. In 1932 she visited 58 museums in the USA to learn about the work done in their education departments. The report of her trip was only published in 2008. It is an important document regarding the history of museum education in Brasil. Lutz mentions, among others, didactic material, cultural democratization, school visits, outreach actions, activities for people with disabilities and small children, visitor research, and gender questions, museum architecture, propaganda and popularization.

de Biología of the Peabody College, in Tennessee, United States. He defended his dissertation “La influencia de la temperatura y la humedad relativa en el número de aves” (The influence of temperature and humidity on the number of birds) in August 1929, and received his MA title.

Returning to Brazil, Stawiarski started to teach in schools and developed a career as natural history teacher. He can be seen as having played a pioneering role implementing experiences on sexual education in the Brazilian school curriculum (FIGUEIRÓ, 1998; PEREIRA, 2014).

At the Colégio Batista where he had studied, the educator proposed to teach the evolution of the species and sex education and in 1930, he convinced the director of the institution to have sexuality courses included in the school curriculum.

But the teacher was confronted with difficulties regarding his work in the field of sex education. Accused of immoral behaviour in his classes, he was sued by the Colegio Batista, convicted, and dismissed in 1954 (FIORINI, 2016 apud BARROSO; BRUSCHINI, 1982). He had already been previously dismissed in the 1940s from the Bennett College after having lent to a student the book Wilhelm Stekel's book “The Education of Parents” (EDUCAÇÃO..., 1972).

His training and vision of education was strongly influenced by the United States where he had not only completed his master's degree, but also taken part in a study trip including visits to important museums, such as the Museum of Natural History in New York, the Field Museum (Chicago) and the Smithsonian Institution (Washington) (STAWIARSKI, 1944).

## VICTOR STAWIARSKI AND THE MUSEU NACIONAL

Stawiarski entered the *Museu Nacional* in 1943, after being transferred from the Institute of Education, where he taught natural sciences. The transfer to the MN was the result of a recommendation by Paschoal Lemme<sup>3</sup>, then head of the Education Sector. According to Lemme, Stawiarski would help to establish contacts between the Museum and the secondary school system. To achieve this, he came up with the idea of courses for teachers, which led to the creation of the *Museu Nacional Magazine* (LEMME, 1988).

The Museum was closed between 1941 and 1947 for refurbishment and redisplaying of the exhibitions. It was in this context that the *Revista del Museu Nacional* came to light, with five issues published between 1944 and 1945 bringing the Museum's message to those who could not visit it. The magazine was richly illustrated and

3 Paschoal Lemme (1904-1997) started teaching as a public-school teacher in the federal capital in 1924 and, in 1926, he joined the Brazilian Education Association. In 1929 he joined the staff of the Directorate of Public Instruction of the Federal District and remained there until 1935, contributing to the reforms led by Fernando de Azevedo, through the organization of the first school film library and the first educational cinematography in Brazil. He became director of the Educational Sector of the Museu Nacional in 1942, where he remained until 1947.



Image 1 - Victor Stawiarski enduring one of his classes at the Museu Nacional, around 1950. (Own collection)



contained texts on subjects related to the work carried out in all the areas of activity of the museum. The concern to contribute to the training of teachers was evident not only in the texts focused on scientific content, but also in the presence of articles which, in addition to reflecting on school teaching, included recommendations for teachers.

From 1945 onwards, the educational department offered students natural history classes by appointment, among which sex education classes stood out (SILVA, 1954).

The promotion and motivation which led to the classes on Sex Education in the MN was inspired by two examples of rooms dedicated to this subject in American museums after the success of the film "The Birth of a Baby" (1938). The inclusion of topics related to the anatomical, physiological, and embryological aspects of reproduction in the entrance exams for certain higher courses in Brazil brought students to attend the classes on this topic in the museum. Stawiarski also mentions that the foetal skeletons presented in the MN exhibition were the most popular attraction and that the

public's interest in "the phenomena of human reproduction" was greater than in any other subject. Furthermore, the attraction of the sex lectures encouraged visits to other rooms featuring among others, insects, crab spiders in their nurseries (SILVA, 1954).

The audiences of the sexual education activities in the MN were quite diverse and were composed of spontaneous visitors, fathers and mothers with their children, teenage mothers and daughters, groups of individual young people, teenagers with their teachers, as well as teachers who wanted to motivate students to deal with a topic that at that time was not discussed in teacher training (SILVA, 1954). The broad and diverse character of the course positioned it as unique in Latin America and with no comparison with other courses in regions of Europe and the United States. The initiative attracted a crowd of more than a thousand people in one Sunday and on one single day 222 pupils from 3 schools attended one of the classes (JEAN, 1956).

Activities for mothers were held in groups of 15 to 20 people on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Those aimed at

groups of individual visitors began with the public approaching the showcases with foetuses and being then invited to receive for approximately one hour more information on the “phenomenon of the baby that encompasses human ovula and the female anatomy” (SILVA, 1954).

The course for adolescents including eight classes with up to 150 youngsters were held in the afternoon from Monday to Friday for two and a half hours (BRAVO, 1955 (JEAN, 1956). It attracted confessional and non-confessional public and private schools from the city and from other states. Stawiarski advocated sex education for girls alongside that for boys, however boys had free access to the classes, while girls under 16 could only participate with parental permission (BRAVO, 1955).

The classes were held in a separate room, the door of which had a sign indicating that it was a space for sex education, accompanied by a sign saying, “If you are interested, come in...”. There were posters on the subject in the room with statements on the importance of sex education, photographs on the walls, articles from newspapers and magazines; and also, glass jars containing human foetuses aged of different months (BRAVO, 1955).

The course dealt with anatomical, physiological, psychological, and social problems, seeking to “link the subject with data from the natural sciences, biology and art” (JEAN, 1956). There was no class curriculum to follow, as according to Stawiarski “interesting questions would quickly arise from the

students” (BRAVO, 1955). Newspaper coverage indicates that topics discussed were among others homosexuality, prostitution, young girls’ virginity, premarital sex, and abortion.

The professor underwent attacks and was forced to stop his sex education activities from 1956 and throughout José Cândido de Carvalho’s direction of the MN (1955 to 1961). The suspension was denounced by the press (JEAN, 1956). As a result, Stawiarski asked to be removed as head of the Education Department, stating his sensitive disagreement with the fundamental concept of education adopted by his colleagues and what he himself understood as museum education. The course was resumed in 1962 (EDUCAÇÃO..., 1972), when the MN had a new director, Newton Dias dos Santos (1961-1963), and continued to be offered until its creator’s retirement in the 1970s. At the end of his career, Stawiarski was less criticised and invited to give more sex education courses (NASCIMENTO, 1968).

Victor Stawiarski opened many other work issues related to educational practice in the museum. His participation as Brazil’s representative in the UNESCO International Seminar on the Role of Education Museums, held in 1954 in Athens, proves his reputation in the international debates on this topic. This event, one of the milestones in the history of museum education, was one of a series of seminars on the educational role of museums organised by UNESCO. It followed the seminar held in New York (1952) and preceded the UNESCO Regional Seminar held in Rio de Janeiro in



Image 2: Victor Stawiarski (in the centre with a white shirt and a briefcase) during a visit to the Temple of Poseidon in the Sounion Cape in Greece on 19 September 1954, as part of the International Seminar on the Education Role of Museums (own collection)

1958. Both Stawiarski, as delegate, and the curator of the National Historical Museum Jenny Dreyfus<sup>4</sup>, as observer (TRIGUEIROS, 1958), ensured the first Brazilian participation and the only Latin American representation, until then, in the debates promoted by UNESCO on museum education.

In Greece, Stawiarski defended the thesis that the museum was a privileged space for the training of teachers and that the students of the faculties of philosophy, through academic internships, would find in this institution the perfect training ground to test what they had learned theoretically in the university classrooms.

In the following years, Stawiarski publicised in the press his position on the “usefulness of training guides”. Having already trained teams of volunteer guides among his students doing their internships at the *Museu Nacional*, called on more people to join his cause for the museum to “contribute helping in the people’s education “ (DESPERTEMOS..., 1956). Based on

the assumption that Brazilians did not know how to look at exhibitions, both because of disinterest and because of deficiencies in the educational system, he defended the relevance of training guides for museum visits.

Ancient Egypt was one of his main subjects of interest and for this reason he promoted several courses on this topic that fascinated the public. Recent research has verified how strong the objects and other elements from Ancient Egypt still was in the memory of those who visited the *Museu Nacional* (COSTA et al., 2023). One of them, a mummified young woman from Roman times, fascinated for different reasons, many visitors who had the opportunity to see her. In addition to its rarity – the only of its kind in the world all belonging to European museums (BAKOS, 2001), this mummy became famous from the 1950s onwards thanks to Stawiarski’s courses in Egyptology and Hieroglyphic Writing. In these courses, the professor allowed the students to touch the mummified young woman, called the Princess of

4 Jenny Dreyfus (1905-1986), graduated in 1939 from the Museums Course at the Museu Histórico Nacional (MHN). She lectured there from 1946 to 1975. At the same time, she held the positions of curator of the MHN and head of its History Department. Between 1960 and 1973 she was director of the Museu de la República. See: <https://atom-mhn.museus.gov.br/index.php/jenny-dreyfus> Accessed 13 January 2024.



Image 3: Victor Stawiarski, left observes young people visiting the exhibition Ancient Egypt in the Museu Nacional around 1960 (Personal collection)

the Sun and with the sound of the opera Aida and slide presentation induced the participants to enter in trance (BRANCAGLION, 2004). This story gave rise to the novel *The Secret of the Mummy* (1959), by journalist Ewerton Ralph, and also to Affonso Romano de Sant'Anna's chronicle bearing the same title published in 1988 in the *Jornal do Brasil* (COSTA et al., 2023).

Stawiarski was also active in giving lectures and classes disseminating the theory of evolution by natural selection. This initiative appeared in the pages of the newspapers which spoke of his provocative approach in opposition to religious dogmas.

Under his leadership, the *Museu Nacional* offered sex education classes and courses that were much demanded by schools and different audiences, promoting film screenings, courses for primary and secondary school

teachers in different branches of natural history, guided tours organised mainly for student groups, academic internship programmes, and courses on Ancient Egypt. All this work played an important role in the consolidation of museum education at local and national levels.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout his professional career, Victor Stawiarski dealt with subjects considered controversial and which met with great resistance from the Catholic Church. Considering the prohibitions Stawiarski suffered in the Protestant schools where he taught, we understand that in the *Museu Nacional*, an institution of great scientific and educational prestige, he found greater freedom to carry out a work committed to the public, free

and secular education. His actions, considered daring, took place in a period when the institution had a strong presence in the press, a space that was skillfully occupied by him.

More than forty years after his death, it is still possible to find people who

remember with enthusiasm the classes, explanations and courses promoted by Prof. Victor at the *Museu Nacional*. This is one more example of the power of the work of a museum educator who dared to challenge the limits they tried to impose on his work.

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# Waldisa Russio's contributions to Museum Education in Latin America

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## INTRODUCTION

This text will present, describe, and briefly analyse three museum projects created by Waldisa Russio (1935-1990), showing her contributions to Museum Education in Latin America. The São Paulo museologist and lawyer was a pioneer in the development of research, museological projects and the training of museology professionals in São Paulo.

The educational dimension has always been present, in a basic way, in her professional work and in the projects, she developed in the field of museology, both nationally and internationally. The social and educational function of museums, the right to cultural heritage, accessibility for people in situations of social vulnerability, the participatory

dimension and the representativeness of dissident identities have always been present in the projects created by Russio, even in those that have not been fully accomplished.

During her most productive period in the field of museology, between the mid-1970s and 1990, the date of her early death, the country faced approximately fifteen years of military dictatorship, a period in which culture was not only not prioritised in government plans but was also subject to censorship.

Even in this unfavourable scenery, Waldisa created and coordinated the first postgraduate course in museology in the country - the Specialisation Course in Museology at the *Fundação Escola de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo FESP-SP* (São Paulo School of Sociology and



Politics Foundation, 1978-1984), which became the *Instituto de Museologia de São Paulo* (São Paulo Institute of Museology, 1985-1992), and even produced master's dissertations and doctoral theses - the first scientific research in museology in the region. She created and directed the *Museu da Indústria, Comércio, Ciência e Tecnologia - MICCT* (Museum of Industry, Commerce, Science and Technology) of the newly created the *Secretaria Estadual da Indústria, Ciência, Comércio e Tecnologia de São Paulo* (São Paulo State Secretariat for Industry, Science, Commerce and Technology, 1979-1987); she was responsible for the museological and educational project of the *Estação Ciência* (Science Station, 1986-1988); and she designed the *Museu Mobral* (Mobral Museum, 1978-1979), the *Museu da Criança* (Children's Museum, 1977-1990), the *Museu do Homem e da Paisagem/Ecomuseu da Riviera de São Lourenço* (Museum of Man and Landscape / Riviera de São Lourenço Museum, 1980s) and the *Museu da Mulher Paulista* (Paulista Women's Museum, late 1980s) - which were never permanently institutionalised or created by private initiative, despite all the museologist's efforts.

In this text, written collectively by the researchers who carried out research as part of the FAPESP Young Researcher project "The Theoretical Legacy of Waldisa Russio Camargo Guarnieri", at the Institute of Brazilian Studies of the University of São Paulo, between 2017 and 2022, we will present the educational dimension of the projects of the *Museu da Criança*, the *Museu Mobral* and the

*Museu da Indústria, Comércio, Ciência e Tecnologia*, with the aim of showing the museologist's contributions to Museum Education in Latin America.

## 1. MUSEU DA CRIANÇA (CHILDREN'S MUSEUM), 1970S AND 1980S

The first record about the idea of a Children's Museum appears in Russio's master's thesis in 1977; during her life as a civil servant for the State of São Paulo, she tried several times to implement the Museum project.

To enter the universe and imaginary that surrounds the idea of this museum, we need to understand the museologist's definition of a "child": "a being in creation, created or built"<sup>1</sup>. In this field, her theoretical basis includes pioneer authors in investigating human development, especially in childhood, such as Ernst Schachtel, Jean Piaget, D.W. Winnicott and Prabha Sahasrabudhe.

In these studies, Russio pointed out that children at that time were not considered as an audience by Brazilian museums, observing that most institutions had programmes aimed at children only from the age of 10, as well as not including children with disabilities and minors in situations of social and economic vulnerability<sup>2</sup>.

She believed that these museums ended up functioning as complements to formal education, missing out the educational potential that specific programmes aimed at children could foster. For the author, there was a "need for them to be

1 RUSSIO, 1977, p. 152

2 IEB-USP Archive, Waldisa Russio Fund, WR-DC-FESP-217



something more than an archaeological residue of education, mere complements to formal education”<sup>3</sup>.

She thus emphasised that the idea of a *Museu da Criança* was internationally nothing new, highlighting the experiences of museums dedicated to children:

“Over the last two years, I’ve travelled around a few countries: England, Portugal, France, Italy, Israel, the United States and Mexico. I was stunned by the number of children - not just schoolchildren - I saw in the museums of these countries.

From the small Portugal to the brand-new Israel and the super-powerful United States, the number of children who not only visit museums but also take part in special museum activities is unbelievable”.<sup>4</sup>

That’s how she began to dream of a museum that would consider children to be the priority audience for its initiatives. With this in mind, the logic of the museum would be one of “Creation/Fruition”, alternating and sharing the ideas of what could then be the museum’s content and its public. As for the museum’s collection, it would be of a threefold nature, involving objects linked to children’s worlds, cultural objects and objects resulting from children’s creativity.

Russio made some attempts to create the *Museu da Criança*, such as: with FESP-SP; *Parque da Água Branca*; the *Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian* in



IMAGE 1 - Children’s workshops at the Museum of Industry, 1979.<sup>5</sup>

Portugal; and, finally, the São Paulo City Hall, with a project called *Espaço Criança* (Space for Children) (1989). Despite their relevance, these actions to be developed were faced with many problems, both politically and socially, and because of Russio’s premature death. They nevertheless demonstrated the conceptual strength of the project.

We can also highlight the *Children’s Workshops at the Museu da Indústria* (1979-1987), which are an example of how the project’s ideas were applied. These were conceived as exhibitions that formed part of the *Museu da Indústria*’s educational service at the time Russio was coordinating it. At least two editions of the workshops were held, one dedicated to textile manufacturing (1979) and the other to ceramics (1980), with the idea of encouraging children to take part in the *Parque da Água Branca*. The idea was to link the creative process in an artistic, scientific, and industrial way, considering that “everything is man’s work”.<sup>6</sup>

3 RUSSIO apud BRUNO, 2010, p.97. Museums and the Brazilian child. O Estado de S. Paulo, São Paulo, 16 December 1979.

4 (BRUNO, 2010, p.97)

5 IEB-USP Archive, Waldisa Russio Fund, WR-SL-OI-004.

6 SICCT, 1981, Museological Proposal for the Museum of Industry, Commerce and Technology of São Paulo.



IMAGE 2- Publication to publicise the results of the workshop “Imaginary Architectures: how do you imagine a children’s museum?”, 2021.

Finally, it should be noted that Russio’s ideals around the *Museu da Criança* are still relevant today. Following her ideal, the research also endeavoured to propose workshops based on her proposals, such as the workshop “Imaginary Architectures: how do you imagine a Children’s Museum?”, held at the *Museu da Casa Brasileira* (2021), which results were exhibited at the 13th São Paulo Architecture Biennial, communicating its contemporary and pulsating aspects regarding museum education and Brazilian museological issues today.

## 2. MUSEU-MOBRAL

The *Museu-MOBRAL* was developed in 1977 by Russio within the framework of the GTM - Technical Group of Museums and was aimed at the students of the former *MOBRAL* (Brazilian Literacy Movement), made up of people with low incomes and levels of education.

Situated in a dictatorial context of strong repression, *MOBRAL*’s students were subjected to a literacy programme that followed the military regime’s

ideological playbook, in direct and deliberate opposition to other illiteracy eradication projects linked to more left-wing social movements, such as the Paulo Freire Method, which was suppressed after the 1964 coup.

Aware of the problems surrounding *MOBRAL* and always considering access to museums by non-traditional audiences, Russio devised a museological project around the cultural needs of non-literate or poorly educated people that would be able to promote social transformation through educational processes designed exclusively for this group.

Russio understood education as a continuous process of humanisation and considered it as one of the responsibilities of museums to act as part of this process, establishing themselves as active educational agents. For the museologist, it was expected that:

“[...] museums should be centres of life and cultural interaction; from the moment they are set up to the moment they are built and running. [...] that they have flexible structures

suited to the multiplicity of their functions. [...] only this way will our museums be active instruments of permanent and humanising education, liberating mankind. Only this way will our museums contribute to humanising the processes of growth and development and the evolutionary process of our history itself, at the service of man and his life in human and humanised societies.”<sup>7</sup>

As a Technical Assistant at the *Secretaria da Cultura, Ciência e Tecnologia*, she developed the *Museu-MOBRAI* Project with a clear objective: to bring a low-education public to museum spaces to find an answer to the question “What enjoyment can people have when they visit a museum?”<sup>8</sup>. Despite endless efforts and medium and long-term planning, the project never became institutionalised. However, we did find three records<sup>9</sup> of educational activities which were organised under this project.

The first record shows that in May 1977, the mobralenses students from the Pinheiros Butantã Unit<sup>10</sup> were taken on an inaugural visit to the *Pinacoteca do Estado* collection. The visit was mediated by the artist and educator Paulo Portella willing to mediate the experience with the students. In their records of the visit, Russio and Eunice Arruda M. Cesar - the project’s supervisor - said that the

experience was a success because the group of students was placed at the centre of the educational process and the institution promoted an accessible and democratic dialogue<sup>11</sup>.

Seeing that “the results went beyond expectations”<sup>12</sup>, Waldisa proposed continuing the pilot project, planning other visits to the city’s museums.

The second and third records, from September of the same year, show the visit of a group from *MOBRAI Perus-Pirituba* to the *Pinacoteca* and *MOBRAI Jaguará* to the *Museu da Aeronáutica* (Aeronautics Museum).

With the deactivation of the GTM, the experiment was not fully analysed, and the next stages of the project did not progress. However, Waldisa gives some information which enables to characterise the visitors taking part in the pilot project, such as mechanical industry workers’ preference for science museums, women, almost always house wives, preferring art museums, and religious visitors rather embarrassed when they were faced with artistic nudes and religious paintings<sup>13</sup>. For Eunice, the pilot project already showed that the Museum:

“[...] is able to provide satisfactory enjoyment even for an audience with little education, thus contributing

7 RUSSIO, 1974, p. 55

8 GUARNIERI, 1977, apud BRUNO, 2010, p.273.

9 Records found in the WR Fund of the IEB/USP, the Walter Wey Library and the Documentation and Memory Centre of the Pinacoteca do Estado São Paulo and through the accounts of Russio’s former colleagues.

10 GUARNIERI, 1977, apud BRUNO, 2010, p.270

11 CESAR, 1980, p.8.

12 GUARNIERI, 1977, apud BRUNO, 2010, p.270,

13 RUSSIO, 1980 apud CESAR, 1980, p.5

to its democratisation. And this has happened, as has been observed, because the messages have been conveyed in a familiar and accessible language, always considering the students' reality."<sup>14</sup>

The pioneering actions used by Waldisa Russio as the coordinator of the *Museu-MOBRAL* Project inaugurated a revolutionary way of placing a socially marginalised public as the protagonists

of the museum's educational processes; with an extraordinary character of resistance, as, even inserted in a dictatorial reality, it promoted autonomy and freedom for this social group. Despite its short duration and abrupt interruption, the experience was, according to the museologist herself, "valid, [...] a work that, having just begun, hopes to motivate followers who will expand the guidelines outlined here."<sup>15</sup>



IMAGE 3 - Drawings made by MOBRAL students on a visit to the Pinacoteca do Estado collection.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> CESAR, 1980, p.11.

<sup>15</sup> RUSSIO, 1980, apud CESAR, 1980, p.5.

<sup>16</sup> IEB/ USP Archive, Waldisa Russio Fund: WR-GTM-0128\_2.



IMAGE 4 - Photograph of the Children's Workshops organised by the MICT in Água Branca Park in 1979.<sup>17</sup>

### **3. MUSEU DA INDÚSTRIA, COMÉRCIO E TECNOLOGIA DE SÃO PAULO (SÃO PAULO MUSEUM OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, 1979 - 1987)**

In 1980 Russio finished her doctoral thesis entitled “A Museum of Industry in São Paulo”, in which she proposed a territorial museum<sup>18</sup> that would be dedicated to preserving the memory of São Paulo’s industrial heritage thanks to objects, such as machinery and consumer goods, and techniques. The idea was that the history of São Paulo’s industry could be told as it happened, going back from the 1940s to the 1980s. The Museum of Industry, Commerce,

Science and Technology (MICT) would place a properly industrial culture at the centre of the museological narrative. It would tell the story of the development of industry as a product of human labour, enabling the working class to see itself as an essential part of the production system and the driving force behind modernisation and national development.

One of the project’s premises was what Russio called the Museological Fact: by encountering museum objects, the visitors, as social subjects, would be able to reflect on their own reality, developing a critical awareness of their history and culture and to act on their future<sup>19</sup>. In the

<sup>17</sup> IEB/USP Archive, Waldisa Russio Fund, code WR-F-OI-012.

<sup>18</sup> “[...] insofar as the physical environment, the urban environment, the artefacts created by man, the relations of production and other social relations, in their dynamics, come together for the project.” (GUARNIERI, 1980, p. 125)

<sup>19</sup> RUSSIO, 1983 [presumed]

case of the *MICT*, the Museological Fact would be the contact between its public, the majority of whom were factory workers, and the industrial heritage.

Another basic concept of the museum's project was the need to be recognised and legitimised by the community for which it was created. For the *MICT* to serve culture and the industrial reality, and for it to serve the museum, Russio developed all the exhibitions and activities in a way that was inextricably linked to the São Paulo working class, planning them in spaces such as parks and metro stations frequented by this community.

The *Museu da Indústria, Comércio e Tecnologia de São Paulo* therefore served the clear purpose of educating the industrial community about its own history, making it both public and an object of study. Looking through Waldisa Russio's documents, we find several references to Paulo Freire and his theory. One of the documents that stands out is the draft of a bibliographic list of museological texts in which Russio recommends reading the professor's complete work<sup>20</sup>, which clearly shows the congruences between Freire's pedagogical theory and Russio's museological theory.

It seems to me that the nodal point of all the discussions is one: if education is a continuous process of humanisation, how can the museum be used within this process?

[...] It is up to the museum to restore the link between the past and the present, projecting the bridge to the

future, by preserving and emphasising the manifestation of man's creative work, intelligence and sensitivity; it is up to the museum to make it possible to read not the symbol, but the symbolised element, penetrating to the very root of Humanism.<sup>21</sup>

In Freire's 1968 work "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", liberation and overcoming the condition of oppression would only happen if subjects broke with hegemonic discourses and were able to take ownership of their own history which would only happen if education was in line with those subjects' reality and if it made sense to them. The Museum of Industry could act in the same way: transforming heritage into a tool for the liberation of São Paulo workers.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Through the presentation of these three educational and museological projects created and developed by Russio, we can conclude that her engagement with the social issues of her time were fundamental conditions for these projects to exist. For the museologist, museums should be spaces for connection, creation, and the affirmation of dissident identities, thus negating the elitist character that the museum institution still carries today. In her "Waldisian" conception, museums should be spaces for humanistic education and for valuing diversity.

Her thinking and actions were in line with the concepts of the Social

20 IEB/USP Archive, Waldisa Russio Fund, document not yet registered.

21 (RUSSIO, 1974, p. 55)

Museology, which she felt should be understood in Brazil as Popular Museology. In line with the concepts of the *Mesa-Redonda de Santiago do Chile* (Santiago de Chile Round Table, 1972), Waldisa considered that debates were needed on the role of museums within the Latin American reality; and on the development of projects based on the social function of museums and the political, economic, and social issues around them.

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Figure 1: Virgínia Schall was one of the creators of *Ciência em Cena* (Science on Stage) (on the right in the photo). In the project there was the idea of a circus, a place for experimenting with the arts and where theatre plays would be staged in the context of the actions of the Fiocruz Museum of Life. In 2016, in her honour, it was renamed the Virginia Schall Science Tent. (Photo: Author unknown, 1996. Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, Fiocruz Collection)



# Art, Science and Health in the Museum: contributions to Brazilian Museum Education in Virgínia Schall's Work

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## 1. WOMEN IN EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND MUSEUMS

In this article presenting Virgínia Schall's work we interweave debates on art and science, science education, museum education and the centrality of emotions to support educational practices that aim for integral human development.

Virgínia Torres Schall de Matos Pinto (1954-2015) was a Brazilian researcher and educator who dedicated herself to structuring interdisciplinary fields and highlighted the strong links between Art, Education and Health, and Science Communication in Brazil. She was a woman of many facets: she worked as a teacher, with research in education and public health, coordinated the implementation of postgraduate programmes in Science and Health, consultant for research funding bodies and the Ministry of Education, invested in literature and games for children and young people, was a poet and much more.

The role of women in a variety of scenarios in society is constantly being valorised. After the second half of the 20th century, "with the growing need for human resources for strategic activities such as science, the women's liberation movement and the fight for equal rights for men and women allowed them increasing access to scientific education and careers traditionally occupied by men" (Leta, 2003, p.271).

Women's participation in scientific production has been intensifying in Brazil since the 1980s and 90s. In recent years, actions and debates have been taking place aimed at creating mechanisms that can break down the inequality of opportunities between the sexes in the field of scientific research and practice. Among these initiatives let us mention the *Amélia Império Hamburger Women in Science Award*, which is awarded annually by the Chamber of Deputies to three Brazilian female scientists who stand

out for their contributions to scientific research in the exact sciences, natural sciences and humanities. The award recognises the excellence of women's participation in solving the great challenges of humanity and encourages the training of more women scientists (Basso, 2021).

Museums have sought to create increasingly inclusive spaces for different genders, to promote dialogue and diversity. Some authors have investigated the presence of women in museum collections, while others have sought to understand the role of women in Museology (Brulon, 2019). Godoy and Luna (2020) draw attention to the feminine side of museums:

“Of mythical origin, the word *museum* carries a *feminine essence*: it is the temple of the muses, the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory. Muse - a definition popularly attributed to women who inspire artists - refers, in Greek thought, to inspiration and creativity. Both are related to the field of the “feminine”, since they are conventionally associated with the characteristics of sensitivity, beauty and lightness. Each of the muses symbolises an area of the arts and knowledge: they are therefore the artistic and intellectual power itself.”

## 2. ART AND SCIENCE: CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENCE EDUCATION

Various projects involving art and science have been conceived in recent decades - especially in museums and science centres - with the aim of integrating different disciplinary fields, stimulating creativity, cognition,

intuition, feelings and promoting critical thinking with visitors.

The connections between different fields of knowledge have long permeated educational environments, whether formal, non-formal or informal. Deepening the relationship between art and science in research projects has been applied in different academic areas.

The capacity for reflection, abstraction, observation, attention to experience and the development of new approaches are increasingly needed in a world that is continually advancing with multiple technologies. Programmes that unite art and science offer the possibility of promoting fruitful debates, as well as collaboration between people of different profiles, something that is fundamental for the individuals' citizenship in today's world. Given the breadth of the arts and sciences, the possible interactions between these areas are limitless.

Despite the growing quality and quantity of Brazilian scientific research, which already contributes 1.7% of the world's knowledge production (data from the first decade of the 21st century, according to Araújo-Jorge, 2007), the performance of young Brazilians in tests that measure scientific skills and maths performance is still unsatisfactory. The researcher comments on possible methodologies for teaching science that are more sensitive and adapted to today's world:

“In my laboratory [Instituto Oswaldo Cruz/IOC], we have developed science and art as a line of research in teaching and creativity, and as a pedagogical strategy. Scientists and

artists deal with the concerns of discovery, the rules, cultural heritage and transformations of knowledge over the years. We intend to try to prove our hypothesis that it is possible to sensitise teachers to more creative teaching and to develop strategies that increase creativity in the training of scientists, practising teaching that stimulates the imagination [...] Art can be combined with science as part of an explicit pedagogical strategy for the scientific education of the population.” (Araújo-Jorge, 2007)

Another educational approach for teaching science in conjunction with the arts was developed by US researcher Georgette Yakman: the “Steam” methodology (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) which involves teaching the arts alongside exact subjects (Jornal da USP, 2019).

According to Lopes and Dahmouche (2019), the arts - combined with science education processes - can make a huge contribution to deconstructing stereotypes, stigmas and reductionist views of scientific practice:

Like science, art is a way of seeing, foreseeing and inscribing. It is an indispensable means of seeing solutions in an increasingly complex, hostile and conflicting environment. Feeding the false incommunicability between them is more than a mistake, it's contributing to an unequal society in which we don't recognise the plurality of knowledge, a powerful ally for fully reading a world that is so diverse, rich in meaning and changing. (Lopes and Dahmouche, 2019, p.146)

The connection between art and science takes on significant relevance in the work of Virgínia Schall. She sought to deepen the discussion

about the interactions between these fields by using the literary word as the main element. She believed that sharing narratives with others stimulates not only the development of other narratives, but also expands the opportunities to recreate one's own reality (Pimenta, Gruzman and Reis, 2018). In her productions, she has dedicated herself to initiatives involving children's stories, poetry and theatrical language. It was based on different artistic expressions, particularly the performing arts, that Virgínia conceived *Ciência em Cena* (Science on Stage) and the Science Tent, as part of the *Museu da Vida Fiocruz* (Fiocruz Museum of Life) (Figure 1).

### 3. VIRGINIA SCHALL AND MUSEUM EDUCATION: A VISION COMMITTED TO THE EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND EMOTIONS IN THE FIELD OF SCIENCE AND CULTURE

A civil servant at the *Fundação Oswaldo Cruz* (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation/Fiocruz), Virgínia Schall was linked to two technical-scientific units at the institution located in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte, where she lived and worked. In the city of Rio de Janeiro, she was one of the key person in the conception of the *Museu da Vida Fiocruz*, particularly *Ciência em Cena* (Science on Stage) (Pimenta, Gruzman and Reis, 2018), a thematic area dedicated to art and science. Virgínia established bridges between different areas of knowledge, playing a fundamental role in creating and consolidating an integrated and innovative academic approach.

Born in the state of Minas Gerais, from an early age she harboured a deep passion for learning. Her educational path was linked to reflections that encouraged a critical view of scientific practices, recognising not only their importance, but also their tensions, power relations and inequities that have been a hallmark of Latin America's socio-political context. Important international and national events in the 1970s and 1980s contributed to the formation of new agendas in the fields of health and culture within museums, which also had repercussions on her professional career.

Critical analyses carried out in the 1970s expressed accumulated concerns about the need to reorganise cultural policies in the context of museums, since they were closely linked to the reproduction of values and interests of restricted groups with little affinity with local issues (Valente, 2020). The reflections conducted showed the need to leverage changes with the participation of silenced social groups, the recognition of diverse cultural assets and the articulation of education with socio-scientific issues. The Round Table in Santiago de Chile<sup>1</sup>, held in 1972, bears the hallmarks of these discussions. The educational role of museums was one of the themes that structured the proposal under the name "Permanent Education". The Santiago Conference influenced the debates on

the role of Museum Education, making important contributions to this field. However, the concept of a critical and active museum institution, as well as the debate on the training of museum educators in the country, are issues that still require investment from participatory public policies (Gruzman and Costa, 2023).

On a different level of analysis, the National Health Conferences held in 1986<sup>2</sup> led to more in-depth debates on re-democratisation in the country, the proposal of agendas on social rights, with an emphasis on the representation and participation of women in public life, and a more comprehensive understanding of health, which considers social, economic and cultural factors in society (Valente and Pimenta, 2023).

It was against this backdrop of intense debate and the country's transformation that Virgínia Schall sought to base her educational practices with children and young people, seeking to promote comprehensive human development and a commitment in which scientific dissemination promotes broad and diverse public access.

She also recognised that knowledge could only be mobilised when emotions and feelings were considered. Virginia understood that psychic activities related to emotions play a vital role in the dynamics of socio-cultural interactions,

1 The Santiago de Chile Round Table (SCRT) is part of a series of events promoted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) that began 20 years earlier in New York City with a debate on "The Educational Role of Museums". In 1972, the SCRT sought to link the theme of *development* to the participation of museums in the contemporary world, with the initial argument being the problems faced by Latin America.

2 In 1986, the VIII National Health Conference and the I National Conference on Women's Rights took place in Brazil.



Figure 2: The theatre show *O Grande Problema da Banda Infinita* (The Big Problem of the Infinite Band), performed in the Science Tent, Fiocruz Museum of Life, by *Ciência em Cena* (Science on Stage) actors for primary school students (Photo: Jeferson Mendonça, Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, Fiocruz)

originating from them and fuelling them, which in turn makes it possible to attribute meaning to concrete life experiences (Schall, 2005).

On this journey, she was accompanied by her reference authors in the field of education, such as Paulo Freire and Lev Vygotsky, among others. She argued that educational processes should be based on a model of listening and dialogue, valuing the public's knowledge and the need to problematise issues covering science and health. The reflections that emerged from her doctoral thesis<sup>3</sup> laid the theoretical foundations for developing connections between affective aspects and the perspectives of literature, play and theatrical language (Pimenta, Gruzman and Reis, 2018).

#### 4. THEATRE AND SCIENCE COMMUNICATION AT THE MUSEU DA VIDA FIOCROZ.

Theatre has been used by museums and science centres as a communication and education tool, with the aim of promoting greater public involvement and engagement with the various themes proposed, as well as stimulating the development of special skills, such as observation, critical understanding, cultural debate, among others (Studart and Almeida, 2019).

The *Museu da Vida Fiocruz* / MVF, the interactive science museum of the *Fundação Oswaldo Cruz*, a national health institution located in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - has been using different approaches to stimulate visitors about

3 Carried out at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC RJ), the thesis was entitled "Health and Affectivity in Childhood: what children reveal and its importance in school" (Schall, 1996).

science, culture, citizenship and social issues, through exhibitions, workshops, seminars, courses, publications, theatre, mobile science, among other activities.

The *Ciência em Cena/CC* (Science on Stage) project was originally conceived by Virginia Schall in 1991, when the researcher saw the opportunity to use one of the green and white tents used at ECO-92 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development), through an agreement with the Rio de Janeiro City Council. The “Blue Book”, a document creating the *Museu da Vida Fiocruz*, records the initial objectives and ideas of the CC project:

“[...] The central aim of this activity will be to break down preconceptions of what science is in order to bring individuals closer to scientific and technological knowledge. To this end, texts dealing with science and technology will be created and adapted into theatre performances and other forms of artistic expression.” (Almeida and Lopes, 2019, p.63)

A good example of the reunion between art and science is the theatre play *O Grande Problema da Banda Infinita* (The Big Problem of the Infinite Band) (2018) - written by Rafael Souza Ribeiro and directed by Leticia Guimarães, coordinator at that time of *Ciência em Cena* - which combined mathematics, social inclusion and music (Figure 2). The performance aimed to bring maths into people’s everyday lives, demystifying this topic. The adventure was designed especially for children aged six to ten, but teenagers and

adults were also welcome (Studart, Colonese and Guimarães, 2018).

In the field of education, it is well known that maths and the arts can inform and enrich each other. In turn, theatre can bring fantasy (a gateway to imagination and innovation) and emotion (a gateway to engagement and learning) to students and other visitors to museums.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

How can museums promote values such as inclusion, citizenship, participation and diversity through projects that focus on integral human development? This is a motivating question for museum educators today. Educational processes in museums can benefit greatly from the combined approach of different artistic manifestations in dialogue with scientific themes, together with the necessary listening to the knowledge, emotions and perspectives of different audiences.

The play “The Problem of the Infinite Band”, mentioned above, as well as being a fun and enjoyable show, also promoted a debate on gender equality, social inclusion and respect for people with physical disabilities, in a country like Brazil that still has many inequalities, but is moving towards changes and resolutions.

During the almost 25 years of existence of the *Museu da Vida Fiocruz*, several plays have been staged in the Science Tent<sup>4</sup>, bringing experimentation and

4 Some of the plays staged in the Science Tent: The Messenger of the Stars, The Barber’s Mystery, Botany Lesson, Singing Axe, The Alienist, Ask Wallace, Bad Blood, Sorcerer’s Apprentice, The Boy with the Rabeca and the Girl Rebecca, The Life of Galileo, The Infinite Band Problem.

versatility, creativity and daring, social inclusion and cultural democracy to children and young people, the target audiences of the *Ciência em Cena* shows.

The links between art, science and health were seen by Virgínia as crucial contributions to enriching educational processes in museums, especially - in the case of the *Museu da Vida Fiocruz*

- those related to health promotion and questioning the merely biological approach commonly presented to the public. The educator has always said that the democratisation of scientific knowledge is an urgent need in contemporary society, given that science is present in people's daily lives, whether through technology, at work or at home, or in health prevention and care.

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# *Museu Dom José: educational legacy and transformations during its management by the Acaraú's Universidade Estadual do Vale do Acaraú (UVA)*

**António Luciano Morais Melo Filho**

*Doctor in History*

**T**he *Museu Dom José* (Dom José Museum, MDJ), located in the city of Sobral, is a private institution belonging to the local diocese, which over the years has marked generations of Sobral inhabitants, illustrating the hegemonic narratives constructed about the city and the northern region of the state of Ceará. Inaugurated in 1952 by the first diocesan bishop, after whom the museum is named, it has gone through several phases, facing challenges and transformations, but always maintaining its relevance in the cultural scene of Ceará.<sup>1</sup> The period between 1990 and 2015 marked by administrative changes, physical renovations, and a growing emphasis

on promoting the institution was very significant for the MDJ.

In 1987, the *Universidade Estadual Vale do Acaraú* (Acaraú's Valley State University, UVA) took over the administration of the MDJ through a maintenance agreement. José Teodoro Soares (1940-2016) took over as rector of the UVA in April 1990, remaining in office for sixteen years. The rector in that time was looking to introduce a mind of revitalisation into the institution and one can say that the name of Professor Giovana Saboya played an important role. Teodoro invited this UVA professor to lead the MDJ because of her links with traditional Sobral families, as

<sup>1</sup> This is a private museum belonging to the Diocese of Sobral, Ceará, Brazil, which was conceived from the private collection of Dom José Tupinambá da Frota (1882-1959). It was the subject of my doctoral thesis entitled “Museu Dom José, em Sobral/Ceará, Brasil: história de uma instituição museológica de referência, 1951-2015”, defended on 5 May 2023 at the Autonomous University of Lisbon, Portugal.

appears in the “Presentation” of the book *Sobral: História e Vida* (Sobral: History and life) (SOARES & GIRÃO, 1997, p. 10), written by Giovana and Norma Soares. Under her leadership, the museum experienced a notable revitalisation in the flow of visitors, especially schoolchildren from Sobral and the neighbouring towns. However, by directing visitors’ gaze towards a model centred on the Catholic and white elite, the director perpetuated in the institution the traditional exhibition approaches, prioritising a saturation of objects justified as “witnesses through time of different ways of life and forms of expression of the various cultural groups in the Sobral society” (MDJ, 2001). Professor Giovana Saboya brought to the MDJ not only her academic experience, but also a connection with part of Sobral’s history and culture.

After its reopening in 1997, the museum intensified its activities aimed at students, resulting in a notable increase in visits by schoolchildren from the region and the neighbouring municipalities. This increased number of visitors can be attributed to two main reasons: first, because of the management’s emphasis on the educational promotion of the MDJ; second, was due to a stronger association with the municipal administration under mayor Cid Gomes, which allowed free access to students from the local public school system.

Throughout history, museums have been seen as spaces for conserving, researching, and exhibiting objects that tell the story of human groups. However, museums go far beyond the

simple exhibition of artefacts, and the educational focus is one of the many potentialities that can be explored in the various cultural facilities that function as museums.

From the very beginning of UVA’s management, the MDJ’s management considered the realisation of educational activities as one of the purposes that would guarantee its existence. The celebration of the museum’s 50th anniversary, which took place on 29 March 2001, saw the remodelling of the rooms, indicating that the exhibition space was divided into 39 rooms, with behind-the-scenes environments also created on the ground floor: the administrative sector, the sector library, the kitchen, the art workshop room and the video room. When examining the MDJ’s plan, drawn up in brochures from 2001 and 2007, one can see a clear structuring between exhibition areas (*stage*) and technical areas (*backstage*) (Figure 1).

The institution not only planned spaces for exhibitions and interaction with the public, but also valued technical areas that were essential for its operation like the technical reserves, two spaces dedicated to educational workshops and a room for temporary exhibitions. This organisation reflected an effort to align with contemporary trends in museology, demonstrating that the management had a commitment to education and effective spatial management. In the “art workshops and video room” areas, which were later renamed “pedagogical workshops” rooms, the museum’s management proposed activities aimed at children and young people like “Write here





Figure 2 - Terra Brasilis Week team (2005)



Figure 3 - Representation of «Stumbling into Prehistory» (2005)



Figure 4 - Experiments on fossils (2005)

about your visit to the Dom José Museum” (SOARES, 2001, p. 39) or “Draw the piece you liked best in the Museum” (SOARES, 2001, p. 40) that did not ask much critical thoughts.

From radio programmes to the schoolbooks adopted in the municipality<sup>2</sup>, the Dom José Museum was promoted by the director to be enjoyed by listeners and readers. From 2005 onwards, the MDJ intensified and diversified its educational activities, holding the first edition of “Terra Brasilis Week” between 19 and 22 April of that year, the period marking the day of the indigenous peoples and the arrival of the Portuguese in Brazilian territory, promoting a series of workshops aimed at young people. The aim was to familiarise them with the MDJ’s collection and involve them in educational activities about indigenous cultures and palaeontology. Under the guidance of Professor Somália Viana, also a UVA lecturer responsible for the museum’s palaeontology department invited by the management in 2003, the educational activities that year included storytelling as well as a specific workshop on Indigenous Cultures. In the Palaeontology workshop, the students explored the museum’s collection of fossils from the north of the state and the Cariri region. They also watched the play “Stumbling into Prehistory”, performed by UVA students, complemented by experiments on fossil formation (Figure 2) (Figure 3) (Figure 4).

The following year, the management took another initiative to expand the museum’s educational offer, holding its first travelling exhibition. Proclaimed as the National Year of Museums by the Ministry of Culture (MinC), in 2006 the Brazilian government sought to strengthen public policies aimed at enhancing and expanding the museum universe, mobilising the MDJ beyond its walls. Between May and August, Fortaleza hosted the exhibition “The History of Ceará in Sacred and Decorative Works”, located in the Cultural Space of the University of Fortaleza (Unifor). This exhibition, made up of 400 pieces from the MDJ, attracted more than 23,000 visitors (UNIFOR, 2006), and marked the first time that the MDJ’s collections were exhibited outside Sobral. However, by projecting an idealised vision of Ceará’s past, the exhibition perpetuated stereotypes, just like the museum’s permanent exhibitions. In this sense, it is crucial to adopt a critical approach when analysing the educational role of museums. It is therefore necessary to question the depth and scope of these initiatives. Were they sufficiently inclusive? Did these activities approach history in a way that was relevant and meaningful to visitors? How would the museum deal with the themes proposed today?

When we analysed the approach of the MDJ’s interpreter-guides, we identified a standardised narrative, consolidated during the phase under

2 This is the textbook produced at the request of the Sobral City Council for primary education, entitled “Discovering and building Sobral: knowledge of Geography and History”, adopted in 2002 in municipal schools and written by professors Isorlanda Caracristi and Giovana Saboya Mont’Alverne, both from UVA.

Saboya's direction which was passed on to the fellows to reproduce. This practice, which positioned the guide as a mere reproducer of a fixed script, without adapting it to various types of audiences, is counterproductive. One-way communication, which does not encourage dialogue or debate, is incongruous with current museum trends and those of the early 21st century. Currently, museology has prioritised the idea of "mediation" (DESVALLEES, MAIRESSE, 2013, p. 53)<sup>3</sup> or even "museum education" (DESVALLEES, MAIRESSE, 2013, p. 38-39)<sup>4</sup>, but in the context of non-formal and continuous education. In the Brazilian context, these and other concepts are examined from a national perspective and presented as fundamental elements of the museological field in the National Museum Education Policy Booklet (PNEM) (IBRAM, 2018). Identified and selected during the construction of the PNEM due to their relevance in the field, these concepts required more detailed and supported definitions to enrich professionals' understanding of the complexity of these themes in the Brazilian museological context. It is important to emphasise that, in Brazil, these approaches are not only

explored in the context of non-formal and continuing education but are also significantly integrated in the context of museum education. This holistic approach is crucial to achieving the objectives of museums within the society of today ensuring that their educational approach is as complete, inclusive and critical as possible.

The history of museums cannot be told without mentioning key figures who have moulded the trajectory of these institutions. One of them is Professor Glória Giovana Saboya Mont'Alverne Girão, who took over as director of the MDJ (1996-2015) at a crucial moment in its existence. Her arrival marked a time of significant transformations in the museum space. The institution underwent an intense process of preparing its exhibition spaces, due to the almost ruinous state it was in before the UVA took over. At the same time, some of the objects were cleaned and catalogued, reflecting a commitment to the preservation and presentation of the collection. This work was not just a matter of organisation, but also a reaffirmation of the value and importance of the cultural heritage in its custody (RIBEIRO, 2002)<sup>5</sup>. The constant presence of political figures at MDJ celebrations and events, such

3 The term mediation is used in museology to cover "some museological notions related to communication and animation, and above all interpretation".

4 In the museum context, education "is linked to the mobilisation of museum-related knowledge, with the aim of developing and allowing individuals' blossoming, mainly through the integration of this knowledge, as well as through the development of new sensibilities and the realisation of new experiences".

5 There were several projects to restore the collection and the building. The museum's management, in coordination with the UVA rectory and with the support of the Ceará State Government's Department of Culture, hired Bahian museologist Professor Osvaldo Gouveia Ribeiro, who carried out the work in three different stages: from February to May 1994, June to August of the same year and between March and November 2001, when he signed a new contract.



as Mayor Cid Ferreira Gomes, show the recognition that Professor Giovana was able to obtain for the museum, supported by the then rector of the UVA, Teodoro Soares, a political ally of the mayor just mentioned. This support was not only symbolic, but also instrumental in realising significant projects and raising the profile of the MDJ.

When analysing the layout of the **Museu Dom José** (Dom José Museum, MDJ) under her direction, one can see a clear intention to highlight certain dominant features of Sobral's history. In its layout, the museum prioritised the memory of prominent figures, as evidenced by the rooms dedicated to the founder Dom José, the Fathers, Dom Walfrido, José Maria Soares, Father Palhano and Bandeira de Melo. In addition, there is an emphasis on specific economic contexts, such as the Leather Room, which reflects the production cycle, and the West Indies Company Room, which shows the crockery acquired by Sobral's elite in previous centuries, to the detriment of a more holistic approach to Sobral's society. Although there are spaces dedicated to different socio-cultural contexts, such as the Room of the Indigenous People and the Popular Art Room, they are exceptions in the museum's predominant narrative. This trend appears in rooms such as the Palanquin Room, the 19th century ambiance Room and the Weapons

Room, which mainly perpetuate the history of the ruling classes, the MDJ still bound to a narrative valorising the memory of the elites, relegating popular cultures and arts to limited spaces. Rooms such as the Portuguese Exhibition Room, the Dressing table Room, the Dom José's Visits Room, the Porcelain and Crystal Wing and the West Indies Company Room exalt the opulence of the bourgeoisie, reinforcing the pre-eminence of hegemonic social groups (GIRÃO, 2007). However, it is essential to recognise that the MDJ originated from a specific collection, reflecting a particular mentality; one can thus interpret the museum as being a "self-portrait", which, despite advances in contemporary museology, is still deeply influenced by the collection and the legacy of its founder.

Professor Glória Giovana Saboya Mont'Alverne Girão had an unquestionable impact on the renovation and updating of the Dom José Museum. Her leadership resulted in advances in the preservation and display of the collection, as well as in the commitment to the community. To study her management from an analytical perspective is crucial to value her achievements and weighing up the consequences of certain choices. In this way, other studies will be able to provide more evidence that will contribute to the perception of how the MDJ constructed its narrative

6 Gustavo Barroso (1888-1959) was a multifaceted Brazilian intellectual who worked as a writer, journalist and politician. As the director of the Brazilian National Historical Museum between 1937 and 1946, Barroso left his mark in the field of Museum Education by seeking to integrate this practice into the construction of a national identity. However, his management is subject to controversy due to its nationalist emphasis, generating debates about representativeness and historical interpretation in Brazilian museums.

for visitors, allowing us to investigate the proposals and objectives of the representations and discourses that were assimilated and disseminated by society.

For years, it was decided to maintain the MDJ's museography based on the tradition of museological thinking implemented in the principles disseminated during the first half of the 20th century. This approach, influenced by Gustavo Barroso<sup>6</sup> (1888-1959), reflected a Eurocentric and colonial vision, perpetuating narratives that celebrated Catholic and white colonisation, and in many ways distorting these same narratives, while the museum's exhibitions minimised or excluded the voices and experiences of social groups other than the hegemonic ones. Analysing the MDJ's *mise en scène* reveals a tendency to perpetuate the history of the elites in a place dominated by spaces that celebrated the bourgeoisie and its symbols of wealth.

However, it is necessary to remember that the Lusitanian colonisation history is inseparable from the violence against indigenous and black populations history. It is essential that museums recognise and address these stories in a critical and inclusive way. The museum should be seen not only as a "place of memory" based on its collection, but also for what it represents for the community in which it is located and how it can be explored as a place for building memories.

From this perspective, reflecting on the Decolonisation of Museological Thinking in a regional museum, such as the MDJ, is of paramount importance, especially when considering the role of museums as spaces of representation and construction of historical and cultural narratives (BRULON, 2020; SOARES, 2020; CURY, 2017).

Since August 2020, the MDJ has been in the process of structurally remodelling the building, with most of its pieces being relocated. This period of transformation offers a unique opportunity for the museum to align itself with the contemporary guidelines proposed by ICOM, promoting accessibility and inclusion, encouraging diversity and sustainability, and disseminating its collections in an ethical manner, especially regarding the decolonisation of museum thinking. This process is not just a question of changing exhibitions or adding new pieces to the collection. It's about provoking a profound re-evaluation of how history is told, who has the right to tell that history and how voices are prioritised. This requires an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach, involving communities, academics and museum professionals to constantly re-evaluate exhibitions, captions, museum documentation and educational activities. Museums like the MDJ have a responsibility to commit to this process, to ensure that their narratives are inclusive, critical and reflect the complexities of history and culture.



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# Accessibility as a Mission

# Who has the right to touch Brazil's archaeological heritage?

*The MAE-USP Educational Area and the democratisation of a hands-on enjoyment of the past/present*

**Maurício André da Silva**

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The *Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia da Universidade de São Paulo* (Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at the University of São Paulo, MAE-USP) has long been promoting public access to the research carried out at the institution and to its archaeological and ethnographic heritage. Over four decades of continuous development museum education activities have changed to meet the demands of the present time. During this period, the Brazilian society has undergone many transformations, such as, among many other situations: the re-democratisation of the country following the end of the military dictatorship in 1984; new technologies, like the arrival of internet and the digital culture; the expansion and strengthening of the field of museum education with the promotion of public policies, especially since the 2000s; the protagonist role of indigenous groups, like the

'quilombolas' and other communities added to the processes of decolonisation; the dismantling of institutions following the extreme right coming to power. Broadly speaking, throughout this period the Education Department has always sought to maintain its commitment to publicising science, heritage, and social justice.

The *MAE-USP* is a university museum located in the capital city of São Paulo, a city with 12 million inhabitants on the Butantã campus. Many cities in one, marked by many origins and accents. However, a significant part of the population's memory of São Paulo is still immersed in a historical perspective based on the great deeds of the Bandeirantes, who explored the inner lands and were responsible for the extermination and enslavement of thousands of indigenous people throughout the colonial period. This

is a limited way of understanding the plurality of people and cultures that make up our territory, which reinforces structural racism and the failure to perceive the pacts of whiteness (BENTO, 2022) in society.

Some of these issues are critically addressed in the Museum's educational activities aiming at encouraging questions and doubts in the public, to contribute to the deconstruction of a series of stereotypes through its rich collection<sup>1</sup>. It has managed to work on promoting cultural difference over time and space, as well as revisiting the materials by indigenous groups and other collectives, who connect with their histories and produce counter-colonial narratives. The educational area promotes a prioritised, non-essentialist approach to the dimensions of memory and identity, as they are not neutral and must be critically stimulated in museums (MENESES, 2000). In this sense, we can say that the MAE-USP's commitment is to teach people to think archaeologically, anthropologically, and museologically as well as highlighting other ways of knowing, by approaching traditional and indigenous groups. Likewise, it is at the service of building a society that is more plural, democratic, and open to difference.

The educational work structured over these decades of practice and reflection has established itself on the São Paulo and the national scene as a benchmark

in the teachers' training; in assisting school groups in its exhibitions and also in the technical reserves open to the public; in working with children during holiday activities; seeking to break down attitudinal, physical and social barriers in the Museum with special audiences; in actions with senior citizens, to mention some work. The current educational area, like the whole institution, is the result of the merging<sup>2</sup> in 1989 of other institutions. The *Instituto de Pré-História* (Institute of Prehistory, IPH) and the former MAE had been carrying out



Image 1: Mediation carried out by Cristina Bruno at the exhibition “27 years of preservation, research and teaching” at the Instituto de Pré-História for a group of students on the FESP Museology Specialisation Course. Early 1980s.

- 1 It is made up of collections of Brazilian, Mediterranean and pre-Columbian archaeology, African and Afro-Brazilian ethnology and Brazilian ethnology, dating back to the last century and also bearing some of these colonial marks.
- 2 The merge took place between the *Instituto de Pré-História*, the former *Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia*, the collections of the *Museu Paulista* (Paulista Museum) and the Plínio Ayrosa ethnographic collection of the FFLCH.

educational activities with different focuses since the early 1980s (BRUNO, 1984; BRUNO, VASCONCELLOS, 1989; HIRATA, 1985).

This history makes it possible to highlight the leading role of the teaching staff and educators in promoting over four decades debates in the museum and archaeological and anthropological fields. For example: the mobilisation of the Awareness Pedagogy, in tune with the reflections of the human sciences and the understanding of material documents as a source of historical and anthropological analysis (BRUNO, VASCONCELLOS, 1989); discussions emphasising the development of educational work through material culture as a product and vector of social relations (MENESES, 1983); the development of pioneering practices in the so-called Heritage Education (HORTA; GRUNBERG; MONTEIRO, 1999), with a focus on cultural heritage, which gained momentum in the field of archaeology from the 2000s onwards; the mobilisation

of Paulo Freire's concepts during the period of re-democratisation, in particular empathy in educational work with consideration for the visitors' reality (BRUNO, 2020). Currently, the challenge of museum education at the institution is to align itself with the agendas of social movements, post-identity discussions, as well as being a space welcoming the new generations' emergencies (SILVA, 2019; 2021; SILVA, CARNEIRO, CURY, 2021).

It is also worth highlighting the participation of the Education Department in the museum curatorial process, understood as an integrated cycle of actions and procedures, a unique feature of the work carried out at the *MAE-USP*, as something unique in the world of museums. The education department usually participates from the outset in curatorial processes, together with other sectors and the institution's researchers, resulting in better quality for museological communication processes. A history built on the practice and activism of



Image 2: Denise Cristina Carminatti Peixoto Abeleira and Célia Maria Cristina Dermatini, training the staff of the old MAE through the didactic collection, 1988, Photograph MAE Collection.

many professionals, such as Maria Cristina Oliveira Bruno, Elaine Farias Veloso Hirata, Camilo de Mello Vasconcellos, Marília Xavier Cury, Adriana Mortara Almeida, Denise Cristina Carminatti Peixoto Abeleira, Célia Maria Cristina Dermatini, Judith Mader Elazari, Carla Gibertoni Carneiro, among many trainees and scholarship holders who have worked in the area and graduated with a museums and archaeology awareness.

Since 1995, the work has been organised through permanent programmes aimed at different audiences, which have been improved and reinvented over the years. Currently, the actions are organised by the Mediation Programme, which offers mediated visits to the Museum; the Training Programme with three scopes of activities: teacher training, the training of scholars and trainees in the area of museum education and the undergraduate internship to raise awareness among future professionals in the field of education; the Accessibility Programme, which works from various perspectives to increase access to the Museum for people with disabilities, socially vulnerable people and people aged 60+ (VASCONCELLOS, 2010; VASCONCELLOS, SILVA, 2018); the Museum Outreach Programme, which develops activities outside the Museum's physical space through lectures, courses at other institutions, as well as participating in academic research projects (CARNEIRO, 2009; SILVA, 2022); and the Pedagogical Resources Programme, which aims to develop teaching aids centred on archaeological and ethnographic



Image 3: Camilo de Mello Vasconcellos receiving children from the São Remo community, 2002. Photograph MAE-USP Collection.

material, which are lent to teachers after they have completed their training at the institution. The history of this programme constitute the main part of this article as these materials are the result of committed and dedicated education professionals which have thus managed to create bridges between the Museum and other spaces.

The former educators of the *MAE-USP*, Judith Mader Elazari, Denise Cristina Carminatti Peixoto Abeleira and Célia Maria Cristina Dermatini, are at the origin in the end of the 1980s of these materials aimed at meeting the demand of the evening schools and teachers, who at that time were unable to visit the museum because it was only open during the day. They thus prepared teaching material of archaeological and ethnographic pieces and some panels to take to the institutions. It was a way for the museum and its collections to reach other places and fulfil their social role. With this material, they provided training in schools and introduced these to archaeology and the museum.



Image 4: Archaeology and Ethnology Educational Kit in the early 1990s. Photograph from the MAE-USP collection.

With the growing demand for this service, they decided to reverse the process and invite the teachers to come to the MAE for training after what they could then take the kit to the classroom<sup>3</sup>.

This *kit* initially consisted in six archaeological objects, such as arrowheads, ceramic fragments, an axe blade and a replica of a Roman lamp, as well as panels with images showing the process of making the pieces and supporting documents. The work provided direct contact with archaeological materiality, especially with original objects from the Brazilian context, which to this day is a hallmark of the teaching resources produced by the Museum. By analysing the materiality, the activities provided a learning process based on analysing many attributes such as the technique

used to make it, its use, the group that produced it, as well as its relationship with the present day. With the period of Brazilian re-democratisation, Paulo Freire's (2014) ideas re-emerged and were used without fear by the museum educators, broadening the public's reading of the world through objects. This was the embryo of the Archaeology and Ethnology Educational Kit, which still serves thousands of students a year at the Museum.

The materials that made up the *kits* were original, but without scientific provenance. They had not been excavated by specialists and had arrived at the institution in many ways, such as donations, chance collections, etc. For the socialisation of knowledge and educational practices, they have inexhaustible potential, as well as helping to solve a problem common to

3 This information was kindly shared with me orally by the educator Judith Mader Elazari.



the various institutions responsible for safeguarding archaeological material, that of finding themselves faced with technical reserves overloaded with material. As Voss (2012) argues, the crisis in archaeological conservation due to massive formation of collections filling the storage rooms and being little studied, disseminated, etc. can be mitigated by considering other archaeological epistemologies, which consider the collections as a source of research, study, and dissemination. Especially in a work involving other people, such as students and communities interested in the collections.

The handling of museum pieces is usually carried out with great care by specialists following the principles of conservation. Once the archaeological material entered the institutions, only a few people are thus allowed to handle it. However, when the right to touch is extended to a variety of audiences, the learning processes surrounding the long term are brought to life. In addition to the enchantment of being able to touch a fragment that has passed through time, these materials provide information about the many possibilities of people's existences and their creative responses to the production of life.

In the same way, the handling of the materials through the kits was already addressing a crucial issue for museums in the contemporary world: the accessibility of actions. Reflecting

beyond the centrality of the gaze leads to many forms of interaction and reflection that involve other senses such as touch. Over the decades, new materials have been created and incorporated by the museum with the same principle, such as the kit on the Man's Origins<sup>4</sup> which focuses on the process of humanisation; the Indigenous Children's Toy Kit, which presents toys from different indigenous groups in order to approach games and cultural difference; the Tactile Models of Brazilian Archaeology, with a focus on recent research in the country and the Mediterranean Archaeology Educational Kit with an approach to everyday life in the cities of the ancient Greek world. The Education Department is currently developing with many partners an African and Afro-Brazilian Educational Kit which is scheduled to be launched in the second half of 2024 with materiality and decoloniality as its structuring axes to promote anti-racist education.

It is worth noting that from the 1980s to the present day, legislation to protect archaeological heritage has progressed in Brazil, with an emphasis on the preservation and promotion of archaeological knowledge for society. Research, safeguarding and dissemination of archaeological heritage has expanded with the development of national and state procedures and parameters. However, if the law is applied in a non-contextual way, it ends up alienating people from the heritage references in their territory.

4 This material was produced by the Centro de Divulgação Científica e Cultural São Carlos (SP) in partnership with the Centro Franco-Brasileiro de Documentação Técnica e Científica (CENDOTEC), which made copies of French teaching materials in 1995.



Image 5 Handling an Amazonian archaeological fragment from the teaching collection, Guarita pottery - 9th to 16th century AD. Photograph MAE-USP Collection.

We can criticise how archaeology is a state practice that can alienate people from their heritage references, so it is always necessary to evaluate it is applied to each reality<sup>5</sup>. The experience of lending these *kits* to teachers to use in the classroom has over the decades brought archaeological materiality closer to different people who wouldn't have had access to such objects. It's important to note that during this time there have been few cases of damaged items and no cases of lost material. In other words, the benefits of making archaeological and ethnographic collections available to the public are far greater than the fear of their destruction. Currently, an average of 15,000 to 20,000 students borrows all the museum's educational

*kits* each year. In other words, the public engages with the preservation and enjoyment of archaeological and ethnographic heritage in many ways, especially through the meanings and commitments made during their training at the MAE-USP. We have created allies for the management of archaeological heritage between the state, research institutions and civil society.

The MAE-USP's Educational Department was a pioneer in the country in enabling people to come into direct contact with archaeological and ethnographic materials with a focus on educational work. In recent years, several other institutions have been inspired by the Museum's experience in developing educational

5 For urban populations, the relationship with archaeology is generally school based, especially due to the content presented in textbooks, a reality that is different from that of rural populations who often live near archaeological sites and establish many relationships.

materials with objects. In addition to the access to materials to touch provided by the *Kits*, this practice has also been mobilised internally at the Museum in many ways for a long time. During the educational visits to the exhibitions on display, the work is structured in three stages, the first is to raise awareness and welcome the group into the educational room to start a conversation. In this space, where everyone is seated in a circle, the word becomes circular from a Freirean perspective, the aim being to understand the repertoire and experiences that the group brings to the museum space. Archaeological and ethnographic objects from the didactic collection are also chosen for handling, depending on the approach the educator wants to take during the

visit. They are analysed beforehand by everyone and discussed afterwards. This action brings the public closer to the Museum's universe and prepares them for the next stages, such as a visit to the exhibition rooms and a practical workshop.

The Museum's Educational *kits* are a way of broadening and democratising the population's access to the collection and especially to the archaeological heritage. This work has produced many positive results in terms of enjoyment of the past and present, as well as access to the institution's collections. We hope that from this experience over many decades, new materials can be developed in the future, just as we hope that other museums will be inspired to open up their educational collections for people to access.

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# Reflections on access, inclusion, and the social function of museums

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## INTRODUCTION

Even today, museums are perceived as elite institutions open only to a few people interested in the themes of their collections. Struggling against this perception and for a broader role for these institutions in relation to the societies to which they belong has been a long process which led to the new definition of museums, approved in 2022 at the ICOM (International Council of Museums) General Conference in Prague.

We notice in it the presence of terms that museum education departments have been dealing with for years, but which now seem to be expanding to encompass the entire institution such as, among others, accessibility, inclusion, diversity, sustainability, and communities.<sup>1</sup>

Another document published in 2022 by the American Alliance of Museums, entitled “Excellence in DEAI (Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Inclusion)”, moves in the same direction as it incorporates the promotion of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) across the whole institution and not only in some areas.

According to this report, among the fundamental concepts for promoting DEAI are the need for an organisation-wide commitment to adopting equity as a cornerstone of the museum’s mission, strategy, values, management and culture; the understanding that it must be an ongoing journey without a fixed end point, through a commitment to the ongoing work of transforming organisational culture and eliminating systems of inequality

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <<https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>>Accessed on: August 2023.

within museums and the communities they serve, the museum sector and society in general; the requirement for an ongoing commitment of funds, allocating financial resources in the budget for staff, internal and external training and expertise, as well as dedicating time for individual and collective reflection, trust development and relationship building; and finally, it indicates that the commitment to promoting DEAI must be constantly measured and evaluated (AAM, 2022, p. 8).

Among some of the reflections proposed by the document, one questions how many operational areas of museums address one or more dimensions of promoting diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion as a starting point for reflection and action (*Idem*, p. 9). Although these concepts are crucial in any educational action, it is very noticeable that in other sectors of museums, especially the more traditional and technical ones such as conservation, documentation, and curatorship, for example, this is not a common practice.

In this new context, the “monopoly” on accessibility is no longer held only by the educational areas but by the entire institution. This reconfiguration generates both a bonus, since it is hoped that this transversality will be beneficial and strengthen accessible museum practices, but also the risk of a burden, with the possibility of the theme being co-opted by areas with little or no practice with such processes, and in some cases, for institutional self-promotion purposes which may weaken accessible educational actions.

## A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN BRAZILIAN MUSEUMS

Education in museums is often in dialogue with the educational trends disseminated in schools. In the Brazilian context, where almost 10% of the population declare themselves to be disabled, although its implementation in practice is insufficient, the articulation of processes, legislation and actions that guarantee school education to these people has been constant (BUENO, BUENO, PORTILHO, 2023).

Historically, museum education has followed this evolution and, in the 1990s, it began to bear fruit, both in specific actions and in ongoing projects. According to Leandro, Boff and Regiani (2021, p. 4),

*In Brazil, laws and decrees guarantee different people the right to access scientific and cultural knowledge in museum spaces (Decree no. 5296, 2004; Law no. 13.146, 2015). As far as the disabled public is concerned, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) and the Brazilian Inclusion Law n. 13.146 (2015) are normative milestones for guaranteeing the political, civil, and social rights of people with disabilities ensuring social inclusion, as well as their full and effective participation in society.*

The history of inclusive educational activities in Brazilian museums has yet to be written, but we can mention a few recognised milestones. The pioneering “Museum of Art and Special Audiences” project for people with disabilities, developed in the 1990s by Amanda Tojal and Margarete de Oliveira at the Museu de

Silk-screen panels created in 2023 by homeless adults taking part in the Socio-Cultural Inclusion Programme Outreach Educational Action workshops at the Casa de Oração do Povo da Rua. Photo: NAE



Arte Contemporânea of the University of São Paulo (MAC USP), which lasted ten years and was subsequently developed at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo. Also in the 1990s, under the direction of Waldisa Russo, the Museu da Indústria, do Comércio e da Tecnologia of the State of São Paulo developed similar activities, as did the São Paulo Biennale in 1998. The Museu Biológico do Instituto Butantã has initiated a series of “Special Visits”, coordinated by Pedro Federsoni, the Museu de Ciências Morfológicas of the Federal University of Minas Gerais launched the project “Célula à mão” (A cell at your fingertips), by Maria das Graças Ribeiro (GUIMARÃES, 2008).

At the end of the last century, there were other inclusive educational initiatives aimed at audiences other than the disabled, such as Silio Coutinho’s work with the elderly at the MAC USP, and the visual arts experiment for imprisoned young

people at the Fundação Casa at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, coordinated by Paulo Portella Filho.

In the case of the Pinacoteca, actions aimed at inclusion, which - as we maintain - go beyond the limits of actions aimed exclusively at disabled people, began systematically in 2002. The first two inclusive practice initiatives date back to that year: the mapping of social institutions in the area where the museum is located with a view to possible articulations and partnerships, and a survey of the museum audience that supported the initiative to establish specific programmes aimed at inclusion. It was on this basis that the Socio-Cultural Inclusion Programme was created that year to work in the museum’s surroundings with socially vulnerable people. In 2003, the Educational Programme for People with Disabilities was created; at the same time actions aimed at museum staff were systematised and, in 2013,

the programme “My Museum” was launched for the elderly.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of accessibility has been widely discussed in the museum educational departments for years, as these sectors were, and to some extents still are, how people - in particular people with disabilities - can enter museums not only physically, but also cognitively, socially, and emotionally. These sectors have focused on training specialised professionals, preparing resources and materials, and fighting to ensure that the content exhibited in museums is intelligible and comprehensible by and for everyone.

As we have seen, it is common to use the terms accessibility and inclusion in reference to actions aimed at people with disabilities. However, in our work in the Pinacoteca’s education department, we consider accessibility in a broader way, which of course includes people with disabilities but not only, since we also include any person or group who has any type of difficulty accessing museums. Surveys of the Brazilian museumgoer reveal that the visitors who come spontaneously to the museum have a very specific profile: they are mainly young, highly educated and, consequently, have average or high family incomes.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, we can say that the larger groups that have difficulty accessing museums in the country are those in the worst socio-economic conditions. From the outset, this indicates a cross-cutting approach to accessibility in the country’s museums which must take social inequalities into account, an inescapable element of the Brazilian reality, as a cut-off point that limits access to institutions for most people.

As Chagas and Storino state,

Just as it is essential to overcome the physical, sensory, and cognitive barriers that prevent full access to museums and heritage, it is also necessary to overcome the economic, social, and cultural barriers and face the challenge of radically widening access to their services and products. In other words, we need to overcome the immaterial barriers that make museums part of an elite lifestyle, beyond the reach of the lower classes (CHAGAS; STORINO, 2012, p. XIV).

Within this more expanded key to understanding cultural accessibility, we can indicate some of its aspects, from those of a more physical and material nature, to others of a more subjective nature, but equally important.

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2 For more information about the education programmes at the *Pinacoteca de São Paulo* see: <<https://pinacoteca.org.br/pina/educacao/programas/>>- Accessed January 2024.

3 According to an investigation into cultural habits carried out in 2017 in 12 Brazilian capitals, as far as museums are concerned, a profile of visitors can be characterised as being made up of young people (more than half aged up to 34), with a slightly greater predominance of men, with a high level of education (57% with higher education) and income (62% with a monthly income of 4,500 US\$). The same study points to the profile of those who said they had never visited a museum in their lives: people with low levels of education - almost half of them with primary education (49%), and mostly (55% with a monthly income not superceding 595 US\$) (LEIVA; MEIRELLES, 2018).



We can therefore characterise access to cultural institutions in terms of its physical aspects (relating to the possibility of mobility and movement); its intellectual aspects (relating to understanding objects and exhibition discourses, the conceptual organisation and language used, institutional rules and spatial orientation); its attitudinal or emotional aspects (relating to the feeling of being welcomed by the institution, trust and pleasure in participation and identification with cultural production systems); in its cultural aspects (in terms of recognising the cultural diversity present in the institution); in its financial aspects (with the release of entrance fees) and, finally, in its sensory aspects (relating to the possibility of accessing cultural objects through senses other than sight and hearing, for people with visual and hearing impairments). (AIDAR, 2019, p. 162).

There is no hierarchy or ideal sequence to be followed by these aspects in promoting accessibility in museums, since they should occur in an articulated and simultaneous way. However, in our opinion, the symbolic barriers to museums tend to be more difficult to overcome, since they don't depend (only) on budgetary resources, but on changing mentalities and the perception of the elitist and distinctive social place occupied by these institutions, something that can't be transformed with isolated institutional action, but with continuous public policies.

In this sense, another term that is often confused with accessibility and even understood as a synonym, partly due to the influence of its use by formal education, deserves our attention: inclusion.

Social exclusion is defined as a process and a state in which social dynamics and institutions prevent individuals and groups from participating widely in society. As such, museums can either play an important role in a network of exclusionary elements or be tools for inclusion.

We believe, as O'Neill says, that any cultural organisation that is not working to break down barriers regarding socially excluded groups is actively maintaining them (O'NEILL, 2002, p. 37). For this reason, cultural institutions are not - and cannot be - exempt or neutral, since they participate in the arena of social problems, i.e. it is not possible to detach cultural action from social action (AIDAR, 2002). Since the process of exclusion involves issues such as lack of political, social, and cultural participation, access to labour markets and access to social networks having thus a multidimensional characteristic, inclusion policies must also consider these multidimensional approaches including social and cultural services.

We can understand accessibility, then, as the identification of the different barriers that end up excluding individuals or groups from attending museums, and the subsequent development of strategies to overcome these barriers, bringing traditionally non-visiting audiences into museums and enabling them to appropriate the culture preserved in them. As a result,

Inclusive processes should propose, in addition to greater access to museum institutions, the development of actions that have a political, social, and economic impact, and that can be both short and long term. Hence the

closer relationship between inclusive processes and museum education, since both seek to promote qualitative impacts on their participants' daily lives (AIDAR, 2019, p. 159).

So, rather than developing new audiences for museums, what we're looking for with inclusive educational processes is to be meaningful for the participants, regardless of whether they become or not regular visitors; their loyalty should be a consequence and not the main objective of the proposed actions.

## THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL FUNCTION OF MUSEUMS

The most recent definition of museums that reinforces the social function of these institutions does not appear without considering a wide range of historical references and internal struggles within ICOM itself and can therefore be seen as the result of several previous debates and founding documents (BRULON, MELLADO, 2022).

Nor is it a new observation that the museum's educational departments have always been ahead of other professional departments in their dialogue with the public as the latter were more focused on dealing with the objects in their collections; however, with social changes, these institutions are increasingly required to be in closer relation with their communities.

According to Hugues de Varine-Bohan (VARINE-BOHAN, 2008), a change in the functions and definitions of the museum as an institution respond to social changes. According to him,

even the most traditional museums (art/history/sciences) have changed their communication practices: from guided tours to mediation exercises considering the demands of visitors' living cultures, to the transformation of their exhibitions based on the diversity of audiences. For him,

The conjunction between museums and social development doesn't exist as such, it requires willpower and perseverance to overcome the opposing forces like, the inertia or even hostility of professionals obsessed with collecting and research, or the distrust of political and administrative leaders concerned with profit and communication, but also the scepticism of social agents who traditionally see museums as a dusty institution for the delight of a privileged cultural elite. (VARINE-BOHAN, 2008, p. 14)

It is also necessary to reflect on what kind of inclusive practices museums want to implement. Whether they are "only" choosing to transform some aspects of their collections, collecting and exhibiting objects from other ethnicities, genders, origins, beliefs and localities than those that the white European tradition produced or subtracted from its colonies; or whether they propose deeper and structural changes within their own organisation, with proposals to co-create programmes and actions with the communities' participation, both for them and for their interests.

As Maria Vlachou states,

On the other hand, there are also many of us who advocate 'access', but access to what we define as valid culture. Still, what if we tried to get to know better the communities in

which we are inserted? What if we opened up our spaces (which are also theirs), involving them, creating comfort (physical, psychological and intellectual) and a feeling of belonging? What if we programmed together with them? What if the artist were them? (VLACHOU, 2013, p. 92)

Being able to relate with the communities to value their identities and their cultural manifestations; broadening the notion of the identity memory of each community together with their members' individual memories; broadening the understanding of fundamental social values such as democracy and coexistence; deepening discussions about the different meanings given to concepts considered stable (such as science, art, history, etc.) according to their temporality; these are among many other possibilities, essential tasks for museums looking to be in contact with their communities.

A socially responsible museum must be able to work together with its communities to be both a space for their events, concerns, meetings, celebrations, dialogues, etc. but also to support their political struggles, moments of strength but also of weakness; and to be open to co-creation, not just by presenting its collections, but by dynamically responding to their visitors' needs and desires.

## EDUCATING TO EDUCATE

As mentioned earlier, the new definition of museums expands responsibilities that were previously assumed mainly by the museums' education department to the entire

institution. Even if this movement is important and can be considered a major step forward, one can still doubt as to whether museums and especially the more traditional ones are prepared to take on this new role giving up the powers they have built up throughout their history. For example, are art museums prepared to include works by disabled artists in their collections? Would they be prepared to allow their audiences to express themselves freely within their spaces? Are museum institutions interested in contributing to a more dignified and just life for socially discriminated groups? Would they be able and willing to give up their relationships focused on the social distinction that the concept of culture attracts to engage in an egalitarian dialogue with people passing in front of their doors and who don't feel invited to enter? Would they be interested in shedding their position of authority (often disguised as technical knowledge) to open their spaces to ephemeral producers and productions not necessarily recognised in the traditional cultural panorama? In other words, are museums willing to *become educational* and operate in *dialogue* with different audiences?

As the educational sectors most often practice dialogue with the public and operate through a methodology called mediation (CHIOVATTO, 2020), they theoretically have the expertise to allow these attitudes to expand and permeate the entire institution.

For this to happen, dialogue must begin within these institutions and educational knowledge must become the basis for the institution's work;

in other words, the hierarchical distinctions built up over the centuries between the different museum professionals must be abolished and the social function of the museum must be clearly defined - and effectively implemented - as a guide for all its activities.

The fear of extending the promotion of accessibility, equity and inclusion to the whole museum is that no department nor anyone really takes the responsibility for it to happen and that instead of collective constructions, we move towards “patchwork quilts”, in which each department contributes with its own perspective, resulting in a social impact far beyond what we desire.

We therefore suggest that all acquisitions, exhibitions, and cultural activities be

planned in line with the institution's social purpose, defined collectively and in line with the guidelines of the new definition of museums. That councils be set up that are not just administrative or technical, but also social, including the participation of different individuals showing how varied the civil society and its instances are to co-create and weave together its cultural programme. That the institution's spaces may offer to the different actors from the surrounding communities a place for cultural, social, and political events. To see personal objects and objects affectively significant be exhibited next to those considered as museum heritage items, thus acknowledging their significance and importance. And that the social and cultural activities of the museums become increasingly indistinguishable.

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# Experience as a learning process: Between accessible museums at the Museu da República

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*A museology not serving  
life is useless.  
(MINOM, 2017)*

The most important partnership I've ever had in the field of accessibility began with an invitation to meet Camila Oliveira (educator and author of the Accessible Museums project). I would like in this testimony to proudly describe everything it represented.

First, I was excited and anxious. I was very happy to develop such an interesting partnership that, without all the infrastructure offered by the Museu do Amanhã (*Museum of Tomorrow*), would have been impossible to realise. A project in which the Museu da República (*Republic Museum*) could offer its space and its collection to widely embrace a cause for which we constantly fight.

What seemed like a dream has come true in several meetings. Arrangements such as scheduling visits with schools, groups

of blind or low-vision people, hearing-impaired students to the museum with educators and interpreters, providing buses and snacks at the end of the visits are tasks that require considerable efforts by the organisation.

Despite having a physical disability and being responsible for all the accessibility projects at the Museu da República, my disability was not included in this project. Here I place myself as a museologist, curator, and disabled person, engaging my body into what was my way to create communicating mechanisms, and as such, allowing personal routes to transform pre-established concepts and meanings. Corporeality becomes *decorporeality*, the future becomes *deviancy*. These are concepts intrinsic to the disabled body's experience which I feel necessary to discuss in this text.

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Image 1:  
Museologist Isabel  
Portella mediating  
with a group of  
hearing impaired  
young people  
in the Great Hall  
of the Museu da  
República.  
Photo: André  
Martins.



As a person with a disability and a PhD in Art Criticism, recognised in my field as a curator and art critic, I can now serenely speak about accessibility issues, which I have been working on for the last seven years.

All my life I have considered disability as something personal, so the issues of overcoming and/or adapting were only mine. When I immersed myself in institutional inclusion and accessibility work, I realised how wrong I was and how this problem wasn't just mine. Institutionally, and for years, this was the attitude of museums, especially those in Brazil.

It was assumed that disability was an individual problem, and it was therefore determined that it was the disabled person's responsibility to adapt, habilitate or rehabilitate to fulfil and carry out the tasks set by society in professional and social terms.

My area of activity in the field of accessibility is directed at museum spaces and/or cultural spaces and

was much more focused on raising awareness and training staff who would interact with the public. Since the beginning of this project bringing and proposing experiences within the museum space, I see a new/other way of contributing to accessible museums much more linked to the sensitive.

For nine months, the length of a pregnancy, the Between Accessible Museums project welcomed groups of blind people every Wednesday, in turns with groups of deaf people. For a better understanding, we will divide the visits, analyses, and testimonies into two parts. One with blind or low-vision people and the other with deaf people.

### VISIT FOR HEARING IMPAIRED.

A museum can be accessible and yet not inclusive. The museum may show models and tactile reproductions, have an audio guide, ramps and other devices for accessibility and still not necessarily be inclusive if they are not thought out and made available to everyone.





Image 2: Eduarda Emerick tactilely reading the entrance gate to the Museu da República.  
Photo: André Martins.



Multiplying access possibilities also involves increasing the participation of different groups. Inclusion involves the active participation of specific groups in the museum.

Thinking about and developing scenarios of accessibility for/with hearing impaired people in museums can only be developed and evaluated by hearing impaired. Institutions need to include in their staff people and receptionists fluent in the Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS), have specific interpreters and guides for the deaf in the exhibitions, international information symbols, video guides (in LIBRAS with -subtitleds).

There is a notable difference between the creation of an educational programme for deaf people and one thinking about an educational programme with deaf people. Deaf people must jointly interact in the construction of the teaching and learning processes.

The Inclusive Museum model is established in an institution and is inserted into an institutional political project that replaces the principles of social inclusion, insofar as it understands the museum as an instrument at the service of democracy. We need to remember that we are talking about the Museu da República, of the *Res publica* (public thing).

That's what Bruno Baptista, a deaf educator at the Museu do Amanhã who had been accompanying groups of deaf people to the Museu da República taught me together with Diego Xavier, a LIBRAS translator-interpreter who specially translated the signs for me having no knowledge of LIBRAS.

At the first meetings, I was delighted to receive with the Museum our own symbol. Little by little, I became familiar with some of the symbols and, together with Arthur Nascimento, holder of a FAPERJ scholarship, we learnt some signs. I must confess that Arthur now knows full sentences in LIBRAS as I still don't.

On each visit, Bruno told me that we needed to hire a deaf educator for the museum and that visits to the Museu da República would suffer if we didn't have this kind person on our staff. I must say how despaired I was because unfortunately this type of hiring is not my responsibility pointing out that the Museu do Amanhã is managed by a social cultural organisation giving a certain autonomy to the museum while the federal Museu da República belongs to the IBRAM (an autarchy that is now part of the Ministry of Tourism).

Bruno fulfils his role as a receiver, and I'm left trying to solve and fill in the gaps.

With each visit I knew and understood that my information needed to be more objective. Short sentences to clarify the information, sometimes removing dates and details that could lead to misunderstandings. Once, during a visit, a student, due to too much information passed on quickly, ended up understanding that the Baron of Nova Friburgo who had built the house had killed **Getúlio Vargas**. Historical and funny confusions at first led me to realise that too much information kills the understanding of the various historical layers of the house. To be accessible the information must be relevant.



Image 3: Visit with a group of hearing-impaired people.

Photo: André Martins.

Excessive amount of data, facts and concepts result in confusing messages hindering the understanding in the LIBRAS sign language which leads to misunderstanding the content which is really important.

Sensory perception is one of the main characteristics for capturing information. The essence of LIBRAS is its visuospatial characteristic and sign language allows deaf people to communicate visually, using gestures made with fingers, hands, body, and facial expressions. This visuality can also come through images, which proved to be great allies when Bruno and Pamela, the educators at the Museu do Amanhã proposed them on the visits where most visitors were children and teenagers.

## A MUSEUM TO TOUCH

Looking at the initial epigraph of this text *museology that doesn't serve life is useless* raises the question: who are museums for? Seeking to answer this question, I will refer to the Museu da República, but it could be any other museum as museums today still serve a very small and limited part of the population.

The conflict between being accessible or not arises from the standardisation of environments using models and concepts that are considered typical. These concepts are based on the image of young, athletic, independent, and healthy people. We can thus consider accessibility to be achieved through diversity, potential and dialogue between the body and the environment.

The visits with the groups of blind or low-vision people were led by Eduarda Emerick and were always moments in which each proposal was to create experiences for all visitors, putting intentionally in conflict the hands and their physical and sensory surroundings.

The educators from the Museu do Amanhã brought a suitcase with sensory objects to complement the narratives developed by Duda and myself.

Presenting a house steeped in more than 150 years of history was a challenge, especially for me who had never guided groups before.

In the suitcase, the educators from the Museu do Amanhã brought a selection of multi-sensory objects that, upon contact, brought visitors closer to the essence of the object or the context of a particular room.

Before the start of the visits, the museology team and I had selected some objects or elements of the house that could be touched like some bronze sculptures and architectural parts such as doors, windows, and the staircase.

A model was brought in from the museum's education department; not meant as a sensory experience it helped us nevertheless understand the structure of the building.

The first sense organ is the hand, the hyper-functional extremity of the body, a tactile organ for perceiving the world and for creation. Looking, living, and touching.

The disabled persons perceive, identify, and express themselves autonomously

and with poetic protagonism by aligning, manipulating and entangling not only the movements of their hands, but also their references with different materialities and contexts.

By handling the latter, they recover affectivity without destabilising what is considered possible or impossible. Relationships that were only built through constant dialogue between the physical body, personal memory, and theoretical and imaginary concepts.

When I look at myself and other people, in the same way that I look daily at objects in search of an inner gesture that considers bodily experiences, I find new possible meaning about bodies investigating the function of the material. It's about bodies reconstructing the semantic subjectivity of the image.

The sensory objects are meant to exercise perception, to provoke the visitor with the most diverse stimuli. Based on these poetics, the visitor is seen as part of the work and his/her relationship with the object takes on a new dimension, broadening the dialogue between the two.

It is the multi-sensory body that is invited to become involved and transformed by the aesthetic experience. In this way, the object is no longer the goal, and the emphasis lies on provoking a direct sensation. It is through sensory exaltation that a transposition of perceptual limits is sought. The hegemony of vision gives way to multisensoriality.

The neo-concretist artists' poetic openness as an experimental exercise towards freedom is a great art



Image 4: Mediation with a group of hearing-impaired people.  
Photo: Albert Andrade.

approach. Hélio Oiticica's sentence "Experimenting the experimental" became a motto, as did Mario Pedrosa's phrase, "Experimental exercise of freedom". Hélio's slogan "experiment with the experimental" was maximised during visits and turned into an experience.

## MULTISENSORY COMMUNICATION IN THE EXHIBITION

We use the word multisensory when the intention is to use other senses, such as hearing, smell, or taste, but above all, the be an opportunity to use touch to touch the objects.

Offering multiple sensory experiences, and not just visual ones, be it in the museum or in an ordinary classroom, is an inclusive strategy, as it creates a space of equality between everyone, establishing direct contact with the work

and in a potentially more meaningful apprehension. The possibility of interacting multisensorially, thinking about the total and somatic conscience, is a question of alterity from which everyone benefits and enabling diverse sensory uses and abilities.

According to Amanda Tojal (2007, p. 22):

A multi-sensory approach to the museum prevents exclusion. By using written and oral information with varying levels of complexity and employing visual, oral, tactile, and interactive means of communication, the museum will better fulfil its mission, communicating more effectively with more people.

Perception or multisensory experience implies the use of all the senses, as we can analyse:

Multisensory perception is also an inherent part of a semiotic position applied to museum communication that favours understanding the

reception based on the stimuli coming from the objects and the senses attributed to them by public looking at them. In this more specific case, the emphasis on reception is linked to the enjoyment of the cultural object through all the sensory channels besides the visual, such as the tactile, auditory, olfactory, taste and kinaesthetic (Tojal, 2007, p. 102-103).

Sensory stimulation is directly linked to cognition, enabling to intensify and give to the discovery and construction of the senses, in an active attitude of search and receptivity. The gaze does thus not develop only through the sight, but through the multiple possibilities of perception and interaction with the world.

The impressions captured by various stimuli: sounds, flavours, textures, shapes, thicknesses, smells, as well as the impregnated memories that emerge from them, are richly woven during the artistic experience, building a potentially richer learning experience than those constructed by sight alone.

Processes that enable this synaesthetic experience, objects and spaces that lead to it are increasingly common, as they understand and dialogue with the process of interactivity that art has experienced over time.

This new audience that cultural museum spaces are receiving is far from homogeneous. They are multiple, made up of people among others with different adaptive needs, some physical, others intellectual, permanent, or temporary, children (and some still very young), the elderly, pregnant women. The challenge for institutions is to promote access and permanence for this new audience and, above all, the feeling of cultural belonging, quoted by Viviane Sarraf (2015) as a central challenge for cultural spaces. According to the author:

The development of cultural belonging, which is one of the main challenges facing cultural spaces today, can use sensory mediation as a strategy, making use of olfactory, taste, sound



Image 5: Case with sensory objects used during the visits.

Photo: André Martins.

and tactile resources, because sensory perception does not presuppose intellectual knowledge, mastery of language or familiarity with cultural offerings; it is free of intellectual and social barriers inherent to the origin of cultural spaces and has the power to involve and sensitise different individuals (Sarraf, 2015, p. 22).

Approaching a text like this is always a constant dissection exercise of our actions and reflections. We can be people constantly evolving and learning, reflecting on every action and/or phrase we say and thinking about how to say them, because we are always coated in some capacitating layers that we try to reject and continuously change.

The Accessible Museums project conducted in partnership with the Museu do Amanhã made me look back and realise how much has not been done yet like the lack of staff, a very small team and almost no funding; we know that what is lacking is an institutional policy. We cannot accept that all accessibility issues lie under one single disabled person's responsibility. It needs to be EVERYONE'S project. This is the main cause of our weakness, the absence of an internal policy integrating accessibility and inclusion actions.

**The following is the testimony of Silvia Pinho, a historian of the Historical Archive of the Museu da República:**

The presentations of the "Between Accessible Museums" project at the Museu da República begin outdoors, in front of the Side Gallery, right under the window next to my desk. So, I've had the privilege of following some of this marvellous initiative. The first time I accompanied them, by chance, it caught my attention so much that I leaned out of the window and listened, watching. I was moved by the mediators' speeches, the students' attentive gaze, the mothers' silent presence, Isabel's enlightened, calm, and very representative performance. I was moved as a museum professional and as a mum, witnessing a project that is so necessary, so essential!

**Testimonial from Livia Murer, technical coordinator at the Museu da República:**

The Museu da República's participation in Between Accessible Museums project met the whole team's desire to put accessibility in practice. Both the visits and the power of the debates, which are only possible with free access and the inclusion of all, were a real gift. The exchange of experiences between the teams, from the planning stage to the development of the scripts and mediating objects, to the practical visits, leaves a legacy that will forever transform the way we think about the public of the museum.

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# Plural approaches

# 65 Years after the UNESCO Regional Seminar on the Educational Role of Museums (1958): Celebrations, Reflections and Struggle for a Democratic Museum Education

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In 2018, the Brazilian museum field celebrated the 60th anniversary of the UNESCO Regional Seminar on the Educational Role of Museums. It's noteworthy mentioning that the same year IBRAM chose for the 12th Spring of Museums the theme "Celebrating education in museums". On that occasion, the Museum of the Republic, in partnership with the Casa de Rui Barbosa Foundation, the Rio de Janeiro Museum of Modern Art, the Rio Negro Palace Museum, the Imperial Museum, the National Historical Museum and the Museum of Reproductions, held the seminar *The educational role of museums: 60 years after the UNESCO Regional Seminar*, aiming at recalling the

event that took place in 1958 in Rio de Janeiro and updating the debate.

One of the objectives of the 2018 seminar was to build new museological, museographic, communicational and educational approaches for museums. Strictly speaking, it was about building new poetic and political perspectives, free from the technological allegiance of contemporary social networks. Novelty does not lie in technology, but in the ability to give it a human, social and creative meaning. Technologies can be used for control, conformation, destruction and hatred, but they can also be used for liberation, transformation, creation and love.

The seminar, which travelled to all the

partner institutions in the city of Rio de Janeiro and Petrópolis and, as a legacy, promoted various inter-institutional relationships and managed to publish the book *The educational role of museums: 60 years after the UNESCO Regional Seminar*<sup>1</sup>, designed to revisit the seminar of 1958 presenting the discussions of the seminar of 2018 and filling the gaps in the following topics:

- 1) reflections on six decades of relations between museums and education, culminating in the recognition of museum education;
- 2) critical analysis of Georges Henri Rivière's report (1958), outlining propositions, presenting the historical context of the document and discussing its deficiencies;
- 3) a record of the important bibliography on museums and museology produced and published at the time, books, reports, articles and texts that are currently being revised;
- 4) a complete translation into Portuguese of the report of the seminar of 1958 signed by Georges Henri Rivière. This was a debt that the Brazilian museum field owed to itself.

Our desire (of the organisers of the afore-mentioned work) was to contribute to updating the debate around the 1958 seminar and to stimulate new critical readings and new research around the theme and the museum field, democratically convinced that it contained in it

divergences and convergences, thoughts and approaches facing each other, as well as leaving open questions, sometimes hinted at in a delicate way and others incompletely pointed out.

Five years ago, when the book was conceived and published, it was clear that many issues would still be widely discussed: gender issues in Brazilian museology; colonialism and the colonialist role of ICOM in dealing with Brazilian and Latin American museology; the National Museum Education Policy; the relationship between museums and the press; the internationalisation of Brazilian museology (will there be a Brazilian museology, especially a Brazilian social museology?). Today it's clear that some of the issues that were discussed on the fringes in 2018 have over the last five years gained central importance in the Brazilian political and social context and that these issues should be discussed more widely: what is the role of museums in the fight against fascism? What is the role of museums in the fight against colonialism and against racism and sexism, lgbtphobia and aporophobia? How can we ensure that museums are practices, processes and institutions committed to radical democracy, equality, freedom, good living, environmental protection, and all of this in dialogue with museum education? Do we want to see our museums with museum education without clear political commitments or committed to banking and liberal education?

1 Available at: [https://museudarepublica.museus.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Livro\\_seminario\\_WEB.pdf](https://museudarepublica.museus.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Livro_seminario_WEB.pdf)

## II

What did one want to celebrate in 2018? What role did the 1958 *UNESCO Regional Seminar on the Educational Role of Museums* play in the development of museum education over the following decades in Brazil and around the world?

The UNESCO Regional Seminar on the educational function of museums was held mainly in the city of Rio de Janeiro, in the Education department of the Museum of Modern Art (MAM), from 7 to 30 September 1958, with preparations having begun the year before. Unlike the short seminars so much in vogue today, the 1958 seminar lasted twenty-four days and involved travelling and technical visits to different museums and historical and cultural sites. One of the main aims of the seminar was, through exchange and professional development, to contribute to the development of museums and stimulate their educational programmes and sectors.

Two other so-called international seminars on the same subject were organised by UNESCO: the first in Brooklyn, New York, USA, in 1952, and the second in Athens, Greece, in 1954. Two observations are worth highlighting here: first the investment made by UNESCO after WWII, in the 1950s, in furthering studies, theories and practices on museums and education. This investment can be seen, for example, in the work to prepare and hold at least three seminars, in the promotion of exchanges and concrete experiences, in the production, publication and availability of specialised bibliography,

and in the circulation of specialists and the awarding of scholarships.

Second: the discursive and colonialist nature of ICOM/UNESCO, which at the time insisted on giving an international dimension to a seminar held in the USA and in Greece, and a regional dimension to a seminar held in Brazil, even though the latter had broad international participation. The seminar planned by UNESCO to be held in Tokyo, Japan in 1960 would also be called regional. The expressions “regional” and “international” are not neutral, they are not naïve; on the contrary, political wills and desires circulate through them; they can either serve to liberate and enlighten, or to imprison and confuse.

Regarding the first comment, it is important to note that, in addition to the international publications produced and distributed by UNESCO, Brazilian research and publications were also encouraged in the 1950s: *Recursos educativos de museus brasileiros* by Guy José Paulo de Hollanda; *Museu e educação* by F. dos Santos Trigueiros; and *Museu ideal* by Regina Monteiro Real. During the preparation phase of the seminar, at least nine bibliographical documents all published between 1952 and 1957 were made available to the participants.

As to the second comment, it is worth remembering that twenty-four countries were invited to take part in the 1958 seminar, of which ten sent representatives - Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, the United States, France, Mexico, the Netherlands and Paraguay - and fourteen were not represented - Bolivia, Colombia, Costa

Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, the United Kingdom, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The seminar audience was basically divided into four groups: leaders appointed by UNESCO, leaders appointed by Brazil, participants and Brazilian observers. The participants included one or two representatives from each of the ten countries mentioned above. In total, there were twenty-two Brazilian observers, twenty from the city of Rio de Janeiro (RJ) and two from Curitiba (PR).

Attendance at the event was rather restricted and controlled. The presence of women was notable throughout the seminar, both among the leaders nominated by UNESCO and Brazil and among the participants and observers, where it was over 65 per cent. Regarding the Brazilian participants, it is worth noting that even though there was a predominance of women in museums, the nominees (four) were all men. The presence of professors and professionals from the National Historical Museum's Museum Course who actively participated in the seminar is also noteworthy. Even then, Brazilian museology was making its mark and asserting its territory. Although some professionals from the National Historical Museum took part in the seminar, Gustavo Barroso was clearly absent. If within the MHN and the Museum Course, Barroso played a highly influential role in the museum the field of museology during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, after WWII however, and especially after the creation of the International

Council of Museums and the Modern Art museums in Brazil, Barroso's museological influence gradually lost its strength and ability to represent Brazilian museology.

The 1958 seminar was not a peaceful field. On the contrary, there were struggles and disputes with different worldviews and professional perspectives; clashes between generations and between the hegemonic museum thinking of European origin and other trends that sought to assert themselves, taking into account national experiences. In the case of Brazil, the dispute between Barrosian museological thinking and the new ways of thinking and practising museology that were emerging, especially from the new generations, was also present and sensitive. According to Henri Rivière's final report, "there were disagreements, sometimes sharp, between educators and the museum staff".

The 1958 seminar took on the task of discussing and trying to define certain concepts: museology, museum, museography, large museums, small museums, medium-sized museums, and museum architecture; as well as signalling the need for dialogue with technical terms such as: lighting, outdoor climate, security against theft, security against fire, armed conflicts and other topics. Examining the concepts worked on in 1958 and putting them into motion today, trying to realise how much progress has been made and how much is still entangled in problems diagnosed in that time that shouldn't have ended is not a difficult or easy task; it is simply a necessary one.

# ITINERÁRIO DAS ARTES PLÁSTICAS

JAIME MAURÍCIO

## Encerramento do Seminário: algumas conclusões

Seminário Latino-Americano de Museus, que há cerca de um mês vinha desenvolvendo intensa atividade no Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio, a fim de melhor esclarecer e renovar a ação do museu no plano da pedagogia, da educação em geral, encerrou-se ontem, às 16 horas, no auditório do Ministério da Educação e Cultura através de uma cerimônia presidida pelo ministro Clóvis Salgado, com a presença (na mesa) do sr. Jean Thomas, vice-diretor geral da UNESCO, do professor George Henri Riviere, delegado da UNESCO que dirigiu os trabalhos, sr. Helela Alberto Torres, diretora da Organização Nacional do ICOM e do professor Themistocles Cavalcanti, presidente do IBCEC. Presentes ainda todos os

delegados da UNESCO, das nações latino-americanas, museólogos, críticos e artistas. Falou o ministro da Educação, salaram todos, presentes à mesa: palavras de satisfação, de congratulações pelo êxito do Seminário. E o voto unânime para que os resultados do trabalho tivessem ampla acolhida entre os países latino-americanos.

Os seminaristas ainda não concluíram totalmente o relatório a ser apresentado. Entretanto, podemos adiantar de forma sintética e possivelmente incompleta uma parte das recomendações a serem feitas à UNESCO e, consequentemente, às nações Latino-Americanas.

### A APRESENTAÇÃO

A apresentação é o meio específico à disposição do museu para valorizar a presença desses testemunhos. O museu, entretanto, não pode realizar integralmente essa valorização sem recorrer, em doses que variam segundo as circunstâncias, aos meios considerados auxiliares, outras formas de difusão, como a linguagem, a imagem fixa ou escrita, o cinema, o rádio, a televisão, a imprensa. Uma apresentação que corresponda a esses princípios será de inestimável valia para a educação.

O seminário concluiu que o nível intelectual da apresentação pode variar de acordo com os tipos de apresentação. Um nível elevado deve ser sempre tentado. A apresentação deve ser proposta, nunca imposta, e o conservador concretizará esse objetivo se contar com a ajuda de um museólogo qualificado e as autoridades competentes fornecerem os meios necessários.

### ATIVIDADES EDUCATIVAS

Nenhum tipo clássico de atividades educativas do museu deve ser negligenciado. É essencial desenvolver ao máximo compatível com a ordem a participação bem pensada do público. É importante a visita guiada, principalmente se for auxiliada por meios especiais, como o cinema por exemplo. Atenção especial deve ser dada a formas novas de atividades, como as excursões e os clubes, que abrem à educação as mais amplas perspectivas.

### PUBLICAÇÕES

É necessário dar aos museus todos os meios necessários para realização e difusão de suas publicações educativas. Entre elas, deve-se dar uma atenção especial àquelas que, estimulando

do no espírito do público o interesse pelas coleções, prolongam por isso mesmo seus efeitos. Os museus deverão vigiar a qualidade das publicações educativas difundidas sob sua orientação.

### O CINEMA

O filme cinematográfico traz à ação educativa dos museus diversas vantagens: animação específica dos programas; possibilidade de formas novas para facilitar a ação, figurando em primeira linha o filme da visita guiada. Acentua-se a importância do filme de 16 mm, na medida em que: a) seu preço de revenda esteja mais em proporção com os recursos medianamente à disposição dos museus; b) convenha mais às circunstâncias disponíveis para difusão; c) facilite a cooperação de cinegrafistas afeccionados.

Os museus devem estimular a produção de películas sobre a instituição e instalação com material de proteção adequado. Solicita-se às autoridades responsáveis que lhes forneçam recursos para esse trabalho.

### O RÁDIO

O rádio pode levar o museu e sua ação educativa a um imenso público indistinto: através de seus vários tipos de programas, por meio de programas reservados aos próprios museus. Na medida das suas possibilidades, os poderes públicos devem favorecer essa proposta, especialmente no que diz respeito ao rádio escolar. As emissoras particulares também demonstram boa vontade, bastando que os museus lhes demonstrem a variedade o valor dos recursos dos quais dispõem. Tipos novos de programas foram emitidos com êxito em alguns países, cuja originalidade consiste em associar à imagem

ao som, dentro das limitações do gênero. Considerando as circunstâncias locais, sua aplicação é recomendada para a América Latina.

### TELEVISÃO

Considerando o desenvolvimento acelerado na maioria dos países do mundo, a televisão pode ser um poderoso instrumento de educação, que muito interessa aos museus da América Latina, que se esforçarão: a) por ocupar um lugar nas rubricas dos programas de atualidades, cultura e televisão escolar; b) por conseguir a criação de rubricas reservadas especialmente para eles, desenvolvendo programas específicos.

Conviria que essa ação não se fizesse exclusivamente em cadeias especializadas, mas ainda no quadro das emissões mais espetaculares e atraentes por serem as mais apreciadas. Muitas possibilidades se oferecem para uma cooperação estreita entre a televisão e os museus, respeitadas as preocupações de cada uma das partes.

### COMUNIDADE DE MUSEUS

Não obstante as categorias diferentes — museus de arte e artes aplicadas, museus arqueológicos e de história, museus de etnologia e de folclore, museus de ciências naturais, museus científicos e técnicos, etc. — os museus possuem em geral a mesma característica, os mesmos interesses e métodos, cabendo-lhes, fundamentalmente e em benefício coletivo da sociedade, uma missão de estudo, de conservação e de valorização dos bens culturais.

Essa missão dos museus seria favorecida se em todos os países latino-americanos e outros em que fosse necessária, se criassem entre os museus um sistema comum de administra-

ção ou de coordenação, cuja eficiência e continuidade seriam reforçadas por uma ampla integração da profissão de museus.

### CURSOS

O Seminário, considerando que não existe na América Latina uma verdadeira escola de museólogos e técnicos, o que os cursos de museus são muito poucos, concluiu: 1) que nos países desta região do mundo, onde os museus estão pouco desenvolvidos, seja instituída uma verdadeira escola de museus, tendo o uso ensino científico especializado, fazendo dispensável o ensino museológico especializado; 2) que os diplomatas ministrados por essas escolas dêem direito à inscrição em uma lista de aplicação, elaborada por peritos qualificados, a fim de garantir direitos a qualquer nomeação no posto de conservador, de museólogo ou educador de museus; 3) que se organizem em cada um dos outros países da América Latina cursos de museus, cujos diplomados teriam tratamento preferencial: 4) que no que concerne ao aperfeiçoamento da profissão de museu, organizem-se estágios coletivos ou individuais com os meios proporcionados pelas circunstâncias; 5) que se encontre os meios de favorecer a organização dessas escolas e desses cursos e de permitir aos aspirantes a conservadores ou museólogos seguir cursos de aperfeiçoamento no estrangeiro; 6) que se deve solicitar às autoridades responsáveis dos países da América Latina que cuidem especialmente desses sérios problemas de ensino, que são: a) a qualificação e o aperfeiçoamento da profissão de museus e o elevação do nível profissional dos museólogos



It is worth highlighting the role played by the press covering the event, providing rich sources for understanding the dynamics of the event, the discussions and tensions that took place. In particular, the work of journalist Jaime Maurício, from the *Correio da Manhã* newspaper, was an important resource for accessing the partial conclusions of the seminar beyond Rivière's report, published two years after the event.

### III

The 2018 event took place in one of the toughest contexts in the history of museums and museology in Brazil: the tragic fire at the National Museum, a few days before the beginning of the seminar which almost completely destroyed the museum's entire collection, still struggling to rebuild itself.

In the context of the political and institutional backlash at the time, the then Michel Temer government saw the tragedy at the National Museum as a "window of opportunity", used as a way to try, through Provisional Measures 850 and 851, to extinguish the Brazilian Museums Institute (IBRAM), create the Brazilian Museums Agency and a heritage fund, which criteria, methods and needs were quite controversial. After extensive articulation and movement by groups in defence of the national museum policy and IBRAM, Provisional Measure 850, which was to replace IBRAM, was rejected, keeping the Brazilian Institute of Museums in its current form (MP..., 2019). Provisional Measure 851, which authorised partnerships between

public management and heritage funds, was converted into law 13,800 on 4 January 2019.

The Museum of the Republic played a special role in the resistance and fight against the Provisional Measures 850 and 851. The Museum became a centre for articulation and mobilisation. It's worth remembering that public events were held at the Museum of the Republic, including the reception of the march by museology students from Urca to Catete. Moreover, while the management of other IBRAM museums was silent or colluded with the "window of opportunity", the team at the Museum of the Republic, including its collegiate management, took up the fight.

It's worth noting that in the four years since Jair Bolsonaro was elected president of the Republic of Brazil, the area of culture and museums has been the target of ideological attacks, placing IBRAM and other autarchies under the command of leaders hostile to the cultural policy built up over the last 30 years of Brazil's fragile (now we all know) democracy; many of these leaders acted with the clear aim of undermining cultural institutions from within, to the point where one of them was exonerated after mocking Nazi minister Joseph Goebbels in a public speech (VERDÉLIO, 2020).

Between 1958 and 2018 many things have happened, many innovations in the field of museums, preventive conservation, expography, museum education, risk management, the development of museum plans and public museum policies have been produced and implemented.

The construction of the Brazilian Institute of Museums, the National Register of Museums, the Brazilian Museum System, IBRAM's editorial programme, the National Museum Education Policy, the National Points of Memory Programme, the perspective, reflections and practices of Social Museology, the more than fifteen undergraduate courses in Museology, the four master's programmes in Museology, one of which has a doctoral qualification, the four Advanced Studies Courses in Museology with access to a doctorate at the Lusófona University of Humanities and Technologies (ULHT), the Networks of Museum Education and Social Museology, among many other initiatives, are obvious novelties. Let us add to these initiatives the creation of community museums, indigenous museums, quilombola museums, slum museums and many other museum experiences. This is something new: thinking and practising the museum as a tool for struggle, as well as a space for encounter, relationship, dispute

and litigation. From the perspective of social museology, museums are the territory of "and", not "is".

What's new between 2018 and 2023? The question and the answer are unavoidable. What is new is the ascendancy of a huge fascist force that has awakened and ruled Brazil in recent years, which has threatened all the achievements of recent decades in the field of culture and education which cannot be ignored. Even if it is defeated at the ballot box in 2022, this force is not dead.

Colonialism, fascism, racism, sexism, lgbtphobia and aporophobia are still alive; there is still a huge number of people in the country who see the mere existence of the other as a threat.

All this increases the responsibility of museums in cultural and educational terms; all this indicates the need for increasingly democratic and radical museum education and social museology.

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# Considerations on Research and Evaluation in the Field of Museum Education in Brazil

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The museum is considered as a space providing for different audiences, diverse experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and the sharing of knowledge (ICOM, 2022).

Throughout the 20th century and into the first decades of the 21st century, there have been changes in the meaning of “education” in museums, how learning takes place in the museum space, how content and messages should be communicated in these environments and how the educational process is brought about by museum institutions.

The interest in researching and evaluating exhibitions and educational activities in museums is mainly related to the need to understand the nature of communication and learning in these environments and to investigate

how communication and educational strategies affect visitor behaviour and perceptions (Studart, 2003).

For many decades, studies considered that through their exhibitions, museums were able to provoke a learning experience for their visitors “only” by having them observing and reading the texts and objects on display. Visitors would thus “absorb” the knowledge of the museum thanks to its exhibitions, a view to which some people still adhere today.

However, this view has changed radically in recent decades, with museum learning being understood as a “dialogical negotiation” between the messages of an exhibition and its different audiences. According to Studart, Almeida and Valente (2003, p.153) “the visitor must be considered as an active, social and psychological subject, accepting the perceptual

permeability of individuals, to the extent that each one has a different view of meanings.”

Particularly since the 1980s, according to Köptcke (2003), “researchers in Europe (Miles, Bicknell and others), Canada (Lefèbre, Niquette and others) and the USA (Screven, Shettel and others)” have considered it important – as in other countries, too – to use the information gathered from the evaluations on museum visitors in the process of designing exhibitions and other museum communication and education activities.

Several international journals publish articles dedicated to the theme of ‘evaluation in museums’, a subject that has emerged in education, psychology and social science journals. Journals specialised in the museum field such as *Curator*, *Museum News*, *Journal of Museum Education*, *Museological Review*, *Journal of Education in Museums*, *Visitor Studies Today*, among others, regularly feature texts on evaluation studies.

In Brazil, the Brazilian Committee for Education and Cultural Action/CECA-Brazil of the International Council of Museums presented several documents at the ICOM-CECA Annual Conferences (Studart, 2004). One text, specially prepared by Almeida (1998), coordinator of CECA-Brazil at the time for the 1997 CECA Annual Conference was on ‘Evaluation of education and

cultural action in museums: theory and practice’. In this document, it was emphasised that the evaluation of educational action belongs to the whole pedagogical process and cannot be seen as an isolated topic; museums need to know for their educational and communicative work the profile of their visitors, their expectations, motivations for visiting etc., as this information helps in the planning of educational and cultural action; and that evaluation should be seen as a process that cannot be disconnected from the objectives of the museum’s educational programmes and activities. Some of the recommendations made by the CECA-Brazil members in this document included:

“Adoption of the practice of evaluating and carrying out audience studies in museums, in order to develop a commitment on the part of the institution to these studies; development and application of systematic studies with clear and well-defined proposals; inclusion of the topic ‘evaluation’ in museology courses; creation of a means of communication about evaluation research among museum professionals.” (Studart, 2004, p.16)<sup>1</sup>

In this article, we seek in an exploratory way, to present some research that are references for evaluation studies in Brazil, identifying among other aspects observed trends in relation to the methodology adopted, objects of study, results.

1 The above recommendations are part of the aforementioned text published in the “Dossier CECA-Brazil” in the Musas/IPHAN magazine in 2004, prepared by the coordinator of CECA-BR at the time, Denise Studart (2004). The article provides detailed information on the intellectual production of CECA-Brazil at the international conferences of ICOM’s Committee for Education and Cultural Action from 1996 to 2004. In addition to this article, the Dossier features texts by other CECA-Brazil colleagues.

## 2. RESEARCH AND EVALUATION STUDIES ON TEACHER TRAINING AND LEARNING IN MUSEUMS IN BRAZIL: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Since the 1990s and especially in the first two decades of the 21st century, there has been a diversification of postgraduate programmes in Brazil that address research in the field of museum education, including evaluation studies (Ovigli, 2015). The main research tools used in these investigations are methods used in the humanities and social sciences, such as, among others: questionnaires, observations, interviews, focus groups, recordings, drawings.

It is possible to see a growing interest in evaluation within the educational departments of museums, although it is not necessarily an institutionalised activity carried out by specialised professionals. The *Museu da Vida da Fiocruz* (Fiocruz Museum of Life), which has a Centre for Audience Studies and Evaluation/Nepam, with a permanent team of researchers is here an exception.

Research carried out in the academic world provides support for the day-to-day practices of museum education departments. However, the preparation of these studies by museum education teams requires an extra effort, given the demands that educators have in their day-to-day work, which make it difficult to continually practise more in-depth evaluation processes.

In the Brazilian context, initiatives to evaluate the museum-school relationship, teacher training and the impact of exhibitions on students

have been developed mainly since the 1990s, through academic research carried out by museum educators, as will be presented below.

Sibele Cazelli (1992) and Beatriz Muniz Freire (1992), in their respective master's research, explored the 'evaluation of teacher training' in a science museum *Museu de Astronomia e Ciências Afins - MAST* (Museum of Astronomy and Related Sciences) and an anthropological museum *Museu do Folclore Edison Carneiro (MFEC)/ Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular* (Edison Carneiro Folklore Museum (MFEC)/ National Center for Folklore and Popular Culture), both located in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Cazelli and Freire describe the activities and materials developed by the museums for teacher training, with the aim of enriching the visit to the museums by the students brought by these teachers. In her research, Freire observes that:

"Considering the teacher to be the multiplier agent, the MFEC team began to give teachers a guided tour as prior preparation. According to the person in charge of the sector, in 1991, '...the practice (guided tour) proved to be inadequate, as the demand from teachers who wanted to 'be guided' multiplied, without the main objective of the orientation being realised, i.e., that of preparing the teacher for an active role, together with their students, on the visit. (...) it seemed that the teachers simply imitated the guided tour, reproducing it with their students, even with the same language characteristics as the technician who had guided them. (Freire, 1992, p.50-51 apud Almeida, 1997, p.53)

The above-mentioned research shows that preparing teachers to carry out museum visits with their students is a complex issue, requiring various approaches with teachers to achieve the desired goal.

Also in the 1990s, the dissertations by Adriana M. Almeida (1995) and Maria Esther A. Valente (1995) looked at the exhibitions at the *Museu Biológico do Instituto Butantan de São Paulo* (Biological Museum of the Butantan Institute in São Paulo) and the *Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro* (National Museum in Rio de Janeiro) and investigated visitors' perceptions through observation and the use of questionnaires and interviews. Both authors searched to identify visitors' understanding of the exhibitions, based on their behaviour and statements about the experience of the visit and the content covered. Valente used ethnographic description and interviews, and Almeida used questionnaires. The results show the narratives constructed by the visitors, which do not always agree with the proposals of those who conceived the exhibitions.

Douglas Falcão (1999), in his academic master's degree, explored the process of student interaction with an exhibition module at the *Museu de Astronomia e Ciências Afins - MAST*, using observation, questionnaires and interviews. Like Almeida (1995), she applied questionnaires before and after the visit, with the aim of identifying learning in the museum environment. Falcão's research showed, for example, a change in the students' conception of the phenomenon of the seasons:

"[...] 30% of them expressed changes in their models in order to make them compatible with scientific models, while 22% admitted that their models prior to the visit were out of step with the reference knowledge or began to make models that, although not compatible with the scientific one, showed relationships between variables that express the development of a 'scientific rationalisation'." (Falcão, 1999, p.244)

At the turn of the 21st century, Denise Studart sought to evaluate the behaviour, perceptions and learning of children and families in exhibitions designed for children in her doctoral research in England (Studart, 2000). The analysis of the open-ended interview questions indicated that adult family members were enthusiastic about the opportunity for children to interact with the exhibitions and perceived the interactive approach as a motivating learning experience for the children. Most of the children in this study said they preferred visiting museums in a family context rather than in a school one. Statistical analyses showed that children's perceptions of their learning were mainly affected by the time spent in the gallery and the accompanying family member (mother). This research has shown that exhibitions aimed at children have characteristics that positively affect the museum experience of children and adult family members, that they perceive they are learning in this environment and that the interactive exhibitions studied are an effective catalyst for family social activity.

Julia Rocha Pinto (2012) carried out a survey in four museum institutions in São Paulo about the instruments

used to evaluate educational activities. All of them used questionnaires filled in by museum educators, teachers and students. Based on an analysis of these practices, the author proposes an evaluation tool that allows greater reflection and manifestation by museum educators, applied to the educational activities of the institution in which she worked (*Pavilhão das Culturas Brasileiras* – Pavilion of Brazilian Cultures). Pinto shows how evaluation has been better understood by professionals in the field:

“Thinking about the role of evaluation in museums, at the end of this work I realise that evaluation and mediation are almost inseparable. Cultural mediation is an exercise of encounter and dialogue between the educator and the visitor. In this encounter, the mediator not only speaks, but also listens. I realised that evaluating also means listening.” (Pinto, 2012, p.117)

Certainly, attentive listening is one of the important aspects of good evaluation work.

Educational materials created by museum education departments, for use inside and outside these spaces, are also the subject of some evaluation studies. A significant proportion of these materials are aimed at teachers. In the publication *A Educação em Museus e os Materiais Educativos* (Education in Museums and Educational Materials), Marandino and other authors (2016) present a series of materials developed from research and state the importance of evaluating them. The authors cite some evaluations that have already been carried out, the methodologies used (questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observation with video

recordings) and the modifications suggested. At the end of the study, they state that:

“These examples show that evaluations of educational materials help us to better understand their potential and their limits. They also show that the materials used and the costs must be analysed in advance and constantly evaluated in the process of developing educational materials. Evaluations can thus contribute to improving these materials, providing relevant data on their effectiveness with the public.” (Marandino et al., 2016, p.42)

Another example of evaluating educational material aimed at art teachers was carried out by Almeida (2009), using focus groups and questionnaires. Teachers were able to analyse and apply the material in the classroom, while it was still in a provisional format. The results of the evaluation made it possible to produce definitive material that was more appropriate according to the teachers’ vision.

There are also studies on museum educational materials from other areas, such as *Design*, as done by Novaes and Alexandre (2016) in an article that analyses the *layout* of educational materials available in digital versions aimed at children.

Educational materials produced in art, history and science museums, such as games, educational kits, ‘curiosity packs’, audio guides and printed boards, have been evaluated and described in articles and presentations at conferences. The main methodologies used are the critical analysis of specialists and the specific

target audiences of each material, through interviews, focus groups and other techniques. These studies contribute to the development of methodologies for evaluating different types of educational materials, even if the immediate application of the results is limited to the material being evaluated.

### 3. A PRACTICE THAT STIMULATES DIALOGUE AND TRANSFORMATION

In this article, we have searched to present some research and use of evaluation in the field of Museum Education, in exhibitions, educational materials and teacher training. We consider these texts to be a reference for evaluation studies in Brazil, carried out between the 1990s and the year 2020. There are certainly other academic research that have not been mentioned here, but which could form part of future, more comprehensive articles.

The growth of studies evaluating educational activities and projects in museums over the last two decades has created a corpus of knowledge about how museum education and learning take place in these environments. However, there is still a need for these studies to become institutionalised practices to guarantee their continuity.

Topics for an educational evaluation research agenda in museums include among other aspects: investigating

the benefits of museum education; understanding the types of learning that take place in exhibitions and in educational activities; how educational materials can help parents and teachers stimulate children's/students' learning during and also after a visit to the museum; adapting languages and activities to the different types of audiences in educational activities; identifying the best strategies to promote the participation of different audiences.

It is currently understood that it is essential for museums' educational, cultural and social policies to increasingly expand their actions to the society, aiming at greater inclusion and accessibility. We believe that evaluation processes contribute to this.

It is up to museum professionals to incorporate the development of evaluation studies into their communication and educational practices, as well as the information elements produced by evaluation devices with visitors.

We hope to have contributed to the debate on the contribution of evaluation studies to the field of Museum Education in Brazil, considering that these practices enable to establish a fertile space for listening between audiences, educators and other museum professionals, with the aim of making evaluation processes in these environments a field for dialogue and transformation.

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# Heritage Education and Archaeology in Brazil: discussions and controversies

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In the second half of the 19th century, with the emergence of anthropology as a science of otherness, the evolutionist model of analysing human societies increased the importance of archaeological collections, the analyses nevertheless searching more for signs of backwardness, savagery, and barbarism of our country's indigenous societies, therefore distancing them from the white, elitist model of civilisation.

It's no wonder that in the *Museu Nacional* (National Museum) in the second half of the 19th century and for much of the 20th century, there were countless collections of skulls from indigenous societies that were studied by the Lombrosian-inspired anthropology<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, the work of an ethnologist, archaeologist or specialist in any other

area of the natural sciences had to be necessarily carried out in a museum, since universities were only created in the 1930s.

Archaeology in Brazil had its first major public appearance with the *Anthropological Exhibition* of 1882, where evidence of indigenous occupation of our coastline (the archaeological sites known as 'sambaquis') were exhibited in the headquarters of the *Museu Nacional*. In the same exhibition were ceramics, especially Marajoara together with skulls, ornaments, projectile points and other artefacts, which, alongside ethnographic objects and oil paintings depicting different indigenous groups, received wide press coverage and even significant visitors by the standards of the time<sup>2</sup>.

1 Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) was an Italian physician who devoted himself to physical anthropology, which was markedly evolutionist and whose hallmark was the search for skull signs showing people's tendencies towards criminality and physical and cultural backwardness different from those in European societies. This vision will profoundly mark the anthropological and archaeological practice of museums in our country.

2 ANDERMANN, J. *Spectacles of difference: the Brazilian anthropological exhibition of 1882. Topoi*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 5, n. 9, p.128-170, 2004.

According to Moraes Wichers the 1882 Anthropological Exhibition was

a privileged opportunity to set up a colonialist museological pedagogy, capable of interweaving discourses about the 'historical Indian' - preferably extinct, as he appears in the nation-building discourse and the 'contemporary Indian', to be controlled. This type of pedagogy marked Brazilian archaeology for a long time (2015, p.110).<sup>3</sup>

Still in its infancy, archaeology did not occupy a prominent place and there was no higher education in the national context, which made it at the time an area of activity restricted to a few interested people, especially the naturalists linked to the *Museu Nacional*, the *Museu Paulista* (Paulista Museum) and the *Museu Goeldi* (Goeldi Museum).

Bruno (1995)<sup>4</sup> when analysing the Brazilian panorama, refers to the archaeological sources as "exiled memories", stating that archaeological heritage has played a minor role in the different interpretations of Brazilian culture.

Gradually, with the overcoming of the evolutionist model and the emergence of other strands of anthropological interpretation - especially diffusionism and functionalism - as well as the

creation of Brazilian universities from the 1930s onwards, with anthropological research consequently being carried out in the teaching departments of these institutions, we can say that these reasons ended up leading both museums and archaeological research to a certain ostracism (SOMBRIO; VASCONCELLOS, 2018).<sup>5</sup>

It was only in the 1960s that some universities began creating courses and formal teaching in archaeology, especially on the Rio-São Paulo axis, but without any consolidated theoretical-methodological model. What is striking is that some of these courses ended up being influenced by preservationist campaigns, especially the outstanding work of Paulo Duarte in São Paulo and Luis de Castro Faria in Rio de Janeiro. In fact, the model conceived by Paulo Duarte and consolidated at the former *Instituto de Pré-História* (Institute of Prehistory at USP-IPH-USP). was the best thought out one considering the research/salvage/socialisation relationship, and would lead to the creation of a tradition focused on museological-educational activities of great importance (BRUNO, 1984, 1995)<sup>6</sup>.

A pioneering and historically important experience in terms of discussing the

3 MORAES WICHES, C. Museums, educational activities and archaeological practice in contemporary Brazil: dilemmas, choices and experiments. *Museology and Interdisciplinarity*, v. 3, n. 6, p.109-134, 2015.

4 BRUNO, M. C. O. *Musealisation of Archaeology: a study of models for the Paranapanema Project*. Thesis (Doctorate) - Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, 1995.

5 SOMBRIO, M. M. O.; VASCONCELLOS, C. M. O legado de Betty Meggers na constituição de acervos museológicos no Brasil. *Annals of the National Historical Museum*. Rio de Janeiro: MHN, p.69-84, 2018.

6 BRUNO, M. C. O. *O Museu do Instituto de Pré-História da USP: um museu a serviço da pesquisa científica*. Dissertation (Master's) - Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, 1984.

methodology of heritage education in traditional museums, which also favoured the area of archaeology, took place in 1987 with the arrival of John Reeve and Eilean Hooper-Grenhill, two leading English researchers in the field of museum education, when they came to the *Museu de Pré-História Paulo Duarte* (Paulo Duarte Museum of Prehistory at the USP Institute of Prehistory (IPH), the *Museu Lasar Segall* (The Lasar Segall Museum) and Rio de Janeiro, supported by the then National Museum Programme, which existed in the country between 1980-1985.

In this experiment, using the existing long-term exhibition, various workshops were held to work on themes of Brazilian pre-colonial archaeology through the exhibitions “Everyday Life in Prehistory” and “Everyday Life in Archaeology”, both designed by Maria Cristina Oliveira Bruno.

As a result, the educational experiences and reflections that took place at the former *Instituto de Pré-História* (Institute of Prehistory (IPH) could be the subject of a theoretical and methodological reflection in the context of a published article that proposed two perspectives as a methodology for educational actions: heritage education and the awareness pedagogy (BRUNO; VASCONCELLOS, 1989).<sup>7</sup>

In addition to this experience, it is necessary to point out here the important educational work also developed at USP by the former *Museu*

*de Arqueologia e Etnologia* (Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology of the University of São Paulo (MAE-USP) under the coordination of archaeologist and lecturer Prof Elaine Farias Veloso Hirata who, although not explicitly referring to the methodology of Heritage Education, developed a series of proposals and reflections based on the systematic exploration of material culture as a primary source of teaching<sup>8</sup>.

As a result, several dissertations and theses emerged and were based on this methodological perspective, especially applied to museums in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Joinville, Salvador, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte and other experiences that have already been mentioned here and which sought to reflect on the validity and “putting in practice” the principles of heritage education as an appropriate methodology for the museum education departments.

We should also point out the emergence of other major academic works that have arisen from the relationship between museums, archaeology, and education, whether under the influence of the principles of heritage education, public archaeology or even from the perspective of the musealisation of archaeology (BRUNO<sup>9</sup>, 1995, 2013; CARNEIRO, 2009)<sup>10</sup>.

It's essential to mention the radical change that took place in Brazilian archaeology and that also impacted the universe of museums with this type of collection, when we experienced

7 BRUNO, M. C. O.; VASCONCELLOS, C. M. A proposta educativa do Museu de Pré-História Paulo Duarte. *Revista de Pré-História*, São Paulo, n. 7, p.165-186, 1989.

8 HIRATA, E.; DEMARTINI, C.; PEIXOTO, D.; ELAZARI, J. Archaeology, education and the museum: the object as instrumentalisation of knowledge. *Dédalo*, São Paulo, n. 27, p.11-45, 1989.

the broad growth of research related to preventive archaeology, also known as contract archaeology or salvage archaeology, especially since 2000. This context is closely related to environmental legislation in the frame of major environmental impact projects (construction of gas pipelines, hydroelectric dams, highways, transmission lines, etc.), which began to require an Environmental Impact Report (EIA-RIMA) for their release, urging archaeologists to be present in different projects from the north to the south of the country.

To give an idea of the dizzying growth of preventive archaeology, in the period 2003-2013 alone, research authorisations granted by IPHAN for this type of research accounted for 98% of archaeological studies and the generation of collections in different parts of the country (MORAES WICHES, 2015 *op.cit.*).

As of the IPHAN Ordinance 230 of December 2002, it was demanded that the archaeological research carried out in the context of major construction projects would be accompanied by a Heritage Education Programme.

At first, this was a big problem because many archaeologists were completely unaware of what a heritage education programme was, and many of the educators hired to work on these projects were not at all familiar with

archaeology-related issues.

Programmes and projects were carried out from the north to the south of the country. Communities that had never even heard of archaeology had the opportunity to get closer to this field through heritage education projects, with or without the participation of local leaders from the surrounding areas.

It's clear that with the economic crisis the country has experienced since 2013, the number of construction projects has greatly decreased, especially those linked to the Growth Acceleration Programme (PAC), launched in 2007, and at the same time there has been a radical drop in the number of preventive archaeology projects with a consequent decrease in heritage education programmes.

Reports and activities were and still are submitted to IPHAN and many educational materials, booklets, thematic guides, travelling exhibitions about archaeological heritage and heritage education, in short, a significant number of strategies and actions, were produced to expand the access and construction of knowledge between the archaeologist with or without the local communities.

Unfortunately, after all this time working on projects in far-flung communities from the north to the south of the country, there has been no critical evaluation of these experiences,

- 9 BRUNO, M. C. O. *Musealisation of archaeology: a study of models for the Paranapanema Project*. Thesis (Doctorate) - Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, 1995. For more recent approaches to the theme of the Musealisation of Archaeology, see *Revista da SAB*. v. 26/27, n. 01, 2013/2014, organised by the same author.
- 10 CARNEIRO, C. G. *Educational actions in the context of preventive archaeology: a proposal for the Amazon*. Thesis (Doctorate) - Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, 2009.

apart from the reports required by IPHAN, which would allow analysis into the effectiveness of these actions.

It would also have been essential to return to the communities where this work had been carried out for a critical, serious, and open evaluation, to see whether the materials produced in their hundreds were used and what the repercussions were for the different and diverse communities affected.

But the most important aspect to evaluate and continue discussing would be the nature and profile of heritage education actions and strategies. Heritage education brings up many questions. Is it a methodology based on specific experiences? A field of action and training based on heritage? In short, how to reflect on this field that is still in the making in the country, but which has already produced so many experiences, materials, dissertations, academic theses and human resources training for museums, archaeological enterprises, actions to enhance cities, archaeological and historical sites, riverside, indigenous and quilombola communities? These questions have not been yet answered but what needs to be clear is that heritage education processes cannot be restricted to the interventions which already took place to validate the civil engineering works linked to museums, monuments, cities, preventive archaeology programmes or the management of any other cultural asset.

Nor should they be understood or confused with the actions based on the

outdated idea of the good intention of “knowing how to preserve”, which dates to when the old SPHAN was created in 1938, but which reverberated so much and still has echoes in our country’s heritage and education policies. Or even another widespread action, that of “bringing knowledge to those who know nothing”, from a perspective that is markedly paternalistic and dissociated from that which should occur in dialogue and exchange, based on the possible transformations that the unjust reality in which we live gives rise to. To this end, I rely on the words of Scifoni (2019) for whom,

Heritage education, as an essential component of heritage activities and therefore as a social right, implies a process of dialogue based on learning/teaching, in which the local meanings given to goods and places, popular knowledge and the relationships established with things are grasped. For dialogue to take place, it is first and foremost necessary to value the other and be willing to learn from them. There can be no dialogue when the heritage technician looks at the inhabitant as someone who is ignorant and degrading. There can only be dialogue in horizontal relationships between equals.

It is in this sense that heritage education strategies help to strengthen the links between institutions, heritage protection and people, enabling to incorporate the views of local people as a legitimate way of interpreting this cultural heritage (SCIFONI, 2019, p.30).<sup>11</sup>

The academic community has produced many dissertations and doctoral theses

11 SCIFONI, Simone. *Knowing to Preserve. An idea out of time.* CPC Magazine, São Paulo, n. 27 special, p. 14-31, 2019.

on this subject, and one of the scientific events organised by the Brazilian Archaeological Society (SAB) in 2009 in Belém, Pará, was dedicated to it.

What these works revealed was that the experience with these communities effectively brought archaeological knowledge from anonymity to the general population, but there is no doubt that the market ended up taking decisions and defining the time in

which these programmes and projects were carried out, in an often conflicting relationship with IPHAN, that makes us rethink many of these assumptions made by different teams today.

Nevertheless, reflections go with the flow. This chapter is another contribution to many others based on our experience as educators who work with musealised heritage or outside museum institutions.

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# Networks of museum educators: A history of social participation in Brazilian museum education

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## A FEW WORDS ABOUT SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

The theme of social participation has long occupied a prominent place in the field of social studies. For many authors analyzing how different social actors relate to each other to find solutions to their problems is a key area, like for the political scientist Maria Glória Gohn who, in her studies on social participation, proposes to analyze this relationship on three basic levels: the theoretical-conceptual level, the political level and the level of social practice (GOHN, 2016).

For this author, the last level

is the social process; it is about concrete actions, generated by struggles, movements, and organizations, to achieve a certain goal, or to participate in institutionalized environments in the public sphere, in public policies. Here, participation is a fundamental means of action (GOHN, 2016, p. 16-17).

This proposal to analyze social participation at the level of social practice is of particular interest to us because it is precisely at this level that we can situate the mode of social participation that will be discussed in this text.

Currently, the field of museum education in Brazil is made up of professionals, researchers, activists, and a growing number of people interested in debating the impact of the educational function of museums on their audiences. Similarly, there are numerous and varied forms of organization to collaborate in discussions and actions to strengthen the theoretical, practical, and political development in this field.

The networks of museum educators are undoubtedly the most representative of these organization forms. Since their creation, they have been important spaces for the exchange of experiences, discussion, and articulation with public

authorities, aiming at participating in decision-making on aspects of Brazilian museum education (NASCIMENTO; GONÇALVES, 2019).

## A FEW WORDS ABOUT NETWORKS

In social sciences, networks are plastic, dynamic and indeterminate structures of social organisation, as their configuration is flexible and governed by self-management mechanisms. Social management organisations working in network are characterised by the fact that they have no centre, meaning that any point in the network is a potential centre. Networks are therefore fluid entities that are not delimited, circumscribed, or described according to existing definitions (CASTELLS, 2010; MARTINHO, 2003).

Different areas of social interest function in networks, but here we are specifically focusing on the key organisations in the field of Brazilian museum education, the *Redes de Educadores em Museus* (Networks of Museum Educators).

In an initial attempt to tackle the state of the art of museum education in Brazil, Andrea Costa, Fernanda Castro and Ozias Soares identified three elements in the history of museum education in Brazil, considering that “this uneven history throughout the two hundred years of museums in Brazil has been constructed in a non-linear way, with advances and setbacks, with characteristics specific to certain phases” (COSTA; CASTRO e SOARES, 2020).

In this sense, to understand museum education in Brazil, the authors propose

an approach in the form of a practical-theoretical-political tripod. I therefore today, see the networks of museum educators as a kind of manifestation of this tripod, functioning at the same time as spaces strengthening the professional category through the exchange of practical experience, scientific and theoretical reflection, and the development and implementation of public policies.

## EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRAZILIAN NETWORKS OF MUSEUM EDUCATOR

The history of the *Redes de Educadores em Museus* began in 2003, the year in which the political and cultural scene was marked by the launch of the National Museum Policy, in which education and training in the museum field appear in axis 3.

It was at this very important time for the country's museum sector that museum education professionals organized themselves informally to request resources for training professionals and to develop the *Redes de Educadores em Museus* (Network of Museum Educators - REM), which functioned until 2008 as the one and only REM in Brazil, positioning itself in the state of Rio de Janeiro as a space for organizing and training professionals in this field. This first REM played, and still plays, a fundamental role in the development of museum education in Brazil, as it is thanks to the promotion of its activities that other networks have over the years been created.

In 2007, the REM coordinated its first national meeting at the Museu



Historico Nacional (National Historical Museum). Museum educators from all over Brazil attended this meeting, presenting documents and taking part in discussions on museum education. It was at this meeting that the idea of creating other similar networks arose, starting with educators in São Paulo, who joined to create the *Rede de Educadores em Museus de São Paulo* (São Paulo Museum Educators Network - REM-SP), which name was not made official until 2014. Other networks followed, albeit timidly.

However, the movement that led to the change of name of the former REM to the *Rede de Educadores em Museus e Centros Culturais do Rio de Janeiro* (Network of Educators of Museums and Cultural Centres of Rio de Janeiro - REM-RJ) took place in 2008 with the creation of the *Rede de Educadores em Museus do Ceará* (Network of Museum Educators of Ceará - REM-CE), the *Rede de Educadores em Museus e Instituições Culturais de Pernambuco* (Network of Museums and Cultural Institutions of Pernambuco - REMIC-PE) and the *Rede de Educadores em Museus e Instituições Culturais do Distrito Federal* (Network of Museums and Cultural Institutions of the Federal District - REMIC-DF). On the eve of the promulgation of the law 11.904/2009, establishing the status of museums and the creation of the *Instituto Brasileiro de Museus* (Brazilian Institute of Museums - IBRAM), Brazil's burgeoning museum sector became a space conducive to organizing and seeking social participation. It is no coincidence that the largest number of REMs were created in Brazil between 2008 and 2010. The year 2008 also saw, in addition to

the networks already mentioned, the creation of the *Rede Informal de Museus e Centros Culturais de Belo Horizonte e Região Metropolitana* (Informal Network of Museums and Cultural Centres of Belo Horizonte and the Metropolitan Region - RIMC). In 2010, the *Rede de Educadores em Museus da Paraíba* (Networks of Educators of the Museums of Paraíba - REM-PB), *Rede de Educadores em Museus de Santa Catarina* (Networks of Educators the Museums of Santa Catarina - REM-SC), the *Rede de Educadores em Museus do Rio Grande do Sul* (Networks of Educators the Museums of Rio Grande do Sul - REM-RS) and the *Rede de Educadores em Museus de Goiás* (Network of Educators of the Museums of Goiás - REM-GO) were created, along with the *Rede de Educadores em Museus e Instituições Culturais de Mato Grosso do Sul* (Network of Educators of the Museums and Cultural Institutions of Mato Grosso do Sul - REMIC-MS), the *Rede de Educadores em Museus e Patrimônio do Mato Grosso* (Network of Educators of the Museums and Heritage of Mato Grosso - REMP-MT) and the *Rede de Educadores em Museus da Bahia* (Network of Educators of the Museums of Bahia - REM-BA).

In terms of museum education in the broadest sense, a first meeting of the IBRAM educators took place in 2010 in the city of Petrópolis, in the state of Rio de Janeiro. From this meeting emerged the Petrópolis Charter, a basic document leading to the formulation of the National Museum Education Policy, the PNEM (BRASIL, 2018). Following the publication of the Petrópolis Charter, the Brazilian museum sector converged towards



one main goal: the formulation and adoption of the PNEM, in collaboration with the newly created Brazilian Institute of Museums.

The following years saw several important events that marked this Brazilian journey in museum education. In November 2012, at the 5th National Museum Forum, also in Petrópolis, the PNEM Blog was launched (Image 1), called at the time the National Museum Education Programme. The aim of the blog was precisely to enable broad social participation in the preliminary discussions for the formulation of what was to become the National Museum Education Policy. The platform was active for eight months and received contributions from individuals, institutions, and groups, particularly the REMs. In 2013, an internal committee was formed at IBRAM to analyze and process the 708 or so entries, 598 comments, 83 discussion topics and 681 publications resulting in a solid document.

The year 2014 was to be the first important step in the participation of the REMs in developing public policies for museum education in Brazil. After compiling the draft PNEM document, IBRAM sought to organize face-to-face meetings in all Brazilian states to ensure discussions to be disseminated. However, given its

centralized nature, this attempt was made possible mainly thanks to the support of the REMs, which organized twenty-four regional meetings in all the regions of the country, in a process that had an impact on all the networks strengthening those that already existed and enabling the creation of new ones.

In 2014, the *Rede de Educadores em Museus no Maranhão* (Maranhão Museum Educators' Network - REM-MA), the *Rede de Educadores em Museus do Pará* (Pará Museum Educators' Network - REM-PA) and the *Rede de Educadores em Museus de Sergipe* (Sergipe Museum Educators' Network - REM-SE) were created. Also in 2014, the VIth National Museum Forum was held in Belém do Pará, consolidating the principles of the PNEM. On this occasion and the direct support of IBRAM, representatives of nine REMs were present, in addition to other groups. They decide to create the *Rede de Educadores em Museus do Brasil* (REM Brasil), to bring together all the active networks through virtual mobilization, making the dialogue process increasingly democratic and, as we shall see later, reaching a greater number of people.

With the approval of the PNEM in 2017, the publication of the PNEM booklet in 2018 and the completion of the PNEM practical workshops, we witnessed the following years the emergence of a growing number of REMs. In 2016, the *Rede de Educadores em Museus de Campo das Vertentes* (Network of Museum Educators of Campo das Vertentes - REM Campo das Vertentes) - was created, followed

in 2019 by the *Rede de Educadores em Museus do Paraná* (Network of Museum Educators of Paraná - REM-PR). The most recent REM is the *Rede de Educadores em Museus do Amapá* (Amapá Museum Educators Network), created in 2023.

Although being similar organizations with common interests, the REMs have very different forms of management and organization, directly impacting the type of their activities. For this reason, they share the common characteristic of being seasonal and discontinuous, leading to certain shortfalls, long periods of interruption and even dissolution. These common situations between the networks have been shared on the REM Brazil forums, an important space to share information and experience, but also for debates that contribute to the strengthening of the federal networks, and consequently to the strengthening of the field at national level.

## REM BRAZIL

As mentioned above, the Brazilian Network of Museum Educators - REM-Brazil, was born in 2014. Created during a face-to-face meeting between museum education professionals, active or not in museum educator networks, this collective originated from virtual groups on Facebook and Whatsapp. At the time of its creation, no role was assigned to its members except for a working group on communication, responsible for creating the mentioned social networks. Thus, until 2018, the entire organization of the REM Brazil was based on members' spontaneous

requests, certain members being clearly more active.

At the time of the request for participation with IBRAM to the organization of the 1st National Museum Education Meeting, a Provisional Management Committee was created in 2018 within the



Image 2 : PNEM second national meeting.  
Porto Alegre-RS/2017  
(Photo: Diffusion IBRAM)

Whatsapp group formed by Fernanda Castro (Rio de Janeiro), Lucinha Santana (Pará) and Mona Nascimento (Bahia) with the intention of continuing until 2019 and the 8th National Museum Forum, scheduled to take place in the city of Fortaleza, with the election of an official steering committee.

Since its creation, REM Brazil has been present at important moments in the Brazilian museum scene. It actively participates in emblematic situations, such as when in 2016 it wrote an Open Letter to the then president of IBRAM, calling for the 7th National Museum Forum to be held the following year in Porto Alegre-RS (Image 2). The same year, REM Brazil also spoke out against the attempt to abolish IBRAM and

mobilized to maintain the Ministry of Culture, which, after disappearing in 2019, was recreated in 2023. During the period of the pandemic, between 2020 and 2021, through research carried out with museum education professionals to understand the impact of the pandemic on museum education, REM Brazil, in partnership with CECA-BR, was at the forefront of important debates in the Brazilian museum field.

All these achievements took place under the direction of this interim committee which in 2020 set up a working group to organize the election process for the first REM Brazil Board. The working group's priority was to ensure that the new board was representative of all regions of the country and that it was able to dialogue with the diverse realities of Brazilian museum education.

After a two-year process, the newly elected REM Brazil Steering Committee took office on 20 January 2023 with two representatives from each region, one titular and one substitute.

### POSSIBLE HORIZONS: THE SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF THE REMs IN BRAZIL

During the last survey led in 2022 by the REM Brazil elections working group, following REM groups were identified: in the North of the country, only one of its seven states had a REM, that of Pará; it now has two with the creation of REM-AP in 2023. In the North-East, four of its nine states have active REMs (Ceará, Bahia, Paraíba et Maranhão), two are inactive (Pernambuco and Sergipe) and three

have no REMs yet (Alagoas, Piauí et Rio Grande do Norte), even if there is a strong will in Piauí to create one. In the South, three states (Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina et Paraná) have already a REM. From the four states in the South-East region, three have a REM except for Espírito Santo. In the West-Central region counting three states plus the Federal District, all the states have their REM.

In recent years, this capillarization of the networks of museum educators has been the driving force behind the social participation in museum education in Brazil. Thanks to this mobilization, it is possible to establish channels of communication that above all enable the IBRAM, the federal authority responsible for the public policy on museums in Brazil, to access information on the reality of a part of Brazil that would not otherwise be possible.

A recent and important example is the research on "Educational practices in Brazilian museums: an overview of the national museum education policy" (image 3), known as Museum Education Research in Brazil, or simply, PEM-Brazil. Launched in 2022, this research, necessary since the approval of the PNEM in 2017, aims to provide information that can support the implementation, evaluation,



Image 3: Visual identity of the PEM-Brazil



Image 4: 1st Museum education national meeting - EMUSE. Cachoeira-Ba/2023 (Photo : EMUSE Dissémination)

and revisions of the PNEM, also contributing to the evaluation of those aspects of the National Museum Policy, established in 2003, that deal with museum education and, consequently, with IBRAM's public policies in this area (PEMBRASIL, 2023).

One of PEM-Brazil's assumptions was precisely the need to conduct an in-depth research in the country, so that the data obtained would better meet the diversity of Brazilian realities. Given IBRAM's initial difficulty in being present in places far from urban centers, with the research questionnaire still circulating at the close of the 2022 elections, data collection was shared via social networks and official

communication channels. In this context, the participation of networks was fundamental in ensuring that the questionnaire circulated virtually in different debate groups and forums, and even in repeating the performance of the PNEM debate in 2014, by organizing face-to-face events in different cities across the country.

Within the framework of PEM-Brazil, the first National Museum Education Meeting - EMUSE (image 4) took place in July 2023 in the city of Cachoeira-BA. Combining the long-standing desire to organize this meeting with the need to widely disseminate research findings, the event was once again able to count on a grant from

IBRAM and the presence of networks that had collaborated in its realization.

As to the next steps in the social participation of civil society organized in networks in the field of museum education in Brazil, the results of EMUSE give us an important orientation. Throughout the event, debates and discussions took place with the aim of forming a working group to revise the PNEM. It is thus

hoped that, as was the case in the process of developing the National Museum Education Policy and Museum Education Research in Brazil, the revision of the PNEM will actively involve the participation of the networks of museum educators thus ensuring that the participatory nature of the actors making up the Brazilian museum education field is maintained.

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# Contemporary perspectives



Exu Ijelú/Exu Lalu/Caboclo Lalu. *Nosso Sagrado/Museu da República.*  
Photography: Oscar Liberal



# Learning from Nosso Sagrado: The strength of the orixás, the caboclas and caboclos, of the vovós and pretos velhos against racism

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**Thiago Botelho Azeredo**

*Son of Ogun, Little Father of the Temple of the Valley of the Sun and the Moon*

**I**  
The collection of sacred objects was formed from the police raids against Candomblé and Umbanda terreiros in Rio de Janeiro in the first decades of the Republic. The raids were instructed by racist orders, which criminalised these religious practices, linking them to witchcraft, charlatanry and low spiritism. Based on these links, the police disrupted the ceremonies, arrested their practitioners, and confiscated their objects as “evidence of crime”.

Quoting Mãe Meninazinha de Oxum, who led the struggle for the liberation of these objects:

Many of our *pais de santo*, *mães de santos*, *ialorixá*, *babalorixá*<sup>1</sup>, were physically assaulted, arrested, thrown into a

police station. And our goods were confiscated. Our goods are our wealth, our gold, our sacredness, which means a lot for us, more than gold, it has great value. But not for the police, who branded us as witches, sorceresses; this is not the case because we worship the *orixás*, which are elements of nature. And this collection in the Museu da Polícia shames us. I say this with great sadness, but with faith in God and in the *orixás*, as a representative of the *candomblé* and as a representative of the *orixás*, I will continue to fight. (PEREIRA, 2017, p. 51).

## II

On 5 May 1938, around 200 sacred objects were inventoried by the *Serviço do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* (National Historical and

<sup>1</sup> People in charge of the Afro-Brazilian religiosities.

Artistic Heritage Service - SPHAN), now the *Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* (Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage - IPHAN), constituting the first ethnographic inventory in the country. However, confiscations continued in the *terreiros*. Today the collection counts 519 sacred objects, including ritual vestments, guides, religious figures, religious settlements, swords, musical instruments, among other sacred objects of Afro-Brazilian religions. It is an extremely important collection, a symbol of knowledge and skills associated with Candomblé and Umbanda and their interactions with indigenous and Muslim culture, an expression of the ethnic and cultural plurality of the country.

From 1937 onwards, this collection was deposited in a space called Seção de Tóxicos, Narcóticos e Mistificações (Section for toxic objects, narcotics, and mystifying goods), clearly showing the prejudice and contemptuous way in which the police institution treated the sacredness of religions with Afro-Brazilian roots. Handled with ignorance and disrespect, this sacred heritage was exhibited together with materials from criminal offences, to compose crime scenes and serve in practical police training classes following a racist pedagogy. In 1945, it was transferred to a “criminal museum”, today called the Museu da Polícia Civil do Estado de Rio de Janeiro, where it was identified, from a racist perspective, as culturally related, not to Afro-Brazilian religious life, but to police life.

### III

The transfer of this collection to the *Museu da República* took place on 21 September 2020, following campaigns for justice reparations and at the request of the leaders of the population of Santo who fought for the liberation of these objects and who now share the management of the collection at the museum.

The participation of the religious group in the shared management team of *Nosso Sagrado* is essential and highly valued. It is an experience anchored in solidarity knowledge and in the understanding that the religious group possesses non-academic knowledge which is essential for the care of these sacred objects.

### IV

In the *Museu da República*, the preservation and safeguarding of this cultural heritage is evident in each object that is sanitised, photographed, and suitably conditioned, respecting the knowledge and skills of Afro-Brazilian religions, now treated in another opposite direction to the historical insensitive one when in the police's hands.

Research on the collection has already identified the provenance of some sacred objects as the names of vilified religious leaders and “men of justice”, whose jurisprudential interpretations of Afro-Brazilian religions strengthened the construction of an unequal and racist Brazil.

The Museum has increased the number of religious people from different



Rosary. *Nosso Sagrado/Museu da República*.  
Photography: Oscar Liberal.

currents, as well as historians, social scientists, museologists, educators, Africanists, and others, thus constituting a fruitful network about heritage knowledge and recently resulting in several publications, dissertations and defended theses, the organisation of cultural events, the strengthening of initiatives to fight religious racism to value the presence and memory of the Santo population.

## V

The *Grupo de Gestão Compartilhada* (Group of shared management) is involved in the organisation of a large exhibition on the *Nosso Sagrado*, which will occupy the *Museu da República* for at least three years. The group has also participated in several academic events and in the production of the first scientific article on the transfer of the collection<sup>2</sup>. These are all strong examples that “higher education” is not purely academic.

*Nosso Sagrado* is, in fact, a vigorous vector in the effort to rethink a counter-hegemonic meaning of “superior knowledge”. Among other examples, medical education in Brazil gained a new social dimension by questioning popular knowledge, including health practices in the terreiros. The memory of the persecution of religious people who prescribed plants and herbs in spiritual consultations is present in *Nosso Sagrado*. Today, we also celebrate a new victory for the population of Santo which benefits the whole Brazilian society: on 20 July 2023, the Conselho Nacional de Saúde

(the national health council) recognised the importance of African traditional practices in promoting health.

On the roads of the diaspora, several African ethnic groups from very different regions and cultures arrived in Brazil and Rio de Janeiro. Their cultural legacy is present in all areas of Brazilian life, be it in poetry, philosophy, history, memory, science, arts, politics, music, gastronomy, dance, language and, among many other influences, in *Nosso Sagrado*.

## VI

The definitive emancipation of this heritage demands the commitment to see its memories reach the schools, the streets, and the institutions, to unveil the stories of prejudice and avoid them to be repeated, helping us with these stories of liberation to rebuild an anti-racist Brazil.

Since 2022, the *Conhecendo o Nosso Sagrado* (Getting to know the *Nosso Sagrado*) project brings at the museum and on a monthly basis educators, researchers, and students from different backgrounds, emphasising the pedagogical dimension of the collection.

## VII

In terms of justice reparation, sacred objects are being treated as objects of worship that deserve all respect and care and that help us understanding another crime, the imprescriptible crime of racism.

2 OXUM; IANSÃ; VERSIANI; CHAGAS (2021).

Heritage care imposes the commitment to valorise the socio-cultural context of the practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religiosities community. This needs a thorough revision of the erroneous and prejudiced terminology attributed by the police in the process of naming sacred objects. At the same time, new tools for recording cultural references in the acquisitions are being reinvented to incorporate in the description singularities specific to cultures with African religious roots, one object having possibly multiple meanings or information.

## VIII

The *Nosso Sagrado* is not simply a collection of material goods. It is a cultural reference for generations of people who share ways of living the religion. Respecting the *Nosso Sagrado* includes respecting these people. Preserving the *Nosso Sagrado* includes preserving their rights. Any reparation around *Nosso Sagrado* must involve and dignify these people.

In this regard, some work proposals around *Nosso Sagrado* deserve special critical attention: justified as adherence to the cause, they may end up serving primarily the promoters, and being only secondarily or not at all a benefit for the population of Santo. At the *Museu da República* we are vigilant and reject this movement: only actions radically in favour of the *Nosso Sagrado* and the anti-racist struggle are accepted. Any technical treatment of this museological heritage rejects not only any racist practices, but also opportunistic ones.

Silvio Almeida (2019) teaches that when structures reproduce racist racial relations, it is necessary to confront them by constructing counter-dominant policies. In other words, the fight against racism requires an ideological and political reorientation of society.

It is plausible to say that *Nosso Sagrado* has influenced the anti-racist orientations of certain public actions, such as the transfer of the collection and the creation of the *Grupo de Gestão Compartilhada*, which constitutes a unique and concrete experience of knowledge and power democratisation.

These actions implement some Babá Sidnei Nogueira's proposals (2020) when fighting in his work religious racism. Deepening the relations and collaborations to build knowledge based on respect, presence and protagonism of religious leadership, opens space for Afro-diasporic cosmo-senses to become real driving forces in knowledge and action related to heritage.

## IX

Particularly important was the renaming of the collection, previously called "Coleção Museu da Magia Negra", (Museum collection of black magic) a name widely criticised by Afro-Brazilian religious communities as being offensive and defamatory, and which showed the prejudice with which state institutions treated religions with African roots.

The religious group managing *Nosso Sagrado* asked to change the name of the collection, which was not a simple



Atabaques. Nosso Sagrado/Museu da República.  
Photography: Oscar Liberal.

demand as part of the collection had been inventoried in 1938. But meetings with the Public Prosecutor's Office and the IPHAN, in seminars and in writing emphasised how serious keeping the impertinent name was, stressing that the management of the collection should serve to broaden, not distort, knowledge about religious practices with African roots.

Thus, overcoming the mistake of attributing to the collection of sacred objects a name offending the practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions and stigmatising and criminalising their practices, became a relevant part of this movement for justice. Finally, on 21 March 2023, the IPHAN announced the decision to change the name of the collection to *Acervo Nosso Sagrado*, as proposed by Mãe Meninazinha, with was approved by the entire religious group.

## X

Already heading towards the final considerations of this brief text presented here we decided to look at ourselves, to look at the *Grupo de Gestão Compartilhada* and to ask ourselves some questions. So, we decided, in an exercise of self-reflection, to ask Pai Thiago de Ogum, Thiago Azeredo, one of the authors of this article: What is the importance of the *caboclas*, *caboclos*, *vovós* and *pretos velhos* in the fight against racism? The answers and their drifts were inspiring. As Pai Thiago says:

The *caboclas*, *caboclos*, *pretos velhos*, *pretas velhas*, all these entities we work with in Umbanda are our personal and collective ancestors. From a

genealogical point of view, someone who was already in my family at some point in the past. In a broader perspective [of these ancestors], and as a people, they recognise me as belonging to their people, I am someone who is on earth, who sustains their legacy.

It is worth highlighting the ancestral and familiar relationship of double welcome: we welcome them, and they welcome us, "they love us and want to come to us". Pai Thiago then tells us:

The meaning they have in the anti-racist struggle is their existence, in the foreground, their very existence. The fact that these divinities, who are important for us, are divinities who are us, who are the many, the diverse, the people, the ordinary, the black, the indigenous, means their existence is important. They are not in our cult to fight against racism, but maintaining their cult is the anti-racist combat. Our very existence is at stake. They are the ones who come to us; they are not the doctors and bigwigs who circulate freely in our society. They are ordinary people like us.

This point is extremely relevant: the existence of divinities, of beings of transcendence, constitutes a form of anti-racist struggle. In other words: the existence and r(e)existence of Afro-Brazilian religions are objective anti-racist manifestations.

## XI

The self-reflective conversation with Pai Thiago was long and inspiring. The limited space available in this publication does not allow us to reproduce it. However, we would also like to highlight the following comment

from *Pai Pequeno* (Little Father) of the *Templo do Sol e da Lua* (Temple of the Sun and Moon), about the different perspectives in relation to Umbanda (one internal and one external):

From the inside, the spiritual entities are simply my master, my teacher, my *vovó* who welcomes me, who advises me, who fights with me, who has with me a relationship of solidarity and care. But from the outside it is possible to make this [sociological and psychological] reading, because it is a symbolic or archetypal spiritual alliance with groups of people, beings, existences, historically persecuted, marginalised, who belong and show marks of belonging to racialised groups, who suffered in their time and whose descendants suffer today the process of persecution and racism. Racialised groups or groups linked to knowledge shaped by racialised grammars.

Mãe Meninazinha de Oxum repeats that it is necessary to retell the history of Brazil through sacred objects. Among the steps taken, the creation of an extension course on *Nosso Sagrado* has mobilised the *Grupo de Gestão Compartilhada*. Furthermore, at the priestess's, the *Assembleia Legislativa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro) instituted 21 September as the *Dia Estadual da Libertação do Acervo Sagrado* (State Day for the Liberation of the Sacred Heritage).

Racism insists and *Nosso Sagrado* resists. The memories of this collection are the memories of the people of Santo and are instruments to safeguard and fight for their right to exist and to profess their faith, their intelligence and their knowledge.

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# What do museums and the Bienal de São Paulo share through their permanent educational programmes?

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## CONSTELLATIONS

The dynamics of the institutions converge into countless interrelationships, many of which are not expressed in this text made up of work notes, work perceptions, conversations with people, including visitors, curators and educators, and many readings on exhibition content. The proposal is here to present some facts, even if the text has no evaluation and verification instruments aimed at the public.

The interactions and metamorphoses that take place between biennales and art museums result in complex internal models and dynamics, influenced by the exchanges between both institutions. Borrowing the term invented by Italian writer Emanuele Coccia, a kind of underpinning metamorphosis takes place between the Biennale and the art museums, from the point of view of the movement and the absorption, the retraction, the resistances, and affinities adding a political aspect to

this relationship that transcends the surface with the related people. He defines metamorphosis as a theory of the continuity of life between bodies. It forces one living being to welcome the other in oneself, without ever being able to be entirely oneself nor to mix or merge entirely into the other.

The same idea is put forward by Brazilian writer Antônio Bispo dos Santos, who, preferring the word confluence, concludes: “A river doesn’t stop being a river because it comes in confluence with another river, on the contrary, it becomes stronger.”

In this metamorphosis, an aspect of eccentric continuity stands out, like a cocoon “a form that every living being maintains with itself and which leads it to radically modify its body and identity”. Institutions are rigidly structured by its maintained culture, but they are also modelled and remodelled by people who at different times can alter their body and identity. This perspective of

change occurs from the context of what we call contemporary, a time that in principle seems to relate exclusively to the present, although it converges in a less tangible way with other periods.

The creative process taking place in both museums and biennales is tensioned by changes, influenced by different periods, individuals, and contexts, moulding a set of ideas permeated by conflicts, often distant from the institution's own convictions and from what was once considered one of its virtues. These institutions absorb a pulsating energy connecting with the future and the past, embracing both what is around and beyond them.

Biennales, characterised by temporary exhibitions lasting an average of three months, undergo metamorphoses every two years, or every year when there are travelling and temporary exhibitions, not only through the exhibitions, but also through the teams and visitors introducing new perspectives. As to, museums, they adopt long-term dynamics, also with the commitment of the employees and the museum collections.

While biennales are free to propose innovative scenarios, incorporating lessons from their recent or distant past, museums are not compelled to radically transform each subsequent exhibition. Nor is the biennale obliged to propose with each edition drastic changes; but its uniqueness lies in the challenge its new curatorial bodies face to create from the present, even

taking non-linear time into account, as appeared in the curatorship of the 30th Biennale with the concepts of constellation and the Mnemosyne atlas and in the notion of spiral time for the 35th Biennale.

There are countless changes of route, driven to engage more people or to strengthen a more politicised or artistic debate with the society<sup>1</sup>.

While museums can adhere to a continuous rhythm, consistently maintaining the same curatorial team for every exhibition, the biennales face a more dynamic demand. They renew themselves at each edition with the contribution of different curatorial perspectives. Both can nevertheless be challenged to make sense of what they present.

## LIFELONG EDUCATION

It is widely recognised that the desire to establish lifelong educational approach as with museums, added to the Biennale's more ephemeral experiences, existed years before the Biennales. Its educational nature and mission have long been confirmed.

However, it was in the 29th edition of the Biennale (2010), 'Há sempre um copo de mar para um homem navegar' (there is always a cup of sea for men to navigate' under the curatorship of Agnaldo Farias and Moacir dos Anjos, and Stela Barbieri's educational curatorship, that this idea materialised and remained uninterrupted to this day.

1 The Biennales organize themselves around a group of ideas concerning what is called contemporary art, but there are many other ways of understanding and expressing the art of the present (contemporary).



29th Biennial Exhibition - "There is always a sea cup for a man to sail." The permanent educational program included long-term studies, even with other art institutions. Source: Elaine Fontana, 2010.

It was 13 years ago that an educational programme was set up and managed to keep a continuous team, even though new temporary curatorial and educational teams were hired for each show. The presence of a permanent team responsible for organising a routine of research and reflection on experiences, in a similar way to museums, brings a series of complex changes. One of the most notable transformations is the ability to integrate with the existing institutional content, using the lessons learnt as a basis for further enriching study, while simultaneously renewing this knowledge with each exhibition.

Stela Barbieri, the curator in charge of leading this continuity, has enriched the Biennale as an artist and teacher (2010-2015). Until her arrival in 2010 there had been at the Biennale diverse experiences in the field of education as those used in museums, many of them related to art teaching. She continuously infused an artistic sensibility and poetic practices guiding approaches with contemporary art that

can serve as a working methodology, as they are easily identified in the educational publications of the time<sup>2</sup>.

## SHARING

In the 30th Biennale's educational publication<sup>3</sup> Stela comments that "The Educational Centre works with poetic fields, tensioning them, making them visible, activating the space for creation". And the curator of the exhibition, Luis Pérez-Oramas, shares a similar view, from a more philosophical perspective. Talking with the education department about the title of the exhibition "A iminência das poéticas" "The imminence of poetry", Oramas asked: What is the language of images? How do they speak? How do we express images? What is the visible that doesn't fit into language? What is the word that has no form, that has no image? ..."Words and things exist in worlds that don't entirely coincide...".

The poetic dimension in this exhibition leads to its political determination,

<sup>2</sup> <http://fbsp.org.br/publicacoes>

<sup>3</sup> [https://imgs.fbsp.org.br/files/30bienal\\_livreto.pdf](https://imgs.fbsp.org.br/files/30bienal_livreto.pdf)



30th Biennial  
Exhibition - «On the  
brink of poetics.»  
Source: © Leo Eloy /  
Fundação Bial de  
São Paulo<sup>4</sup>

Photo of the  
light studio - an  
unconventional  
studio with  
black walls, like  
a photographic  
darkroom, where  
visitors in groups  
carried out luminous  
and ephemeral  
experiments.

deviating and disengaging the images from their representation systems. This makes the approach to the works different from this context, influencing the way a conversation/silence is conducted about them.”

During this period, a studio model was developed that transcended the conventional studio and classroom art materials. The practices were not limited to these materials, since the inspiration derived from the elements conceived based on the works on display. Moreover, these elements enabled practical research in art to be explored. In this way, spaces such as sand tanks or a darkroom provided aesthetic experiences that lasted only that instant.

The workshops at the 32nd Biennale (Incerteza Viva – Live incertitude)

combining workshops and cookery to share knowledge and put it into practice like with the numerous preparations of a cooking recipe proposed by the course or exhibition participants bring an additional focus as we shall see further on. It was a real sharing, not a staging, of the integration of many forms of knowledge. Such practices lead us to question the very essence of art in this type of exhibition.

## ACTIONS THAT EMERGE FROM CONTINUOUS CONTACT WITH TEAMS AND EXHIBITIONS

Between 2011, 2013 and 2020<sup>5</sup>, there were temporary exhibitions that broke away from the traditional biennale cycle, even during the global Covid-19 pandemic (Wind Exhibition). The first

4 “The Biennale Archive (Arquivo Histórico Wanda Svevo) that provided the image is maintained by professionals from the institution who are responsible for organising the documents of all the exhibitions, including images, documents and curatorial texts. Working dynamically, it offers public access to materials and maintains a comprehensive archiving system that involves temporary and permanent teams, contributing to the preservation of institutional memory.”

5 The 34th Biennale lasted two years, involving ongoing collaboration with the school and cultural community through the educational publication “First Essays”:

Exhibition  
between  
Biennials “In  
the name of  
the artists.”

Source: Elaine  
Fontana, 2011.



of these exhibitions, called “In the Name of Artists”, curated by Gunnar Kvaran, highlighted works from the prestigious Astrup Fearnley Collection, which houses creations by renowned artists such as Cindy Sherman, Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst.

The second exhibition by Paulo Venâncio Filho entitled “30x Biennale”, celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the *Bienal de São Paulo* presenting iconic works by Brazilian artists who took part in previous editions of the event.

Curiously, these first two exhibitions, which at first glance seemed historic and untouched, became a breeding ground for the Biennale’s education team, which developed various visits and workshops with a political slant.

As part of the exhibition “In the Name of the Artists” (2011), Mayara M., in her second exhibition at the Fundação Bienal, proposed a “thematic visit” with a workshop including a live model focusing on the relationship between the erotic and the political in Jeff Koons’s work.

These actions, led by the educators and publicised on the Biennale’s media channels, took place for the first time that year, were based on the visitors’ interest and the proposer’s research. This initiative shows that educators get more consideration for the activities they propose. Previously, the attention was more focused only on well-known cultural figures beyond the exhibition.

The 31st Biennale, entitled “Como... coisas que não existem” (“How... things that don’t exist”), emphasised networked collaboration between artists and organised social groups working on collective projects, moving away from the idea of a “great autonomous work of art”. Political conflict and activism became inseparable from the creators’ artistic practice, resulting in significant changes in the art exhibition and, consequently, in the approach to art mediation and teaching. This dynamic promotes a new relationship between art and politics, renouncing to see the interpreter and an object validated by the art system, and favouring new forms of sharing and needs among the collectives formed during the Biennale.



32nd Biennial Exhibition - "Living Uncertainty." Biotechnological artifact made with mycelium, by Nomedá and Gediminas Urbonas. Source: Living Uncertainty Catalog, 2016, p. 287.

In the 32nd issue - "Living Uncertainty"<sup>6</sup> – discussions on cosmology and anti-racism were deepened, enriching the debates in subsequent issues. Fungi and mycelium, a topic in this issue, reflects the idea of the network, not only in its conventional form, but also in the communication between trees, like the configuration of the internet. This analogy highlights how different elements interact through connectivity or interference, resulting in systemic updates. Such a reference can broaden the agencies that give body to the relationships established within an educational experience.

In a more current context, the "Invitation to Attention"<sup>7</sup> exercise was created on the 33rd Biennale - Afínidades afetivas

(2018) (Affective affinities)<sup>8</sup>, with a permanent educational programme fully operational and a renewed team of consultants and a few intern members. Conceived with no content to be shared, nor a poetic practice to mediate the relationship between the work and public, the aim was merely to practice attention through contact protocols which can be used with works of art of any kind. What does art mean for you? It doesn't matter if you are a qualified art knower or not.

The author Jan Masschelein, quoted in the educational publication, confirms this idea to break out from common considerations: "'to understand' or 'to educate the gaze' not in the sense of educare (to teach), but of e-ducere,

6 Curated by Jochen Volz and co-curated by Gabi Ngcobo, Júlia Rebouças, Lars Bang Larsen and Sofia Olascoaga.

7 Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro - 7 artist-curators: Alejandro Cesarco, Antonio Ballester Moreno, Claudia Fontes, Mamma Andersson, Sofia Borges, Waltercio Caldas, Wura-Natasha Ogunji.

8 Team: <http://33.bienal.org.br/pt/convite-a-atencao>



meaning to lead out, to direct outwards, to take outwards...". The process of e-educating the gaze does not mean acquiring a critical or liberated vision, but rather freeing our vision."

A dialectical relationship is established between aiming and the object that is aimed at, favouring self-transformation with a kind of practical freedom. The practice of attention does not necessarily seek to teach something that is absent or to eliminate existing inequalities.<sup>9</sup>

## CIRCULARITY

The Biennale recreates long-term courses with teachers, visiting programmes, modes of aesthetic appreciation with an emphasis on accessibility, among other notable examples referring to museums.

For the 33rd Biennale, one of its programmes was inspired by the Lasar Segall Museum's activity for babies, post-partum mothers and young children. This idea is reflected both in the creation on the third floor of a separate and more quiet space and in the programme during that year. The Lasar Segall Museum, a Brazilian public museum, has gained international recognition for its educational and cultural approach aimed at babies and young children. It owes this recognition thanks to its Best Practice Award received in 2014 by the Committee for Education and Cultural Action of the International Council of Museums (ICOM-CECA).

In the 33rd Biennale public programme, the way this museum offers children a relaxed and free experience is evident. On the ground floor children are free to crawl and play with common objects in a dedicated space. This approach is guided by the consideration that the museum is a public space and therefore babies have the same right to enjoy it as any other visitor.

Another notable approach is the use of Video Libras (Brazilian sign language), a tool that has already been used in exhibitions such as the 30th Biennale. This tool is integrated in the exhibition right at the entrance, next to the curator's text. This decision was based on research conducted at the MAM - São Paulo which has a long involvement with the deaf community.

At the 34th Biennale, the remarkable integration of the educators' rooms in the exhibition redesigns the museum model. This education space (previously called Educativo Bienal) plays different roles, such as serving as a rehearsal room or a space for spontaneous dialogues; it is in line with the perspective of the writer Édouard Glissant<sup>10</sup>, teaching about the experience of opacity when relating with audiences.

The complex relationships between biennales and museums, as well as the underlying metamorphosis they experience, demonstrate the incredible vitality between these institutions. Lifelong education, a pillar of the Biennale, has proved to be a driving force for continuity and the creation

9 <http://33.bienal.org.br/pt/convite-a-atencao>

10 <http://34.bienal.org.br/agenda/9165>



Practicing "Invitation to Attention" with a course participant. *Parque do Ibirapuera*, São Paulo.  
Source: Elaine Fontana, 2016.



of perspectives in contemporary art education.

Sharing, collaborating and continuous dialogues with the teams, the visitors and the exhibitions have enriched the experience and shaped new forms of interaction and understanding of what contemporary art can be, or rethinking the narrow category surrounding institutionalised contemporary art. Actions that arise from continuous contact with visitors, teams and exhibitions have led to greater flexibility and adaptability in artistic mediation and its implications in the political sphere of life.

Finally, as these institutions continue to collaborate and share experiences, maintaining external dialogues and continuous reviews, they can become institutions increasingly practicing accessibility and counter-coloniality, even if they are institutionally traditional.

This process of transformation and constant adaptation makes them relevant in an ever-changing cultural environment, opening doors to a more diverse audience and promoting true inclusion, incorporating politics of difference and wisdoms that are beyond the art system.

## Acknowledgments

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Image 1: The Noble Salon of the Museu do Ipiranga with the painting "Independence or Death" and accessibility material in the exhibition. Digital photo. José Rosael, 2022. Archive: photo 221104-027 - rosael.jpg

# Curatorial actions: the role of the education team in the “New Museu do Ipiranga” project

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The *Museu Paulista* (Paulista Museum), better known as the *Museu do Ipiranga* (Ipiranga Museum), was the first museum created in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. Its building was built at the end of the 19th century as a monument to celebrate the memory of Pedro I, Brazil's first emperor, and to mark the spot where the country's independence was proclaimed in 1822. Built between 1885 and 1890, the monument was opened to the public as a Natural History museum in 1895, and over the decades it was gradually transformed with changes and transfers of collections, but without losing a significant place in the social imagination as one of the city's best known and most visited museums.

In August 2013, the Museum building was closed to the public due to displacements in the ceiling in some of its rooms, including the

Salão Nobre (the Noble Salon) - where one can see its best-known work, the painting “Independência ou Morte!” (Independence or Death!) by Pedro Américo. At this time, the exhibitions were closed to visitors so that restoration, modernization and accessibility work could be carried out. This was the start of a long process of reformulation that lasted nine years, until the reopening of the building for the celebrations of the independence bicentenary on 7 September 2022. To achieve this, several work fronts had to be established (architecture, curatorship, exhibition design, fundraising, among others). Discussions thus began on the curatorial proposals that would lead the exhibition discourse, as well as the definition of the collections to be mobilized in the new exhibitions and the expography guidelines. It should be emphasized that in both the architectural and exhibition projects guaranteeing qualified access

was one of the fundamental premises and, in this sense, the participation of the education team made fundamental contributions, especially when it came to planning the exhibitions.

In addition to the mediation activities carried out during the closure period, a subject already discussed on other occasions, this article aims to present the work of this team in the activities directly linked to the reopening of the Museum related both to the architectural and the exhibition project.

Firstly, it is important to emphasize the Museum's institutional links. During the period it was closed, the Museum started to be acknowledged as the *Museu do Ipiranga*, its most popular name although its formal name is *Museu Paulista da Universidade de São Paulo* (Paulista Museum of the University of São Paulo - MP-USP), the university to which it has been linked since 1963. Consequently, its staff is composed of civil servants linked to the University of São Paulo. The pedagogical team consists in only two educators, Denise Peixoto (since 2001) and Isabela Ribeiro de Arruda (since 2012), the authors of this report. In addition, during the closure period there was a significant institutional change, which led to the dissolution of the former Educational Activities Service (2001-2021) which merged with other technical areas to form the Education, Museography and Cultural Action Section - without, however, increasing the number of professionals of the team.

Returning to the reopening process, we can start by discussing the project to restore, refurbish and expand the Museum building. Right from the start,

the team, more specifically the educator Denise Peixoto, who has become a reference in the institution when it comes to this issue, put the question of accessibility as a central premise. In addition to meeting the minimum technical requirements established by the required standards for circulation, signposting and improving spaces, our aim has always been to broaden this perspective to provide a barrier-free experience that is integrated as much as possible with all the Museum's services and spaces, guaranteeing equal rights for all audiences. As part of the project, high-quality service areas were also incorporated to accommodate groups, including the creation of two workshops that can be subdivided, allowing up to 80 people to be served simultaneously. In addition, we introduced Educabars, communal spaces with educational proposals that can be carried out with or without the presence of a mediator, and comfort areas for the public.

At the same time, the educational plan proposed by the team was very broad, diverse and, why not say it, audacious, considering that the Museum only counts two educators on its staff. In order for the project to be developed, a team of six assistants was hired to work on the different fronts established by the educators. The proposals were implemented between 2020 and 2022 and some of them are described, albeit briefly, in this article. Among other objectives, the aim is to share the complexity of the work process carried out, to demonstrate the extremely diverse potential of museums' educational areas and, finally, to reaffirm the importance of educators in building proposals that amplify the communication,

educational and accessibility interfaces of museum institutions.

## 1 LISTENING TO SOCIAL GROUPS

Once the general lines of the curatorial proposals had been defined, which unfolded into eleven long-term exhibitions and one temporary exhibition spread over approximately 5,500m<sup>2</sup>, the process of listening to different social groups began. The aim was to find out their references to museum institutions in general, their expectations regarding the reopening of the *Museu do Ipiranga* and their reception of some of the themes that would be presented in the exhibitions.

With the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the proposal was reformulated and adapted to be developed through virtual meetings. Thus, twenty profiles were defined and forty-five meetings were held mediated by a company specialized in process facilitation, seeking to provide a safe space for speech, without possible interference that the mere presence of a professional from the internal team could generate. The groups were formed using different strategies (with the presence of organizers or through public calls) and we were able to count on the participation of the following profiles: tour guides, teachers, people with autism, people with visual disabilities, people with hearing disabilities, people with intellectual disabilities, teenagers, children, indigenous people, participants in the black movement, participants in cultural movements, workers on the Museum site, LGBTQIA+ people, participants in housing movements,

immigrants and refugees, monarchists, carers of children aged 0-5, carers of children aged 6-12, users of mental health services and members of the neighborhood trade association.

## 2. THEORETICAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION PLAN

Defining an educational plan requires for its structure and leading to organize the theoretical and practical references. Based on the extensive bibliography already available in the field of museum education and studies relating history teaching and museums, conceptual axes were systematized in accordance with the experience of the proposals already developed by the Museum's education department. Another extremely important contribution to the configuration of this structure was the word clouds obtained from the research carried out with educators and museums. In addition to framing the questionnaires to be sent out, two meetings with these professionals provided perceptions and proposals on relevant points for establishing the educational plan.

## 3. EDUCATING AND TRAINING TEACHERS AND FUTURE STAFF

Museums have a centuries-old relationship with school audiences and the educational potential of exhibitions is undeniable. Materials were therefore prepared and training processes were carried out in which public school teachers were invited to take part not only to learn about the curatorial proposals, but also to discuss ways of



Image 2: Enlarged reproduction of a Brazilian Imperial coin of 320 réis. Digital photo, Thamar Nunes & Luisa Barcelli, 2022. Archive: CCI-TUO-RET-001\_1.jpg

bringing students closer to the themes dealt with in the exhibition spaces. In addition, training was given to the teams that started operating the Museum in September 2022, especially those linked to the ticket office and security.

#### 4. EDUCATIONAL GAMES

Museums are also spaces for play. In this universe, games have an enormous potential to engage visitors with issues, themes, collections and to promote interaction between those who are playing, inside or outside the exhibition. The educational plan included the development of new proposals in line with the new exhibitions. Tactile boxes, card games, puzzles, board games and hobbies are among the materials designed for the initial phase of the team's work. This material can be mobilized by educators during mediation, but will also be available in a space called Educablab, located on the

building's Garden Floor, where visitors can access them freely and have contact with publications and other materials that will be available there.

#### 5. AUDIENCE RESEARCH

Since the early years of the then Educational Activities Service, audience research has been conceived and applied in different contexts. In this new institutional moment, many of them have subsidized curatorial choices in such a way that we understand that they should be expanded institutionally and not be confined to the educational area, although it is a constitutive part of its lines of action. Unfortunately, numerous factors (in particular, the context of the Covid-19 pandemic) have prevented a large-scale proposal from being part of the Museum's reopening process, but it has been possible to consolidate a questionnaire that can be applied consistently over the years. It is quite comprehensive, covering everything from profile data to the subtleties of enjoying spaces and exhibitions, both digitally and in print, favoring different uses of the same material and being adaptable according to the desired objective. To consolidate this proposal, tests of its use were carried out and the data obtained tabulated in 2023.

#### 6. PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL TEAMS

The educational area's lines of action, as well as the scope of its actions, presuppose a significant number of professionals involved in the numerous demands. This requires careful



planning and the establishment of a management model that, in addition to meeting institutional needs, favors a fruitful relationship with the public and promotes good team engagement. In this way, during the exhibition planning phase, proposals were also drawn up for organizing the work fronts, simulating proposals for scales, spreadsheets for recording materials used in mediations or objects to be borrowed from the didactic technical reserve, among other general instruments.

## 7. PUBLICATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The first materials designed were aimed at two public profiles: teachers and children aged 4 to 12, when they visit the Museum spontaneously. A set of eight booklets was produced for teachers. Seven deal with the contents of the exhibitions and one presents the objectives of the material, its main characteristics and possibilities for use. In addition to the conceptual issues, links were made to the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC), which is the reference document for formal education in Brazilian schools. This material, as well as the printed version for free distribution, is available for download from the Museum's

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Image 3: Detail of the enlarged reproduction of a Brazilian Imperial coin of 320 réis.

Digital photo,  
Thamara Nunes &  
Luisa Barcelli, 2022.  
Archive: CCI-TUO-  
RET-001\_3.jpg



website. Virtual materials were also produced about the new exhibitions, the Museum's history and the way the institution works. For children accompanied by their families, booklets have been proposed with two routes that explore the exhibitions, with games and incentives for observation and interaction. The publications will be added to a set of objects that can be borrowed during a visit to the museum.

## 8. MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

The curatorial proposal foresaw the insertion of more than fifty multimedia resources in the exhibition spaces aiming at presenting, deepening or contrasting the themes of the exhibitions. In the initial stage, the team carried out an extensive survey of how this type of resource is available in different museums, its scope and limitations. Afterwards, a long and meticulous process began, with meetings attended by curators, educators and professionals hired to create the design and adapt the content to this type of resource.

The educational team contributed both to reviewing the content and adapting the language, as well as defining the format and usability. It also reviewed all the proposed audio descriptions.

## 9. MULTISENSORY RESOURCES

Physical and communicational accessibility was adopted as a premise for defining the new exhibitions, as previously mentioned. In addition to audio description resources, Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) and texts in ink and Braille, it was decided that all the



Image 4: Plastic jar in the shape of a pineapple. Digital photo, Hélio Nobre & José Rosael, 2022. Archive: CEC-Co2-OBT-010\_1.jpg

exhibitions would have tactile resources available to all visitors - and this can probably be seen as the main factor in the innovation of this project and one that can contribute significantly to broadening the understanding of the scope of education in Brazilian museums.

In a universe of 4,000 objects on display in 43 rooms and 11 exhibitions, 351 tactile items were fully incorporated in the most different materiality: situational tactile plans of each space, original objects, models, dioramas, images in visuo-tactile silkscreen printing, screens in high relief, olfactory devices, among others. The definition of these items followed technical and curatorial guidelines and was based on many years of experiences in the educational field and on benchmarks established by proposals developed in other institutions



that show consistent results in their effectiveness. We therefore believe that making the tactile collection part of the curatorial discourse, integrating it into the conceptual narrative, favors the sharing of the visitation experience between disabled and non-disabled visitors without creating barriers or audience segmentation.

## 10. EDUCATIONAL TOUR ITINERARIES

The educational project also planned to hire staff to work with the different public profiles. These professionals would undergo training and take part in planning educational activities for visitors. Given the large number of exhibitions and thematic axes that would need to be appropriated by the educators, it was thought that it would be useful to draw up visit itineraries for the school public and itineraries for the spontaneous public. This way, by using the proposals, the professionals would have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the exhibitions and plan new actions.

## 11. WEB APPLICATION/ AUDIOGUIDE

One of the strategies to bring visitors closer to the themes of the exhibitions was the development of self-guided tours. Three scripts were drawn up for the long-term exhibitions, seeking to offer different ways of travelling around the spaces. In addition, versions have been produced that include audio description

of the multisensory resources, Libras and English translation.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Undoubtedly, the work described was a collaborative effort involving the coordination of the team with dozens of professionals and companies hired during the project. However, it is important to emphasize the essential contribution played by the education team, which was made possible by a significant previous effort in institutional discussions about the importance of incorporating and approaching a sensitive perspective towards the public, a distinctive characteristic of this same team.

## NEW ACTIONS

With the completion of the project, however, we are faced with a number of challenges. The institution is currently going through a delicate phase of transition from the project to the implementation of its operations, and so far, we have not been able to form a team that can continue the actions started during the reopening project, given that all the professionals hired to work during the project had their contracts interrupted as the reopening project drew to a close. Therefore, especially after the challenges faced by all the education teams throughout the pandemic, we recognize the need to maintain a proactive stance towards the demands of the broad and diverse public in an institution with more than a century of history, such as the *Museu do Ipiranga*.

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# Museum Education and Cyberculture: historical mapping and trends

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To reflect on Cyberculture and its relationship with museum education, we consider cyberspace and its communication potential in terms of interaction between a museum and a visitor as with the related respective educational practices. In presenting the concept of cyberculture, Pierre Levy (1999) identifies cyberculture as formed by virtual communities making up a digital network present within the cyberspace, where the different styles of relationships through a flow of asynchronous communication are present almost independently from their geographical locations.

It is thus understood that cyberculture provides new dynamics, communication contexts and knowledge production that influence everyday online educational practices in formal and non-formal educational spaces, including museums which are also educational spaces.

With the advance of digital network technologies (DNT), contemporaneity has been marked by the intense development in our daily lives of information and communication technologies, reconfiguring our socio-cultural relations (MARTI; COSTA, 2021). Online Museum Education (OME), a concept proposed by Frieda Marti (2021) inspired by the didactic and pedagogical approach of online education corresponds to Museum Education in the context of cyberculture (MARTI; COSTA, 2020).

Digital technology in a virtual context therefore allows for online experiences such as interactions and dialogues focused on the production of collective and multidirectional knowledge, as well as providing experiences that are not materially possible, complementing thus projects that might previously have been limited by the museum's

geolocated situation. It should be remembered that not all museum education actions on the internet can be called OME practices and that Online Museum Education activities can also be carried out within the geolocated museum. According to Marti and Santos (2019), Online Museum Education consists of a “new way of *thinking about* museum educational actions in/with cyberculture”, which stems from the main communicational and educational transformations generated by the rapid and intense development of the contemporary new technologies.

We found few records of this type of activity being carried out online in Brazilian museums before the start of the pandemic. Marti (2021b) records in her thesis the implementation of a “live m useum mediation” activity, also called “live online museum mediation” developed by the Teaching Assistance Section (SAE) of the *Museu Nacional* - UFRJ (National Museum - UFRJ). According to Marti (2021b, p.193), “the idea was to organise Facebook lives in which synchronous museum mediation would take place, thus enabling its followers to actively participate in choosing their topic via a poll on the SAE page”. In the context of the *Museu Nacional*, the first online live museum mediation took place in April 2018 and the space selected was the ‘Princesses’ Garden’, an area of the museum that was not open for public visitors. The researcher highlights in various remarks the followers’ synchronous and asynchronous participation saying that this action showed that this could be a new and promising way to enable audiences to access and participate in

educational activities that until then had been carried out exclusively face to face.

In March 2020, on the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic the first security measures were set to restrict circulation. In April, according to a survey carried out by the International Council of Museums (ICOM, 2020) 94.7 % of 1,600 museums and their professionals in the world were closed to the public. According to the same survey, the forced closure has boosted digital activities within museums, which have increased or started their actions after these measures for at least 15% of their participants. Activities on social networks increased or began for at least 47.49 % respondents. At the same time, many museum workers, especially those working in direct contact with the public such as educators were made redundant (ALMEIDA *et al.*, 2021).

According to the museum audience survey “Challenges in times of Covid-19”, presented in “Data for navigating amid uncertainty: adjusting the rudder towards the future” and published by ICOM Brazil, carried out with 4,210 respondents from 412 cities in 25 states and the Federal District, before the pandemic 37.7% visited museums to take part in cultural programming or educational activities. During the pandemic, 43.0 % of the online activities carried out by visitors were museum initiatives and 55.2 % of these activities were considered good experiences. Also, according to the survey, the platforms preferred or used most frequently by the public to visit and/or take part in virtual



Figure 1: During the pandemic, the Museu do Amanhã (Museum of Tomorrow) started its interactive programme of digital mediated visits called «Televisitas», the image shows an educator talking live to viewers who were following the visit at distance.

activities promoted by museums were respectively Youtube (64.7%), the museum's website (54.5%) and Instagram (53.5%) (Figure 1).

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, museums were closed individually for private reasons, as so many others in Brazil and other countries. They spoke little about their extramural, geolocated experiences, set outside their administrative premisses; they mentioned how their education departments worked exhaustively to show that museums are not just a physical space to visit, that they must be present within society, and reach audiences who for various reasons cannot access the museum personally. In March 2020<sup>1</sup>, we were for public health reasons globally faced with a general closure of museum doors. This

museums' closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic showed that there was an even greater need to consider the role of education in building the museum to be present online (MARTINS *et al.*, 2021).

The work of museums on the internet is still very much related to the media. As far as we can tell, educators' access to the digital social networks of the institutions in which they work is mediated by journalists and press officers. Thus, even when museum educators conceive educational actions for their institutions' digital social networks, these actions tend to be structured on a unidirectional communication model, which can be explained by the fact that there is nothing planned for educators to act as mediators in these spaces in an

1 decree no. 46.973 of 16 march 2020: recognises the emergency situation in public health in the state of rio de janeiro due to contagion and adopts measures to deal with the spread of the new coronavirus (covid-19); and makes other provisions. <<https://pge.rj.gov.br/comum/code/MostrarArquivo.php?C=MTAyMjI%2C>>

asynchronous way. Despite the increase in the number of studies on the subject of museums and their educational departments working on the internet, many museum workers and even researchers remain resistant, often limiting themselves to dealing with the digital quarrels on the topic within the Brazilian context or insisting on the risks that the geographically localised museum experience runs with online actions (MARTI; COSTA, 2020).

Educational visits using online platforms became more frequent during the health crisis. In a brief search on the internet, it is possible to locate some initiatives in this direction that have been implemented by museums with different types of collections, both public and private, and located in different parts of Brazil, such as *MM Gerda*u - *Museu das Minas*

*e do Metal*, Belo Horizonte (Mines and Metal Museum) (Figure 2), Museum of Tomorrow, Rio de Janeiro, *Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo - MAM* (São Paulo Museum of Modern Art) and *Museu Lasar Segall*, São Paulo (Lasar Segall Museum), for example. These experiences allow us to realise the diversity of formats, strategies and platforms used: educational visits based on geolocated exhibitions, others based on online exhibitions created from the “virtualisation” of geolocated exhibitions, and visits that explore exhibitions and activities that only exist online (Figure 3).

In this context, one finds visits in which educators are in the geolocated museum and circulate around the exhibits in the institution’s physical space, as well as visits in which educators don’t necessarily need to be



Figure 2: In 2023, MM Gerda u will have the possibility of scheduling Mediated Virtual Visits and learning about the museum’s Online Educational Actions on its website, in the Education area.



Figure 3: Screenshot of the online activity “Bees and Us: cultivating a sustainable relationship”, on the Genially platform, developed by the Teaching Assistance Section (SAE) of the National Museum - UFRJ, as part of the project for online museum mediation and the promotion of educational activities in the digital network.

in the museum. In the first case, only the visitors are away from the museum, in their homes and/or schools. In the second case, both visitors and educators may not be in the museum's geolocalised space. There are also practices that make image or video content available on social networks which can be accessed at anytime and anywhere possible, people leaving their comments and asking questions asynchronously.

Thanks to the versatility and diversity of technological interfaces and platforms in museum education within the present sphere of museums and their virtual spaces, the "digital transformation" of museums during the pandemic has been possible. The increase in investments and activities in digital networking through media, ICTs and other platforms used by museum institutions around the world, thanks to the movements to digitise the museum spaces since the 20th century may explain this achievement. In Brazil, access to museums, whether via the internet or in person, is still difficult for most of the population, whether due to accessibility, location or even communication issues. Among those who always use the internet, 38% also visit museums, while this percentage drops to 11% among those who never use the internet, so those who use the internet the most are also those who visit museums the most (LEIVA; MEIRELLES, 2019 *apud* MARTI; COSTA, 2020).

Analysing a recent study on the performance and future of online museum experiences carried out by the Regional Centre for Studies for

the Development of the Information Society (Cetic.br) in 2020, we observed a significant change in the use of the Internet by museums, mainly in the use of social networks, showing that 56% of museum institutions use communication platforms to maintain their relationship activities with the public. Educational visits to exhibitions using human mediation are among the most frequently promoted museum education activities. It is believed that in the presence of an educator, communication takes place more efficiently, as they can listen to the public and modify their discourse, engaging in dialogue with the visitors' values, expectations and knowledge and making the visit an educationally significant moment (MARTINS *et al*, 2013).

It's worth mentioning that varying from institution to another museums tend to include as many audiences as possible; the most common accessibility measures include images with their description and for the hearing impaired people with their content signposted or interpreted in Libras as subtitling the audio-visuals. Teleconferencing/videoconferencing platforms are essential, but these can vary according to the museum and even the group's wishes. In addition to the platforms already mentioned, let us also mention the use of digital social networks - Instagram, Facebook and YouTube - for visits and educational posts (Figure 4).

Among the PNEM guidelines (IBRAM, 2018), Axis II - Professionals, training, and research, states in art. 1 that institutions should "promote





Figure 4: Online Museum Education post from 18 August 2023 on the profile of MAST's — Museu de Astronomia e Ciências Afins (Museum of Astronomy and Related Sciences) Coordination of Science Education (COEDU) – (Not everything that shines is gold but may be precious)

professional museum education, encouraging investment in the specific and continuing training of professionals working in the field". We can see that there is still a lot to be done and that the recent concern of public participation will still generate various debates and thoughts about how to be handled in the online museum space, be it in posts on social networks with images or video, workshops, commented message mediations or online visits. For the field of Museum Education in Brazil,<sup>2</sup> training courses are essential so that its professionals can exchange information

and face future challenges in a field constantly changing to strengthen their work so that its activities "can be implemented and gain in visibility for the institutions' audiences" (MARTI; COSTA, 2021). One must also insist on the importance of continuing theoretical publications and the promotion of courses on Museum Education, OME and virtual mediation, for example, which can be used to open up a range of discourse on the role played by museums in a hyperconnected society with different desires when accessing a museum social network.

2 Courses have already been offered on Museum Education in Cyberculture, the first of which was offered as an extension course at UNIRIO itself, as publicised at: <https://sabermuseu.museus.gov.br/curso-de-extendaoeducacao-museal-na-cibercultura-unirio/>.

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**Maria Helena Versiani:** Historian, PhD in History, Politics and Cultural Assets, with a post-doctorate in History. She is a member of the Research Department at the *Museu da República* (Museum of the Republic) and coordinates the historical documentation of collection Nostro Sagrado at the institution. She is a guest lecturer on the Professional Master 's Degree in History lecturing at the *Universidade Federal Fluminense - UFF* (Fluminense Federal University). Researcher at the Observatory of Studies on Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ/CNPq) and the Institute of Studies about Rio de Janeiro.

**Thiago Botelho Azeredo:** Son of Ogum, Little Father of the Temple of the Valley of the Sun and the Moon. Pharmacist, PhD in Public Health, Adjunct Professor and Undergraduate Coordinator at the *Faculdade de Farmácia da*

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**Elaine Fontana:** She holds a master 's degree in Aesthetics and Art History from the *Universidade de São Paulo* (University of São Paulo) and specializes in Education and Curatorship in Art Museums from the same university. She works as an educator, researcher, manager and collaborator in creative processes at various art institutions. She worked for more than ten years at the *Fundação Bienal de São Paulo* (São Paulo Biennial Foundation) and the *Museu Lasar Segall* (Lasar Segall Museum). Last year she published the book "The political body in the art institution" based on this experience.

**Isabela Ribeiro de Arruda:** She has a bachelor's degree in History from the *Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade de São Paulo* (Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences of the University of São Paulo) (2011), a specialization in Cultural Project Management from ECA/USP (2017) and in Cultural Management from the Sesc/SP Research and Training Centre (2015). She has worked as an educator in different museums in the city of São Paulo and joined the *Museu Paulista* (Paulista Museum) in 2012. Between 2016 and 2021, she supervised the institution's Educational Activities Service. From 2021, she took over the supervision of the Education, Museography and Cultural Action Section.

**Júlia Mayer de Araujo:** She is a postgraduate student in Science Communication at the *Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio de Janeiro - IFRJ* (Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio de Janeiro), a museologist graduated from the *Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - UNIRIO* (Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro), where she

was a tutor in the subject of Museology and Education with the project “UNIRIO and training in Museum Education: contributions to the implementation of PNEM (National Museum Education Policy)” and an intern at the Laboratory of Applied Taphonomy and Palaeoecology (LABTAPHO), developing work and research with the GeoTales group. She is currently a museum educator at the Museu do Amanhã (Museum of Tomorrow) and a member of ICOM-CECA Brazil. She has experience and research in science communication, museum education, online museum education and cultural accessibility.

**Nicolas Januario dos Santos:** Postgraduate student in MBA Communication and Marketing at the *Universidade de São Paulo - ECA/USP* (University of São Paulo)), Museologist graduated from the *Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - UNIRIO* (Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro – UNIRIO), was for 2 years (2018-2020) a fellow of the Initiation Programme for the Dissemination and Popularization of Science belonging to the *Museu da Vida Fiocruz* (Fiocruz Museum of Life). He has extensive experience and interest in the areas of Museology, Education and Communication, with an emphasis on *scientific* popularization and dissemination s in virtual museums and informal education spaces. Currently, he is part of the Educational and Social Program of the Museu do Pontal (Pontal Museum) and member of ICOM-CECA working as a cultural producer and co-founder of Coletivo Raiz Popular (2019), which aims to popularize science through educational activities for public schools on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro.



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Victor Stawiarski on an educational visit to the Museu Nacional - UFRJ, c.1950 (Private collection)



Camilo de Mello Vasconcellos on an educational visit to the MAE-USP, 1989 (MAE-USP Collection)

This book presents the history of museum education in Brazil through the professional eyes of different generations. We are pleased to be part of the efforts of the ICOM-CECA committee to analyze the history of museum education worldwide. Brazil is the second country in the world, and the first in Latin America, to take part in this series. The choice reflects the relevance of Brazilian Museum Education at regional and international levels. We have gone a long way these last decades and we continue to cultivate a horizon of utopias that mobilize us towards strengthening this field!

“ There is no teaching without research and no research without teaching. These tasks meet in their complementarity. I teach because I search, because I question and reinvente. I investigate and submit myself to questioning. I investigate to find out, finding out, to intervene, and intervening, educating and educating myself

(Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of Autonomy)

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