

# CAMOC MUSEUMS OF CITIES REVIEW

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## What is a city museum?

### ▶ COLLECTING WITH(IN) THE CITY

## Housing and city museums

REFLECTIONS ON THE CITY MUSEUMS GLOBAL MAPPING PROJECT • MUHBA BON PASTOR, A NEW MUSEUM SITE FOR THE HISTORY OF HOUSING IN BARCELONA • ARBEIDERMUSEET, COPENHAGEN





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**COVER PHOTO CREDITS:**  
MUHBA BON PASTOR SITE, HOUSE 1 (1929-1952), RECONSTRUCTION OF KITCHEN AND LIVING ROOM, 2023. PHOTO: MARTA GARCÍA HOYOS

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# Editor's Note

Dear colleagues and CAMOC members,

It's with immense pleasure and honour that we present to you the Summer - Fall 2024 issue of the *CAMOC Review*. The main axes of reflection in this edition of the *CAMOC Review* are: What are the narratives presented by different museums within the city? What are actually city museums?

As the Global Mapping Project (GMP) comes to an end after a long period of thought and work on the city museum definition and missions (from the development of the questionnaire to the analyses of the results), we are bringing a series of articles that not only talk about the GMP but also bring some examples of the varieties of initiatives and museums that are engaged in collecting and shaping the city's history and heritage.

## What is a city museum?

What defines a city museum? What are its main characteristics and missions? Are museums that do not have the history, or histories (plural narratives), of a city automatically city museums? Are museums that do not have the denomination of "city museums" but that present the history of a city city museums? With the new ICOM museum definition, what changes in the dynamics of collecting and exhibiting the city? What are the main missions of a city museum?

In 1995, a special issue of *Museum International* (XLVII, 3) was dedicated to city museums and in one of its articles, Amareswar Galla proposes a definition for city museum: "a city museum is a non-profit cultural institution or mechanism, dynamic and constantly evolving, at the service of urban society and its development, open to the public and which ensures the coordination, acquisition, conservation, the study, dissemination and presentation of material witnesses of tangible and inviolable heritage, movable and immovable, emanating from various peoples and their environment, for purposes of study and education, to contribute to the reconciliation of communities and to their delight."<sup>1</sup>

Today, almost thirty years later, the question of defining what makes a museum a "city museum" is at the heart of a special project led by CAMOC since 2019.

<sup>1</sup> GALLA, A. (1995). *Muséologie urbaine: une idéologie de la réconciliation*. In *Museum International* 187



Andréa Delaplace at the 25<sup>th</sup> ICOM general conference in Kyoto. © Joana Sousa Monteiro, 2019

To learn more on the topic, you can follow our Chair, Glenn Perkins's contribution with an article that presents the Global Mapping Project (GMP) goals and outcomes. Francesca Lanz completes the reflection on city museums showing us that the birth of city museums in Europe can be traced back to the second half of the nineteenth century. They first emerged as a response to significant and profound architectural and socio-cultural urban transformations that were happening in most of Europe's major cities. Today, city museums are present in different cities around the world from São Paulo to Tokyo passing by Montreal and many others.

## Collecting with(in) the city: Amsterdam 2024

How do we collect the city? What narratives, what objects, what memories? *Collecting with(in) the city* is the theme of our next annual conference in Amsterdam. Annemarie de Wildt, CAMOC's vice-chair, opens this summer edition with a presentation of the next conference topics and invites us to be part of this joint conference with COMCOL.

## Social housing and city museums

The article (cover of this issue) dedicated to the Cases Barates in Bon Pastor was conceived last year after the opening ceremony of MUHBA's Bon Pastor branch in March 2023. I had the honour to be there with the Barcelona History Museum - MUHBA's team and that's when we started talking about the article that you will read in the following pages. I would like to thank Joan Roca, Paolo Sustersic and Elena Pérez Rubiales for working on this amazing article that is our main feature. With social housing museums the goal is to reframe diverse

narratives under the larger umbrella of housing: urban history, women's history, labour class history, migration history are just some of the examples of thematics that can be talked about when creating a museum dedicated to social housing. And that's the same with city museums: multi-sites and multiple histories that can show multiple perspectives and narratives that compose the history of a city. We would like to continue our reflection on the importance of housing and urban development exhibitions in city museums during a webinar on September 19<sup>th</sup> 2024.

### **Different voices and perspectives**

The idea of this *CAMOC Review* Summer - Fall 2024 edition was, thus, to bring together different voices and perspectives of what social history and museology can create as museum initiatives and exhibitions. From the creation of the Barcelona History Museum - MUHBA's Bon Pastor branch to a collective engaged in creating a city museum in Casablanca, this issue wants to show the diversity of perspectives when developing museums dedicated to the city and its history (as well as its inhabitants' memories and stories). Trying to bring

different perspectives and voices from different locations and cultural backgrounds is also essential to better show the variety of what can be a city museum.

I would like to thank all the authors that agreed to be part of this publication. The editorial process is long and without the support of the Editorial Board (with a special thanks to Catherine Cole and Elka Weinstein) this publication wouldn't exist. So thank you very much for the hard work and support of the whole editorial team.

All these different articles show the richness and variety of city museums and of CAMOC itself: a kaleidoscope of members from different cities with such different backgrounds and cultural diversity that makes this International Committee of ICOM so unique and full of possibilities for the future. Looking forward to seeing you all in Amsterdam.

*Andréa Delaplace*  
*Editor of the CAMOC Review*  
*and CAMOC board member*  
*(2022-2025)*

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# Collecting with(in) the city

ANNEMARIE DE WILDT\*

From 9-11 October 2024 a few hundred museum curators, educators, activists, directors and researchers will come to Amsterdam to discuss collecting strategies and practice in urban settings. *Collecting with(in) the City* is the joint annual conference of CAMOC and COMCOL. It will be hosted by the Amsterdam Museum in partnership with Imagine IC and will focus on what collecting with and in a city means and how the museums and cultural heritage institutions of today do this.

Amsterdam Museum is renovating, so the conference will be held in another venue: Pakhuis de Zwijger, a former refrigerated warehouse. It is now a public meeting space that focuses on dialogue as a form of conversation, especially in relation to the cities of today and tomorrow. De Zwijger means The Silent, the nickname of William of Orange, who led the Dutch revolt against Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. This part of Amsterdam, a 10-minute tram ride from Central Station, was created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Reclaimed land was turned into a harbour area, to facilitate trade with the Dutch colonies in Asia. So, this

place, rooted in history, will sparkle with our debates, panels, (artistic) presentations and mutual inspiration around contemporary cities all over the world.

In 2011 CAMOC and the newly established COMCOL also had a joint (one-day) conference in Berlin on Participative Strategies, followed by separate conference days of the two committees. Some of the topics discussed there are again on the program of the 2024 Amsterdam conference, such as selecting processes and mixing the tangible and the intangible. Among the questions posed in 2011: 'Can we have a participative museum? If so, what is it, or what should it be?' The first one is by now answered positively by the majority of (city) museums, but we are still struggling with the question: whom can you partner with? *Collecting with(in) the City* will certainly have many critical discourses on power, reciprocity, and impact.

Our Amsterdam conference will be bigger than the one in Berlin and certainly more global. In Berlin the only non-European presenters came from Brazil, Seoul and South-Africa. The 90-plus proposals the joint COMCOL-CAMOC selection group is studying right now come from

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\* Annemarie de Wildt, Curator. Amsterdam Museum



As Amsterdam Museum is being renovated, the conference will be held at Pakhuis de Zwijger



*Exhibition Collecting the City – Zeedijk (Chinese neighborhood) in Amsterdam Museum*

all continents. Unlike in Berlin, this conference will be a complete mix of CAMOC and COMCOL members (and probably many are affiliated with both committees). As we want to enable many people to present there will be various concurrent sessions and workshops during the two conference days (10-11 October). Hard to choose maybe, but with the advantage that discussions are more intense in smaller groups. We hope delegates will exchange among each other what they learned and experienced in the simultaneous sessions during lunch breaks and in the evenings.

We will start on 9 October with an excursion day. Co-host Imagine IC will open its doors for a breakfast and afterwards there will be meetings with various organisations in Amsterdam south-east, such as the Black Archives and OSCAM. This part of the city was built in the 1960's and 1970's and became home to thousands of immigrants from former Dutch colony Suriname, African and Mediterranean countries. In the city centre house

museum Willet-Holthuysen (part of the Amsterdam Museum) and other heritage places are also part of the excursion day. In the afternoon there will be tours through Amsterdam Museum followed by the opening reception.

We will give suggestions for places to explore in the evenings, from cultural events to great pubs. Probably some delegates will extend their stay in Amsterdam for some days before or after the conference. The city has a lot to offer with its many big and small museums, the circle of canals, magnificent architecture and exciting (sub)culture. And there are other great cities in the Netherlands. Modern Rotterdam, with some exciting heritage institutions, The Hague with the Mauritshuis, the House of Parliament, various royal palaces and a city museum. Utrecht with its small scale canals in the centre and the Centraal Museum with a mix of art and city history. The Netherlands is the country with one of the highest museum densities in the world.

# Reflections on the City Museums Global Mapping Project

GLENN PERKINS\*



*Exploring Taipei's Wanhua District, April 2023. © National Taipei University of Education*

In the last issue of the *CAMOC Review*, a special issue dedicated to the April 2023 Taipei workshop on City Museums Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific region, I wrote about some of the hopes for our Global Mapping Project, that “the core concepts and the spirit of the Project’s inquiry continue to motivate our committee’s work to build networks that support cities and museums around the world.”

Since wrapping up that publication, I have continued to talk with colleagues and think more about the special project: where it succeeded, where it fell short, and what opportunities it promises for going forward.

The project had some great successes: a majority volunteer team created a detailed survey tool, made it available in ten languages, and collected the largest sample of data on city museums that we know of.

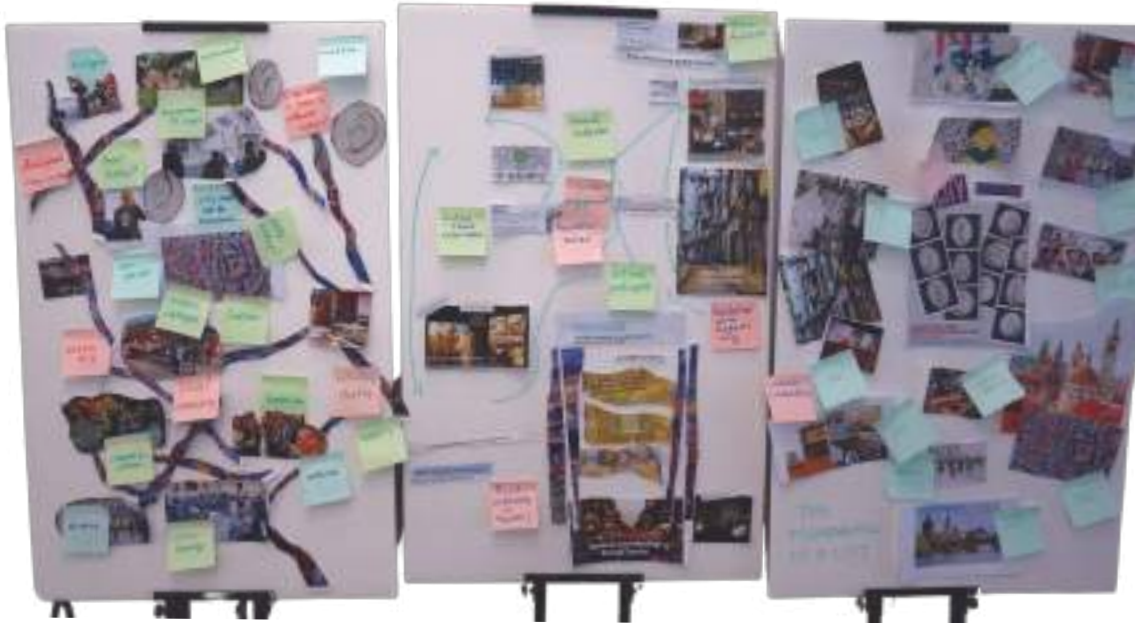
Additionally important was establishing a relationship with an academic partner in East Asia: Roger Lin and his team at the National Taipei University of Education (NTUE). Building that relationship meant developing collaborative working styles that accommodated cultural differences, and that effort paid off. Not only did NTUE obtain financial support for the Taipei workshop from the Chinese Association of Museums (CAM), but they also worked to create a diverse group of workshop participants by including students, researchers, and professionals from different fields. Building partnerships beyond Eurocentric circles was one of the project’s original goals, and I think it is something that will continue to benefit and strengthen our network in profound ways.

At the same time, there was a lot we had hoped for with the Global Mapping Project that we weren’t able to complete entirely. This ambitious project set out to collect data and create a map of city museums everywhere in the world – an enormous task! At the end of three years, we have started that process, but it is far from finished. Significant gaps remain. Disruptions due to the global

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\* Glenn Perkins, Curator of Community History at Greensboro History Museum (NC, USA) and current CAMOC Chair.





*The manifestoes activity at the City Museums Global Mapping Project workshop in Taipei visually explored possibilities of what city museums can be. © National Taipei University of Education*

pandemic obviously contributed. Another issue was asking the survey to do two things at the same time. It was supposed to do the basic work of identifying city museums to put them on the map, but it also required substantial investment of time on the part of museum staff who answered its very detailed questions. I am tremendously grateful to everyone who took time to provide data on their museum's facilities, operations, collections, exhibitions, and more. We have a trove of information to improve our understanding of city museums and their variety. But at the same time, we are a long way from understanding the true number and geography of city museums around the world.

So that leaves us with some opportunities that this project has opened up. These fall into two main conceptual areas. The first is quantitative: how many city museums are there in the world, and where are they? Coming up with a more satisfying answer will mean focusing attention on the geographical gaps in the survey responses: the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, Africa, much of the Western Hemisphere. It will also require simplifying our approach to developing a basic census of city museums. The second area loops back to the question of definition: what is a city museum? A bold stance of the City Museum Global Mapping project was using an open, working definition at the head of the survey, rather than something fixed and exclusionary. This approach promotes a fluid, adaptive and evolving understanding of what city museums are.

CAMOC's ongoing programming can illuminate different sides of this open definition. For example our upcoming Amsterdam conference in collaboration with our project partners COMCOL, encourages us to focus on collecting

with and within the city. Are there approaches to collecting unique to city museums? How does collecting as a way to understand cities' pasts, presents and futures define what city museums can be?

My hope, therefore, is that this project continues to inspire us in different ways. I hope that it forces us to focus on those city museums who have not yet been counted, and where as a network we can connect and grow. And I hope that it emboldens us to reflect on some of the distinctive qualities we see in city museums – engagement with communities, openness to uncertainty and an embrace of the ever-changing expressions of the city and its people.



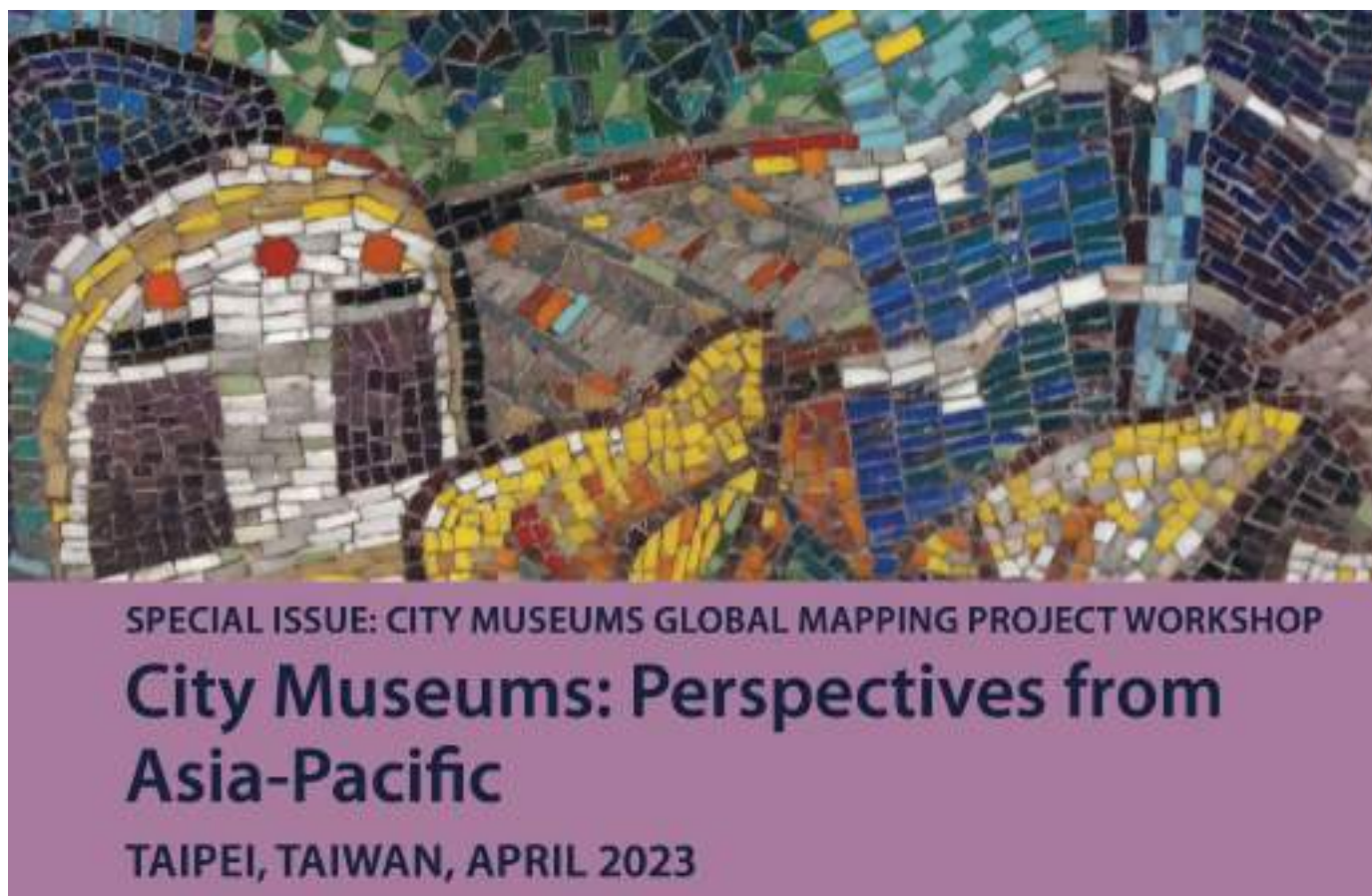
*Winston Lim from Singapore's Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall explaining one of the workshop's city museum manifestoes, April 2023. © National Taipei University of Education*



*Amsterdam canal at night. © iftikharalam / vecteezy*

# Are you a city museum?

FRANCESCA LANZ\*



*CAMOC Review special edition dedicated to the Global mapping project - published in April 2024.*

“Are you a city museum?” This was the first prompt opening the City Museums Global Mapping Project, run by CAMOC from 2020 to 2022 with the support of ICOM and in collaboration with COMCOL, the international committee for collecting, ASPAC, the regional alliance for Asia-Pacific countries, and the academic partner NTUE - National Taiwan University of Education (Sousa Monteiro, 2024)<sup>1</sup>.

The main objective of the project was to learn more about the different types of city museums around the globe: where they are, what they do, and how they do it. The project aimed to unveil how rich and diverse city museums are nowadays and highlight their role as key actors in contemporary urban socio-cultural scenarios. In doing so, our goal was to draft the first – and long-awaited – definition of a city museum.

\* Francesca Lanz is attached to the department of Architecture and Built Environment, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

<sup>1</sup> Please check Joana Sousa Monteiro’s article in the CAMOC Review special edition dedicated to the Global Mapping Project, April 2024.

The birth of city museums in Europe can be traced back to the second half of the nineteenth century (Lanz 2013). City museums first emerged as a response to significant and profound architectural and socio-cultural urban transformations that were happening in most of Europe’s major cities. Typically hosted in a historical building chosen for its historical and symbolic values, with exhibitions focused on the city’s history, these city museums were entrusted with the task of conserving the city’s history and serving as repositories of civic treasures and its glorious past. Following the establishment of the first museums of this kind in cities like Paris (1880), Brussels (1887) and London (Guildhall Museum established in 1826; the London Museum founded in 1912), city museums began to open ubiquitously in many other European cities and gradually overseas. However, less than a century later, city museums were already a museum type in decline. Many were closed down, others were deserted and left drifting in the grey zone of neglect, dormant, lacking funds as much as public attention. But change was ahead.

## CITY MUSEUMS

With a new wave of great transformations affecting cities worldwide under the impact of globalisation on urban dynamics, city museums once again garnered new attention. However, this time, city museums were to be regarded not solely as static repositories of city past and places where to record urban transformations, but also, crucially, as key actors in discussing and driving such change (UNESCO 1995; Fleming 1996; Kavanagh and Frostick 1998; Lohman 2006; MacDonald 2006; Kistemaker 2006; Jones, Macdonald and McIntyre 2008; Jones et al. 2012).<sup>2</sup> A new lively debate revolving around city museums' role and future began in the late '90s, soon to be followed by pioneering projects and experiences on the ground, with a key role in disseminating and discussing such new ideas played by the newly established ICOM International Committee for the Collection of Cities (CAMOC). It was the rise of a second generation of city museums (Lanz 2014).

Differently from their previous incarnation, alongside their conservation role, this second generation of city museums strives to take on a proactive social and political role, shifting the core of their mission from representing The City's History – singular and with capital letters – to narrating its various *histories* and *memories*, connecting past and present. With a key focus on contemporary urban issues, these city museums aim to be a forum for debate, social agents and a place for envisioning the city's future. Such a new understanding of what a city museum should and could be, started to foster a rethinking of city museums' mission and core values which also reflected in the renewal of their educational programs and curatorial approaches. More recently, all that has led to more radical transformations, also involving major architectural and exhibition design projects. New city museums are opening or reopening in new and renewed venues with brand new exhibitions – such as London, Copenhagen and Amsterdam. With a spinning effect, these endeavours and their results go back to fueling the debate, raising the question: "What is a city museum today?" For more than a decade, this question has been at the centre of numerous publications, conferences and workshops, particularly those promoted by CAMOC and culminating in the City Museums Global Mapping Project.

As often happens with ambitious and well-researched projects, in the search for answers, we have found more questions. As patently evident during the recent frictions

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<sup>2</sup> An excellent collection of essays and case studies discussing and illustrating the most recent evolution in city museums and the debate around them is represented by CAMOC publications, available online open access via CAMOC website, <http://camoc.mini.icom.museum>

and conflicts that surfaced during the ICOM consultation for a new definition of museums, there is not a common understanding not only of what museums are but also of what they ought to be. It appears the same is true about city museums across the world – and even within Eastern countries and Europe itself – there exist very different understandings of what a city museum is, its role, and its practices. How can this diversity be captured in a definition?

At the same time, we cannot ignore that to define something implies setting a boundary. It involves demarcating a territory of knowledge, approaches and practices, and determining who does and who does not belong within that given framework. Where is the border between what is and what is not a 'city museum'? Who determined it, why and for whom? How will such a definition help us improve and advance what city museums do? Can a definition be kept open enough to be of any use and meaningful, while, at the same time, avoiding fixity and closing up to multiple views, eventually limiting its own scope and significance?

The City Museums Global Mapping Project may have not eventually led us to develop a definition for city museums but it has surely given us a new quest, inviting us to shift the focus of the debate from what is a City Museum to how city museums are. It tells us that we probably need to look for ways to appreciate differences rather than mapping commonalities, recognizing that the state of the art of city museums' evolution worldwide is extremely heterogeneous; evolving not only at a different pace but also in different directions. Such heterogeneity, although confusing and difficult to represent and restate, might be seen as a sign of the city museum being a healthy and lively institution, profoundly locally rooted and connected with their contexts. This is an invitation to renounce depicting city museums as a single coherent and discrete reality, to renounce fixing a definition of what they are today, and instead, to start seeking forward-looking manifestos of the city museums of tomorrow.

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CMGM, City Museums Global Mapping Project

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## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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The texts should be concise (up to 1000-1500 words), having not only informative but also an analytical component, and be accompanied with complementing images or other visual materials of your choice. For technical reasons, horizontal layout is preferred for images.

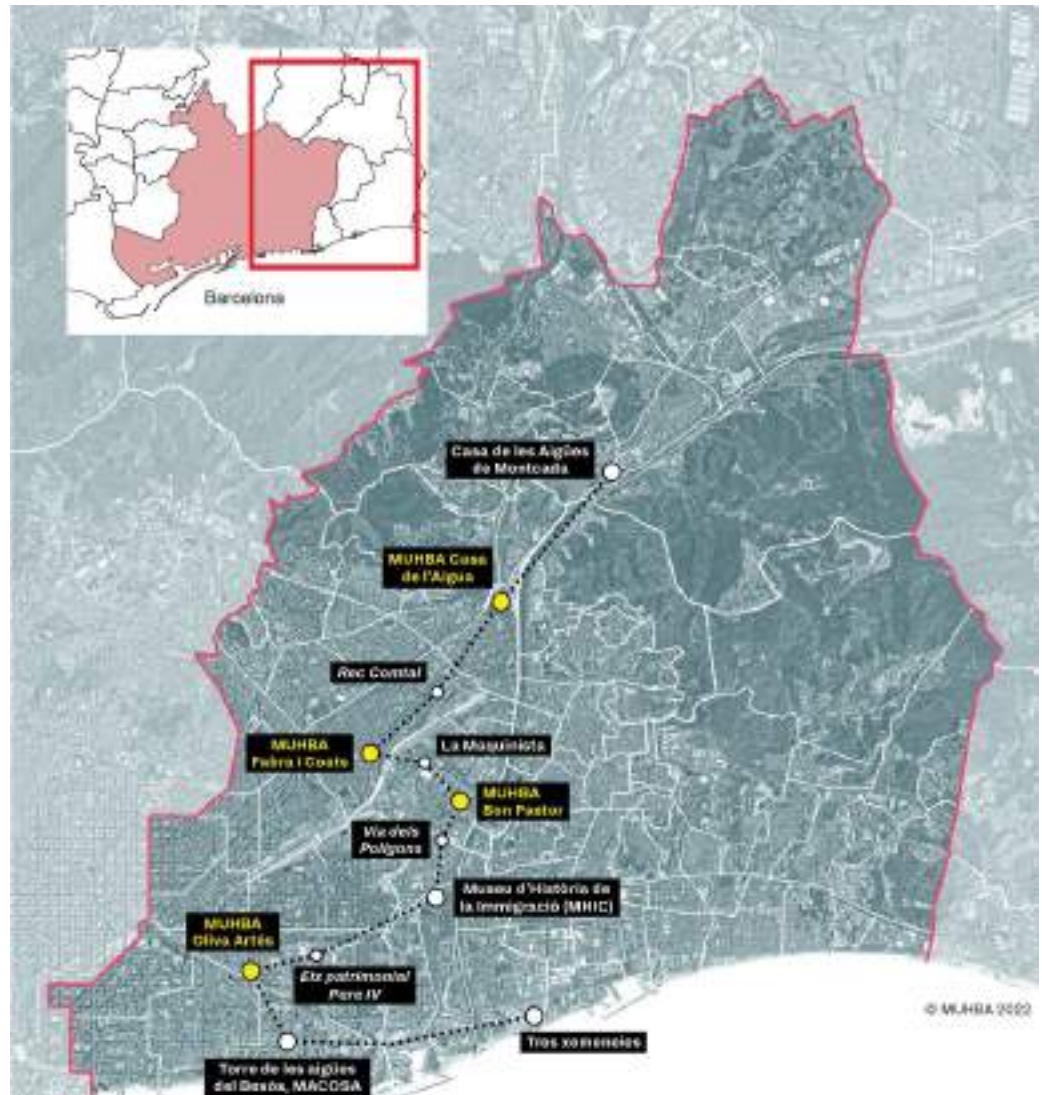
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[camoc.review@gmail.com](mailto:camoc.review@gmail.com)

# MUHBA Bon Pastor: A new museum site for the history of housing in Barcelona

PAOLO SUSTERSIC\*

MUHBA, the Barcelona History Museum, proposes multiple visions of the city, covering a period of more than two thousand years, from the Roman times to the present day. The museum, that in 2023 celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is conceived as a polycentric network with fifty-five urban rooms distributed throughout the city.<sup>1</sup> Over time, in the narrative of the museum, the traditional focus on the urban elites has been integrated by a complementary perspective centred on the urban majorities that became more significant when cities like Barcelona shifted into major industrial poles and ignited large scale attraction of resources, capital and people which triggered unprecedented urban transformations. Today several of MUHBA's permanent and temporary exhibitions discuss the shaping of Barcelona as a great industrial centre addressing it from different perspectives such as work, demography, immigration, social conflicts, territory, technology and economy, raising questions about the contemporary city, its future as a global metropolis and as the capital of Catalonia.



In the last decade MUHBA has been working on the Eix Besòs, the River Besòs Heritage and Museum Trail, a complex project that narrates the metropolis from the territories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's urban expansion, conceived as a hub integrated by public and private institutions. Its backbone is formed by four MUHBA sites

Fig. 1. The Besòs Heritage and Museum Trail from the initial MUHBA proposal.

which discuss the impact of four key verbs on urban life: to *supply* at Casa de l'Aigua, where the water supply of the city is explained; to *work* at the former Fabra & Coats factory, where industrial production and its technologies are shown; to *urbanise* at the former Oliva Artés mechanical works, where urban processes are discussed; and to *dwell* at Bon Pastor Cheap Houses estate, where the politics and practices of social housing are presented. (Fig. 1) Inaugurated in March 2023, the MUHBA Bon Pastor

\* Architect, PhD and professor at Elisava School of Design and Engineering, UVic-UCC, is one of the curators of MUHBA Bon Pastor site.

<sup>1</sup> The MUHBA guide detailing its 55 rooms is available at: [https://www.barcelona.cat/museuhistoria/sites/default/files/activitats\\_pdf/2023-05/GuiaMUHBAEng.pdf](https://www.barcelona.cat/museuhistoria/sites/default/files/activitats_pdf/2023-05/GuiaMUHBAEng.pdf)

site is the culmination of a long-term research project that stemmed in 2010 from the interest of the residents' association in preserving part of the neighbourhood and narrating the life of the working-class inhabitants of Barcelona. The understanding between the residents and the museum produced a dialogue that has made it possible to avoid both community anthropology and visions based exclusively on urban planning. This understanding has been based on three key principles that MUHBA placed at the heart of the project: urban history as a paradigm of interpretation, the consideration of the housing question on the double scale of the city and the neighbourhood, and the full insertion of Bon Pastor in a narrative that portrays the city from the periphery to the centre, which is essential for the MUHBA's historical approach.

As a result of a research process that was carried out by two teams working in parallel under the supervision and coordination of the MUHBA's direction, social housing in Barcelona is approached from a multidisciplinary perspective and is discussed at different scales, starting from the whole city and ending up with Bon Pastor as a relevant case study. As a matter of fact, it is a new concept of a museum site on social housing, and one of the first on this subject in Southern Europe. (Fig. 2)



Fig. 2. Opening ceremony of MUHBA Bon Pastor site, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Photo: Paolo Sustersic

The urban problem of providing the industrial city with large amounts of low-cost housing is discussed in the section entitled *Housing the majority. Barcelona, 1860-2010*, whereas the section *Living in the Cases Barates. Bon Pastor, 1929-2010* approaches the planning and design of the first municipal housing developments and the living conditions of the working class, which are narrated through the reconstruction of four *cases barates* or 'cheap houses'.



Fig. 3. The Milans del Bosch housing estate, known as Bon Pastor, and the factory Can Sala, 1947 ca. Archbishopric of Barcelona - Diocesan Archive of Barcelona

### BON PASTOR'S KEY CONCEPTS

*A prime example of low-income housing.* Built in 1929, at the time of the International Exhibition, the four Cases Barates estates were the first social housing model in Barcelona. Two of them – Milans del Bosch (today's Bon Pastor) and Baró de Viver – were built next to the Besòs River on land then belonging to the municipality of Santa Coloma de Gramenet. Bon Pastor became a testing ground for municipal social housing projects throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. In 2002, after a long process, the reconstruction of the whole estate was approved, substituting the original houses with new residential blocks, where the cheap houses' residents began to live from 2007. (Fig. 3)

*A shared project.* The first steps toward the museum project were taken in 2010 on the initiative of the Bon Pastor Residents' Association and with the backing of the Sant Andreu district. It was finally secured through cooperation with MUHBA, which is part of the Culture Institute of Barcelona. After a decade of preparatory work, the Neighbourhood Plan made it possible to open the new museum site. The whole process has been a joint effort between MUHBA, residents' associations, universities, and other institutions. The groundwork was also laid for shared management of the facility. On June 8, 2023, shortly after the Bon Pastor site was opened to the public, MUHBA, the Vilabesòs Study Center, (created ad hoc for the project by the Residents' Association) and the Sant Andreu District signed an agreement that makes the three parties co-responsible for a facility that aspires to have a leading role in the neighbourhood, Barcelona and internationally.

*A twofold scale approach.* The museum approach is informed by previous work and new research in which the outskirts look towards the centre<sup>2</sup>, complemented by other studies sponsored by the Bon Pastor Residents'

<sup>2</sup> Especially the exhibition *Inhabiting Barcelona. Challenges, Struggles and Policies in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (2022), the booklet *City of Housing Estates* and the project *Barcelona, Besòs View*.

Association. A historical and double scale museology is proposed, consisting in the exploration of the neighbourhood to explain the city and vice versa. Questions about long-term housing choices are posed also, to avoid the linearity of an inevitable historical trend.

*A public history proposal.* The Bon Pastor project is underpinned by research into urban history drawing on written, oral, graphic, photographic, film and archaeological sources involving academics<sup>3</sup> and scholars from Bon Pastor. It is a local and city public history project in which this twofold scale is crucial while also taking a comparative look at the history of working-class housing in Europe. Straddling history and memory, its purpose is to show the evolution of low-income housing in Barcelona as a whole and of the Besòs area in particular.

*An open knowledge centre.* MUHBA's evolution into a citizens' museum that culminates its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary poses a threefold challenge: a) showing urban history anchored in heritage assets; b) operating as a knowledge centre, and c) engaging the city's residents and other visitors. The convergence between the city and the neighbourhood perspective makes it possible to deepen a new model of cultural organisation in which heritage, museum and public are intertwined in a knowledge venue jointly managed by MUHBA, the Sant Andreu district and the Vilabesòs Study Centre-Archive as the resident research organisation.

*A hub on the Besòs heritage and museum trail.* As mentioned, the MUHBA Bon Pastor is part of a hub that displays the metropolis urban expansion areas along the Besòs River in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The MUHBA heritage complex is rounded off by Maquinista and Macosa Foundation, focused on mobility, and the museums in the neighbouring towns of Montcada, Santa Coloma de Gramenet and Sant Adrià del Besòs. Besides, from Bon Pastor, visitors can take a tour of several housing estates built in the surrounding areas during the Franco era.<sup>4</sup>

### THE OPERATIVE TASKS OF BON PASTOR'S PROJECT

*Looking for references.* Based on contacts in Autumn 2016 with the Helsinki City Museum, a member of the CITYHIST network promoted by MUHBA, the museum's director, Joan Roca i Albert proposed to the Bon Pastor Residents' Association to jointly study the Työväenasuntomuseo, the branch of the Helsinki Museum dedicated to popular housing, among others. Shortly after, a working group was established coordinated by historian Carmen Cazalla,

who continues to be in charge of the Bon Pastor project at MUHBA.

*Compiling sources.* Extensive desk and field research has been conducted since 2016. Mining the information on the origins and history of the Cases Barates and their residents held in the former Municipal Housing Board, the Barcelona and the Santa Coloma city archives, among other resources, has provided fresh insights into their evolution. Likewise, considerable work has been done to compile written, oral, graphic and film sources based on systematic sorting of the numerous interviews with people who live or have lived in Bon Pastor.

*Archaeological monitoring.* The archaeological monitoring of the project uncovered specific items, which document changes in the layout of the spaces and different solutions used over time to make the houses more comfortable. The archaeological search has been crucial also in getting a clear idea of the basic structures, finishes and equipment of the interiors, and in making an inventory of hundreds of objects.

*Conservation and restoration work.* Sourcing all kinds of movable property in the Cases Barates and adding original items to the new museum space has been challenging. When the residents moved from their houses to the new flats, many objects were collected before making a more refined selection of the movable property to be restored, ranging from pieces of furniture to household appliances. The experience has opened up new ways of working: until now the furniture in the City collections had been chosen mostly on account of its formal or material quality, whereas in this case it is low-priced functional consumer furniture.

*Crafting a collection.* The collection of movable property has been created with the help of the public. The partnership between locals and the MUHBA team has made it possible not only to gather all kinds of furniture and objects, but also to build an archive of written material, photographs and films. The archive is organised as the basic stock for Barcelona's Contemporary History collection and will be displayed as part of the project.

*The architectural restitution.* The first sign of the effectiveness of this dialogue between the museum and local entities occurred when the municipal works management company, BIMSA, organized the competition for the restoration of the Cases Barates, won by the architects Aurora Fernández and Ricard Mercadé. The project was discussed with the district, specialists and organisations, and its execution has benefited from archaeological and restoration monitoring in an area

<sup>3</sup> Professors from University of Barcelona, Polytechnic University of Catalonia and Elisava-Faculty of Design and Engineering UVic-UCC participated in different phases of the research.

<sup>4</sup> See the booklet *The City of Housing Estates*. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/PSV/Downloads/la\\_ciutat\\_dels\\_poligons%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/PSV/Downloads/la_ciutat_dels_poligons%20(1).pdf)





Fig. 4. Map of the Bon Pastor site, 2023. Aurora Fernández and Ricard Mercadé, Architects

without any kind of heritage protection. On the exterior, a distinction has been made between the façade on Bellmunt Street, restored as it was in 1929, and the one on Barnola Street, left as it stood in 2016 when its residents moved out. Inside, the modular rhythm of the houses, the walls and floors have been preserved to different degrees, compatible with the new uses of the spaces. Especially in the southern half on the block, Barnola side, the layout and shaping of the interiors have been carefully restored to show the evolution of the Cases Barates. Although the general criteria were clear from the beginning, focused on an urban history approach, rigorous archaeological and documentary research and broad field research, many final decisions had to be made during the works, when new elements surfaced in the houses. (Fig. 4)

*Museographic conception.* The careful architectural restoration, conservation and restitution have been completed by architect Andrea Manenti as museographer: he played a decisive role both in the conceptual definition and in the formalization of the museum project. The museography is based on a constant dialogue between the original elements of the cheap houses that have been preserved and restored whenever possible, and reconstructed in other cases – and the new elements that display information on different visual supports, completed by a broad selection of images and objects. The neat

design helps visitors to learn about social housing and living conditions of the working-class without overdoing the exhibition spaces.

#### ***Housing the Majority. Barcelona, 1860-2010***

The first section of the Bon Pastor site (which conceptually corresponds to Room number 34 in the general map of MUHBA), approaches social housing not only as a municipal and metropolitan scale issue, but also as a matter of improvement of the household equipment.<sup>5</sup> The exhibition traces building policies and patterns of access to housing for urban majorities in Barcelona in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: from a new urban problem in Ildefons Cerdà's studies and projects for the extension of the city, to unaffordable renting at the beginning, or in the extremely tough post-Civil War period, to almost obligatory purchase of a property during the late Franco regime, and, finally, to the advances in democracy, although the interventions were more effective in public space than in housing. (Fig. 5)

<sup>5</sup> The section *Housing the Majority* has been curated by professors Manel Guàrdia and Maribel Roselló, with the collaboration of professors Amador Ferrer and Paolo Sustersic and the advice of the MUHBA's director, Joan Roca. More information available at: <https://www.barcelona.cat/museuhistoria/es/formatos-y-actividades/exposicions-temporals/alajar-las-mayorias-barcelona-1860-2010>



Fig. 5. Housing the Majority section in MUHBA Bon Pastor, 2023. Photo: Andrea Manenti

In any case, the history of social housing in Barcelona is discussed as a matter of lights and shadows. This section points out that, compared to other Western European countries, the social housing policies in Spain and in Barcelona didn't manage to create a large public housing stock for rent, exposing the most vulnerable workers to the consequences of the cyclic economic crises of the capitalist system. At the same time, the exhibition shows also how the policy of purchasing a property, promoted by the Franco regime and continued during the democratic era, encouraged the working class to struggle for the improvement of urban equipment and the public spaces of their neighbourhoods, creating a strong sense of belonging and a deep link with the city. This space also discusses how household utilities were introduced into low-income housing at a slower rate compared to upper-class housing, and how the introduction of new mass-produced appliances was a consequence and, at the same time, a driver of the incorporation of women into the labour market.

#### **Living in the Cases Barates. Bon Pastor, 1929-2010**

From the time they were built to their final conversion in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Cases Barates at Bon Pastor illustrate the key moments which shaped the outskirts of Barcelona in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> They reveal the intricacies

<sup>6</sup> The section *Living in the Cases Barates* has been curated by professor Paolo Sustersic, with the collaboration, among others, of Aina Mercader, Carmen Cazalla and Marta Delclòs (research and documentation), Jordi Ramos and Toni Fernández (archaeologists), Natalia Hervás (study, conservation and restoration of household effects) and the advice of the MUHBA's director, Joan Roca. More information available at: <https://www.barcelona.cat/museuhistoria/ca/formats-i-activitats/exposicions-temporals/viure-les-cases-barates-bon-pastor-1929-2010>

of the process of integrating low-income housing into the city and the struggle of urban majorities for the dignity of their neighbourhoods. Its history is narrated in a 'polyvalent room', where the video *Bon Pastor, a century of Barcelona* highlights the circumstances that shaped the cheap houses, three scale models compare the most relevant urban designs that were proposed for the Cases Barates over time, and a facsimile collection of plans immerses visitors in the technical offices of the municipal administration, showing how this estate has always been a virtual testing ground for the social housing theories that have been implemented in Barcelona.

As mentioned, this section (conceptually corresponding to Room 35 of MUHBA) displays also the reconstruction of four cheap houses which reflect the history of Bon Pastor between 1929 and 2010 with a brief epilogue to 2022. Each house depicts one of the major periods identified in the estate's history: 1929-1952, Shortage; 1953-1974, Developmentalism; 1975-1993, Renovation, and 1994-2010, Reframing.

#### **A DIACHRONIC VIEW OF THE WORKING CLASS' LIVING CONDITIONS**

During the preparation phase, the MUHBA team carefully discussed the approach of the exhibition to be displayed in the houses, coming to the conclusion that it should steer clear of immersive restoration and instead focus on archaeological data and historical research. It was decided that each house would show not only reconstructed interiors, but also a museographic room



Fig. 6. MUHBA Bon Pastor site, House 1 (1929-1952), reconstruction of kitchen and living room, 2023. Photo: Andrea Manenti

where relevant aspects of the living conditions of each period would be presented, where a selection of photos from the family archives could be seen for the first time, and where the voices of the neighbours explaining how they lived in the houses could be heard, offering visitors a unique experience based on both historical evidence and personal memories. The fact that MUHBA could reconstruct four houses was an exceptional opportunity to trace a diachronic view of working-class' living conditions throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Focused on the concept of *Shortage (1929-1952)*, the first house describes the period during which residents were merely getting by. (Fig. 6)

The residents of the Cases Barates were mainly migrants from inland Catalonia and other Spanish regions. The high hopes of the Second Republic did not come to fruition while the Civil War took a heavy toll on this community which backed the anarchist movement. Reprisals, courts martial, National Catholicism re-education, and shortages shaped the post-Civil War period.

Based on the idea of *'Developmentalism' (1953-1974)*, the second house describes an era of economic growth, when the routines of work defined many aspects of daily life in the Cases Barates and contributed to shaping people's identity and gender roles inside and outside the home. (Fig. 7)

Habits changed: at home new household appliances made chores easier and helped increase family income; by the end of the period Bon Pastor's streets were lined with parked cars. The effects of the 1973 oil crisis closed this era, which in social terms saw the emergence of local community movements calling for urgent attention to neighbourhood problems.

The third house introduces a moment of *Renovation (1975-1993)*, covering the Spanish Transition and democratic reconstruction era, when City Council rolled out vigorous urban planning policies, initially addressed at improving public space and facilities, and then at carrying out projects tied to the 1992 Olympic Games. The first refurbishment schemes were executed in the Bon Pastor from its construction, improving the comfort and reorganising the spaces of the houses. (Fig. 8)

The last house, *Reframing (1994-2010)*, portrays a period of successive crises. Many factories in the area closed and strategic zones were freed up for large schemes. In 2003 the Cases Barates residents supported the redevelopment plan proposed by City Council by a large majority. However, the old cheap houses had still to be tailored to the needs of a population that was not only ageing but also unsettled by the consequences of the recession. After the first flats were awarded in 2006, Bon Pastor began a new relationship with its territory, retaining to a large extent the same residents who already lived there.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Bon Pastor site narrates a complex urban process in which residents struggled constantly for the improvement of their living conditions and full integration of their neighbourhood in the city of Barcelona, both on a functional and a symbolic dimension. The functional integration was completed in 2010 with the arrival of the metro line, but the symbolic one came only in 2023 with the opening of the Bon Pastor site.

The alliance between the city perspective and the neighbourhood perspective gives MUHBA the opportunity of delving into a new model of cultural institution where heritage, museum and citizenship are intermingled, in



Fig. 7. MUHBA Bon Pastor site, House 2 (1953-1974), reconstruction of kitchen and living room, 2023. Photo: Paolo Susteric.r. Fig. 8. MUHBA Bon Pastor site, House 3 (1975-1993), reconstruction of the living room, 2023. Photo: Andrea Manenti

a space of shared knowledge and critical discussion of the city history, where the goal is contributing to create singular narratives with universal values.

Bon Pastor site is special also for the methodologies that have been applied, creating a multidisciplinary team including historians, archivists and other scholars, archaeologists, architects, designers, visual communicators, journalists, restorers, model makers, among other experts, who carried out a complex project still in progress with the creation of the virtual Bon Pastor site, accessible online. MUHBA also invites visitors to look at the whole project of Eix Besòs sites as a step forward on the path to the Democracy and Democratization processes that were discussed recently at the EMYA 2023 annual conference.

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# Casablanca Collective Museum's Satellites: From local to international research and partnerships

EUGÉNIE FORNO\*

The Casablanca Collective Museum is a citizen-led project to record the collective memory of the city led by the artist Mohamed Fariji. It offers a shared process of writing about and documenting the city by its artists, researchers, and residents. It takes the form of a series of workshops, giving rise to the creation of a wide range of work (visual, sound, performance, etc.) which constitutes the Museum's collection, and includes meetings and temporary exhibitions in various neighborhoods. The Collective Museum has been partly exhibited at the Kunsthal Art Center in Denmark (2016), at Calton Hill in Edinburgh (2019), and at Das Weisse Haus in Vienna (2021).

The Casablanca Collective Museum is situated at the crossroads of contemporary art, history, collective memory and museum. The conceptualization of the Collective museum draws on the legacy of Joseph Beuys as art as a vector of social transformation, and his fundamental statement used for the 1994 Exhibition's poster at Centre Pompidou: "Every human being is an artist". For the Collective Museum, everyone is a bearer of memory. The Casablanca collective museum can also be seen as a "social sculpture", as a museum that is both artwork and place. The new museum definition approved in Prague in August 2022 by ICOM had a direct impact on the Casablanca Collective Museum as it both affirmed and symbolically opened new doors to its existence. These traits reinforce the agility of the Collective Museum and allow it to transform itself and interact with its community, its needs and its opportunities. This agility was particularly visible in Fall 2023, when its international strategy turned towards North America.

Indeed, anchored in Casablanca, its stories and its dynamics, the Collective Museum opened itself up to other cities of the world. The objectives were to participate in the international dialogue on what makes museums, on heritage and contemporary practices, and to be active on the local level with a fierce will to open the first Museum

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and Art and Research Center dedicated to the city of Casablanca by 2030.

## Collecting the city with polyphonic voices

Over the past 10 years in Casablanca, a new form of museum has emerged, on a continent that holds fewer than 1% of the world's museums, stated Ernesto Ottone, Assistant Director-General for Culture at UNESCO, during the opening session of the ICOM General Conference in Prague. This form does not follow traditional museum models but rather is founded on the stories and storytelling modes valued by ordinary citizens. The Casablanca Collective Museum is embedded in the connection between contemporary art, forgotten or invisible narratives, artists, researchers, cultural actors, and inhabitants. The museum offers a shared process of recording and documenting the stories of the city by its inhabitants and emerged from a convergence of necessities. The goal was to empower and activate the margins through art<sup>1</sup>, which is why it was particularly specifically located in the city's neighborhoods. Funded by the Swiss Drosos Foundation, the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, the French Institute Morocco, the Minister of Culture in Morocco and the city of Casablanca<sup>2</sup>, the project benefited from a major investment in culture and arts as powerful tools to develop young citizens' imaginaries, potentials and impact.

Narrating the city from multiple standpoints took the form of several calls for projects, inviting civil society to participate. Over the course of 10 years, more than 50 projects were selected, each culminating in the creation of an artwork that expresses stories and memories that are typically undervalued by traditional historians. Together the artworks make up the collection of the Casablanca

<sup>1</sup> Strava, C. (2020). "Activating the margins through art: an ethnographic perspective on the work of L'Atelier de l'Observatoire in Casablanca". In Kuoni, C., Khan, N.N. and Moses, S. (eds), *Forces of art: Perspectives from a changing world*. Amsterdam: Valiz, pp. 104-109.

<sup>2</sup> L'Atelier de l'Observatoire has received funding from 15 financial partners since its creation.



*“Design without Designers” is a project within the framework of the Casablanca Collective Museum led by Laura Drouets and Olivier Lacrouts, in 2018-2019, in partnership with Casablanca’s School of Fine Arts. @ Atelier de l’Observatoire. They collected chairs and narratives from the guardians of the Badr market.*

collective museum. This first phase of the Collective museum resulted in a dialogue between Moroccan and international artists, researchers, and inhabitants. During this phase, an important negotiation was driven by the Atelier de l’Observatoire<sup>3</sup> team, Mohamed Fariji and Léa Morin, the co-founders and co-directors at the time, and numerous cultural actors worked together to activate and reflect on the necessity of the museum for the city.

**Negotiating for a citizen museum of the city**

The Collective Museum has existed outside traditional organizations and structures for memory keeping walls. In December 2021, after long negotiations with the city, its stakeholders and representatives of its institutions, the team of l’Observatoire succeeded in installing the Collective Museum in containers at the

newly renovated Arab League Park, right in the beating heart of Casablanca (formerly Yasmina Park) which has been the centre of collective action of recuperation of collective memory.

From December 2021 to July 2022, the Museum exhibited part of its collection, as a way to give back to the public and the audience. It was a preview and an experiment with a view to negotiating a museum / center for art and research with the city of Casablanca. In July 2022 (7 months later), Casa Patrimoine, a private-public entity of the city, with whom a partnership had been signed, requested that the containers be returned, thus putting an end to the programming and exhibits of the Collective Museum earlier than planned.

During the development of the Collective Museum, the research and creative work was just as important as the development of the museum in the city. One of the most prominent tools for this work is The Greenhouse, a platform for experimentation at the crossroads of contemporary art and botany. It is an open and participative space measuring between 150m<sup>2</sup> and 200m<sup>2</sup> which is installed in the public space. It seeks to welcome and support the development of new projects, voices, and ideas, sheltered from dominant visions. The Greenhouse invites the general public, artists, students, researchers, cultural operators, scientists, and local



*Collective Action-recuperation led by artist Mohamed Fariji at abandoned Yasmina Park, in 2015 (top left), reactivation at Kunsthall Art Center in Denmark in 2016 (top left and bottom). @ Atelier de l’Observatoire*

<sup>3</sup> L’Atelier de l’Observatoire is the organization that develops and supports projects such as the Casablanca Collective Museum, The Greenhouse, The Hive, The Invisible, The Aquarium, etc.

residents to collectively invest in this shared space, to carry out and participate in meetings, screenings, listening sessions, project presentations, workshops, radio shows and other artistic interventions. The Greenhouse is an artist project by Mohamed Fariji, developed through the Atelier de l'Observatoire since 2014.

It has been used as a platform to discuss and promote the Collective Museum, notably with itinerant showcases exhibiting the growing collection of the Collective Museum in public spaces. In an interview by researcher Danielle Pailler, Mohamed Fariji explains how the Greenhouse device serves as a sensitive "auscultation/listening" of society that "generates production" and gives life to new stories. "The artistic and political-social situations that we create then represent a means of deciphering urban, social, and cultural phenomena which, without these activation processes, would remain invisible, silent, and forgotten. A situation is created inside (the greenhouse) to transmit to the outside (in the city, in society) what will be born from these new interactions"<sup>4</sup>. Thanks to its long-term negotiation and its presence in public spaces, l'Atelier de l'Observatoire succeeded in settling the Collective Museum in containers, as a continuity of its itinerant showcases and Greenhouses. As many paths for the settlement of the museum had already been explored and

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Mohamed Fariji, comments collected by Danielle Pailler, "Faire médiation dans l'espace public au Maroc. Ou comment activer les droits culturels des personnes ?", *L'Observatoire*, 2018/1 (N° 51), p. 64-65. DOI : 10.3917/lobs.051.0064. URL: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-l-observatoire-2018-1-page-64.htm>

discussed with authorities, without any more solutions, the next strategy was to focus on international territories.

### **International strategy to act locally: from ICOM conference to the Satellites of the Collective Museum**

In the Road Map for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations pinpoints 17 goals. One of them emphasizes the importance of partnership for achieving the goals; it seemed crucial for the Collective Museum to construct partnerships that could both apply the approach about collecting and city museums locally, as well as to give new life to the negotiation with Casablanca and the Moroccan context. These partnerships would then help us to collectively construct sustainable cities and communities.

The first step was to participate in the ICOM conference in Prague, to meet with like-minded professionals and to present the project, its methodology and vision. This led us to present the Collective Museum's work at the International Committee for Collecting (COMCOL) and to meet representatives from the Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (CAMOC). The second step was to develop the Satellites of the Collective Museum. Indeed, to escape its isolation and to give national and international scope to its negotiations with the city of Casablanca, the Collective Museum deployed its activities by orbiting and exhibiting the memories of Cities around the world. The Collective Museum Satellites had previously taken shape in Algiers,



*The Casablanca Collective Museum, in March 2022, exhibiting its collection: a preview and an experiment with a view to negotiating with the city a Museum / Center for art and research in the city of Casablanca. @ Atelier de l'Observatoire*

## COLLECTIVE MUSEUMS



*A Greenhouse was installed in Ahuntsic, a neighborhood of Montreal, and co-organised with La Serre-Arts Vivants, in September 2023. The programming included the deployment of Ahuntsic Collective museum Satellite. @ Nicolas Biaux*

Nouakchott, Marrakech, Sharjah, Sidi Harazem, Hamrun, Edinburgh, Brussels, and Marseille. During the Fall of 2023, the Casablanca Collective Museum continued to promote its approach in the cities of Montreal, Chicago and New York.

In Montreal, in partnership with La Serre-Arts vivants, l'Atelier de l'Observatoire co-organised a *Greenhouse in Ahuntsic neighborhood*. During a week-end in September 2023, the Greenhouse project was adapted and presented to the Canadian audience. A workshop on the Ahuntsic's Collective Museum Satellite was deployed, inviting the participants to bring objects and texts, relevant to them and to the memory of the city.

In Chicago, in partnership with the Casablanca committee of Chicago Sister Cities International, Mohamed Fariji and I had the opportunity to carry out a set of meetings and actions around a future Chicago Satellite of the Collective Museum, notably during the Sukkah design festival, partnered with the Chicago Architecture Biennial, as well as meetings and presentations at the University of Illinois and the John Mooney Foundation. These activities both introduced the tactics for creating a citizen led museum as well as laid the groundwork for a future Satellite in Chicago.

In New York, at the annual conference of CAMOC, the idea was to communicate on the Museum and to co-construct and explore with museum professionals what could be "The New York Collective Museum's Satellite" through a performance-presentation.

The idea of these partnerships and actions is to co-create a methodology that is adapted to the particular audience and interests of other localities. It is also to strengthen the position of the Collective Museum on the international scene and to play between the local and international as

resonances that echo and have impact on both levels. With our expertise, l'Atelier de l'Observatoire wishes to bring in other people to develop this research and this practice to support the Casablanca Collective Museum project. The Collective Museum is meant to be collective, and the partnerships for its creation are fundamental, whether they are local, national or international. The goal is to develop the project with students, artists, researchers, professionals from around the world and to give such a strong character to the project that it can return to Casablanca and its inhabitants. As the Collective Museum collection has not yet been exhibited fully, therefore international exposure and negotiation is a crucial strategy to allow the artistic, heritage and curatorial project to return to Casablanca as a fully fledged project.



*Collective Memory Performance on Chicago Satellite, in October 2023, during Sukkah Design Festival in partnership with Lawndale Pop-up Spot, Chicago Architecture Biennial and the Casablanca committee of Chicago Sister Cities International. @ Norvell's Photography. Collective Memory Performance, in October 2023, during the CAMOC conference at the Museum of the City of New York. @ Atelier de l'Observatoire / Eugénie Forno*



# Decolonial processes, curatorial strategies: MUCI, Museum of the City of Córdoba, 450 years since the founding of the City of Córdoba

PATRICIA E. BRIGNOLE\*



View of the MUCI front, Museum of the City of Córdoba, Historic Cabildo Building.

## Mediation, dialogues and reflection on “new topics”

The transformation process of the Museum of the City of Córdoba, responding to a new museum profile, began in March 2017, returning to the institutional objectives for which it was created in 1980, thanks to the advice and training of a professional team, it began to redefine its mission; with a contemporary vision and incorporating the new “themes of the city”, in addition to all the aspects that define the Museum itself.

Part of the strategy, taken as a source of inspiration, were the words of Bonaventura Souza, who proposes “Distancing oneself from the traditional historical view

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of institutions, without discarding or ruling out, and in a certain way transforming impossible into possible narratives, narratives absent in the present narratives”, as the author refers to in his text *Sociology of absences, and forms of production* (Santos, 2010).

The MUCI, therefore, is a favorable environment to generate and give birth to contemporary productions, giving rise to new meanings and the presence of other voices.

## New narratives, design and thematic axes

By redefining the new mission through critical and territorial reflection, new narratives about the city were incorporated and for the first time the term “Citizen” is spoken of within the tour.

These days, it is necessary to identify that since its beginnings, different strategies could be implemented,

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presented as stages and processes (still in progress), which today allows us to identify the decolonial approach in our curatorial script.

For this reason, we refer to the City Museum collection as a “deconstructed collection” that addresses:

- The native peoples, who built a community before the founding of the city in the hands of the Spanish.
- The founding of the City contemplates the origin of our identity, both Aboriginal and Afro-descendant, which has been silenced until now.
- The City Museum as a new paradigm open to the social fabric in all its dimensions.
- Traditional and contemporary migration, influences on our music, gastronomy, arts and habits.
- The role and presence of women in the construction processes of Córdoba society.
- The building where it is located, in addition to being National Historical Heritage, is beginning to be valued as a “memory space” symbol of the city’s intangible heritage.
- The creation and implementation of mediation programs and design of significant experiences open to the general public and the entire community free of charge.

In the first years, with the change in mission and activities, new audiences were incorporated and their number increased, along with improvements in the quality of service, dissemination and visitor participation. On the other hand, the museum began to have a presence and active participation in research teams and specialized organizations that are responsible for critically reflecting on these issues.

The basis of the new exhibition and curatorial design, based on new approaches to this type of museum, considered the state of the exhibition existing since 1980, whose starting point was the discovery of America, the founding of the city of Córdoba in 1573 and the arrival of the conquerors.

This proposal was accompanied by cartography, models of Columbus’ three caravels, the image of Jerónimo Luis de Cabrera (the founder), along with a brief mention of the aboriginal peoples, among other supports and text elements. They were all part of the first room of the museum from which the tour began, with a strong linear chronological character, that told a part of the history known to everyone, until now.

Currently, the strategy deconstructs the previous one and proposes talking about the “found territory”, which is referred to in Room 1, *The urban archaeology room*. The new proposal begins with an introduction, which invites you to physically locate yourself in the territory, where the MUCI is located, part of the 70 founding blocks, as the place chosen by the conquerors. In addition, it includes the site on the banks of the Suquía River, unique for its geopolitical characteristics, everything is translated into a cartography that reveals the conditions of the site as the “chosen territory”, showing the archaeological zones, which prove the previous existence of a population, and the risk levels of impact in each of them, according to the findings and archaeological studies carried out recently, as part of the work in urban archaeology. This curatorial project is the result of collaboration between the MUCI, the Heritage Directorate of the Municipality and the Province of Córdoba and the Anthropology Museum of the National University of Córdoba.

On the other hand, “Córdoba before Córdoba”, as a play on words that invites us to think about and recognize the existence prior to the founding date of the city of Córdoba, revealing the role of the communities of indigenous peoples (called Comechingones) in social formation, and politically according to its laws and that, due to a traditionalist view of these processes, had not been shown as such.

After going through these topics, the “founding acts” are presented, as historical documents where the formal



Room 1, project prior to 2017 (left). Room 1, MUCI\_New Curatorial Project Urban Archaeology (right).

administrative political act is recorded, which gave rise to Córdoba, called the “New Andalusia.”

The MUCI, through this new museological project, presents the city for the first time expressing its aboriginal, migrant origin and which will later express its African descent. Each and every one of these topics today allows us to interpret, question and reflect on the complex identity of a city with its own characteristics.

### Key strategy: The building and its context

Currently, since 1996, the museum has been based in the Historical City Council, a building whose construction began in 1604; since then it has been the administrative, economic and political center of the City of Córdoba, among other functions.

In 1941 it was declared a “National Historical Monument” and later a memory site. For this reason and as part of a distinctive point on the so-called “Route of Enslaved Persons of Córdoba”, a project initiated by UNESCO in 1994, to account for the processes of colonization and slave trade around the world, UNESCO refers to the site thus: “Internationally, the project has played a fundamental role in ‘breaking’ the silence around the history of slavery and placing in universal memory this tragedy that has shaped the modern world” (UNESCO s.f.).

In the City of Córdoba, the Historical Town Hall, along with a set of other spaces, have been named and identified to account for these stories and memories invisible during the last centuries.

In this new proposal, the museum includes in the script the declaration of a site of memory, and is also an active

*Patio Mayor, MUCI, Museum of the City of Córdoba Historic Cabildo (left). Red Room, Chapter House, MUCI upper floor, Historical Council of the City of Córdoba (right).*



*Cell and Cistern, New Curatorial Project. MUCI Underground, Historic City Council.*

member of the group “Route of Enslaved Persons of Córdoba”, along with other entities such as the Afro Córdoba Table.

Another very significant point was the reopening of the archaeological site: *The cell and the cistern*. The site is located in the basement of the building, where the Cabildo prison formerly functioned, whose construction began in 1609. These walls are a testimony of political events, social and cultural; they protect the memory of women and men who spent part of their lives there.

Over time, *The cell and the cistern* were recovered for exhibition open to the public in 1992. Parts of the original structure were rescued: concerted masonry walls, remains of original floors, vaulted ceiling level and the old staircase. On several occasions the public access was closed for security reasons.

In December 2022, a long-awaited moment arrives, as the exhibitions open again, starting a new stage for the Museum, enriching the experiences of reading, interpretation, research and visits through the space integrating the Cell, Cistern and its context; the City Museum, the Town Hall and the Historical Center of the City of Córdoba. Likewise, the role that the Cabildo had during the military dictatorship is recognized, when it functioned as headquarters of the Police of the Province of Córdoba. Identity and the construction of the social fabric are part of these reflections and are immersed in new paths.

As a curatorial strategy that is sensitive to space, it was proposed to clear the premises and walls of invasive signage, to allow reading of the total environment. It now allows us to observe the construction details and allows the visitor to have the experience of feeling the space, identifying the construction stages and knowing the possible uses throughout history.

### Gender and colonial past

This reopening has helped both to enrich visitor experiences and to update the content resulting from

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new academic research, such as in the case of gender, deconstructed narratives about this site based on the archives and founding documents. Here we refer to the approach of Jackie Vassallo, a local researcher who highlights the existence of a large number of imprisoned women, their role in colonial times and the cultural heritage of the City. In them she describes in a documentary way the life of these women inside this building, and their important role in the city in those days (Vassallo, 2021). Few previous mentions have been made of women imprisoned in colonial times.

### The institutional articulation

Since the reopening of the archaeological site, the MUCI has reorganized the visitor experience, the result of constant updates. Through an annual mediation project, more than 40 students are included in professional practices and internships, through an agreement, with the Provincial University of Córdoba, with the aim of building routes that allow activating links with heritage in a comprehensive and holistic way, throughout the entire building, which is a Historical Monument, and a fundamental part of the so-called "Historic Central District", recognized as the Heritage, Cultural, Tourist and Gastronomic District of our city.

### Conclusion

The Museum of the City of Córdoba was created in 1980, based on traditional museum theories, strategies and needs of the time, on which the institutions were founded at that time, with the main objective of reflecting the history of a City of more than four hundred years of life, which today turns 450 years old, witness to 40 years of Democracy in our country, Argentina.

In light of decolonial theory, museums as social actors are invited in a multidisciplinary manner to deconstruct and produce new curatorial practice as permanent strategies, which allow addressing cultural heritage in a comprehensive manner from different perspectives, acting in connection and synchrony with the territories.

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*Students of professional practices, Faculty of Tourism and Environment. Provincial University of Córdoba. Honor Guards, MUCI Entrance, Historical Council of the City of Córdoba. Upper floor gallery of the Patio Mayor, MUCI, Historic Town Hall, view of the domes of the Cathedral of the City of Córdoba.*

# Kenya, ways of being in the city: Museums and heritage projects

FLORA NGUYE MUTERE\*

Straddling the equator, the Kenyan cities of Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and Nakuru provide a foil, atmosphere and resources representative of Kenya's rich and varied cultural landscapes. These administrative centres represent a dynamic and extensive range of environments, ecosystems spanning the Rift Valley (semi desert, forest, plains, swamp) as well as the Indian Ocean. Sixty years after independence, a quest to cohere a national identity has turned into a national project uniting a diverse

institutions which have yet to be decolonised. *Indeed, what significance do galleries, libraries, archives and museums (the GLAM sector) hold, specifically for Kenyan citizens? How are our museums and cultural and heritage projects doing today? Has the Kenyan gaze been firmly installed as decolonial transformation?*

In 2020, COVID's accompanying tensions, conversations and lessons about vaccine inequality and discrimination



Nairobi gallery textile exhibition

population of over 42 ethnicities. A myriad of Kenyan creative and cultural projects thrives alongside the mortar and brick heritage institutions of remembrance. Undeniably, a pervasive colonial legacy of museums has been passed on, through content and presentation of narrative, objects and collections. These are memory

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and the #BlackLivesMatter movement saw increased debate and analysis for the meaning and understanding of inclusiveness, representation, and identity. As tourism bookings and reservations plummeted, we analysed our outward gaze critiquing political, social, economic and cultural attitudes and outcomes. These discussions were concentrated on digital social fora. At this juncture a seismic shift occurred. Museums and heritage spaces were closed to the public. Yet distinctly Kenyan knowledge, heritage and cultural creative production



*Archiving Kenya's Pasts and Futures: an event at McMillan Memorial Library showcasing its restoration undertaken by Book Bunk.*

was foregrounded, sustaining souls through the doubt and anxiety-inducing season contributing to much needed mental clarity and social cohesion.

Pervasive silences and amnesia persist in our understanding and knowledge of history regarding the meaning-making of transformative past cultural, social and political events. The Mau Mau resistance, Africanisation, multi-party protests and expediency of myth-making of the political class are a few of these events. Statecraft initially kept citizenry dependent on what and how we remember phenomena. This was dictated by a political vernacular, agenda, and motive. What was on display, broadcast and communicated created a barrier to access by shaping and distorting essential understandings of individual and collective consciousness.

#### **For the culture**

Currently, we vigorously exercise and examine our social, political, and cultural freedoms and rights. Of importance is that successful cultural heritage projects are profitable and resourced, providing quality, context, and relevance to their constituents. Kenya's museum collections focus on paleontology and anthropological and archaeological finds; however what is presently needed is an ethnographic material collection, mapping the everyday life of the region. Documents and records remain intact at 10 sites in Nairobi and 22 nationally which are run by National Museums of Kenya. Consequently, this extensive coverage will enable citizenry to locate their mental and psycho-social status in both time and space. Without question heritage proves to be an exemplary dashboard. Museums are highly desirable as they infuse debate and reflection, and offer a valuable instrument proven to comprehensively address questions of power, knowledge and being.

Performative oral expressions present lively and vibrant descriptions of life in these urban spaces. A pool of festivals provide an accurate cross-generational view of the society. These well subscribed occasions are rooted in a civic societal dimension or dynamic expression of ways of being in the city. Annual festivals range from literary, traditional, musical, and theatrical events and are relied upon as a curated arena of lived experience. Their custodianship and effort contend with the threat to their financing, and are often underwritten by corporate sponsorship or individual vendors. Whether for economic gain or for culture, city festivals yield a considered, mediated and negotiated production of space. As well as creating employment, and promoting cultural innovation, these are platforms to display an expression of the city while they draw large crowds.

Abundant and industrious creativity is noteworthy in this context, leveraging digital tools and media platforms vlogs, and podcasts, that seek to educate and entertain audiences, report on and bring together a city through food, lifestyle and entertainment. These create livelihoods with manageable costs, yet they also provide a high impact for shaping values and perceptions, and sparking thinking on how Kenyans constitute ways of being in the world. On display is relatable content and it is often inclusive across race, age, gender. These highly generative social media platforms - specifically vlogs, podcasts and short form productions - document fresh takes on Kenyan culture.

#### **Conclusion**

Urban institutions have contributed to advancing culture and heritage, to understanding socio-cultural contexts, processes, and meanings within particular cultural systems. Despite the establishment of urban areas beginning with the capital of Nairobi which achieved city



*Dr Njoki Ngumi of the Nest collective moderating discussion on inventory and repatriation of Kenyan collections at the National Museum of Kenya.*

status in 1954, the lived experience of most Kenyans has remained either on the periphery or in the interstices of formal city development<sup>1</sup>. Digital platforms enable individuals to address the scarcity and lack of priority of heritage content, whose purpose speaks to the role that cultural heritage will play in the Kenyan socio-political experience in the present and in the future. One possible explanation is a critical observation made by Mutheu Mbondo of the Godown Arts Centre that said ‘there is a way people interact with the city that it is not theirs’, a provocation that speaks to collection and curation of

the progression of selfhood, ownership and settlement within Kenyan cities.

Today, an unequivocally dedicated ethnographic project that aims to instil cultural confidence in citizens Today, an unequivocally dedicated ethnographic project locate personhood, connecting audiences with their memories, is needed. The city museum as a public institution should actively include audiences on contemporary matters, identity and belonging.

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<sup>1</sup> Annex 3, Report: City evolution and identity: Nai Ni Who Festival, 11 May-2 August 2013, executive summary.



*Nairobi Walking Tours for residents to participate in and share city cultural heritage resources. © The GoDown Arts Centre*

# MUPANAH: A state museum, a city, many facets<sup>1</sup>

FRITZ-GERALD LOUIS\*



*View of the MUPANAH entrance. @ Fritz-Gerald Louis, July 2023*

As we delve into this case study, Port-au-Prince, the capital of the Republic of Haiti, is experiencing a socio-political crisis, jeopardizing cultural sites, especially museums. The Musée du Panthéon National Haïtien (MUPANAH) is one such institution.

This relatively young museum, forty years old, has been the subject of several studies that offer a certain perception of its potential importance compared to other museums in the country. Eleven researchers have demonstrated how the museum stands out from the rest. Thus, the MUPANAH has been examined through semantic approaches (Vendryes, 1995; Augustin, 2016; Joseph, 2017); educational and evaluative approaches (Féron, 2012; Da Silva, 2012); and legal perspectives (Gaston, 2013). The timing of its creation and the political context in which it operates have also been studied (Célius 1998,

2019; Charlier-Doucet, 2001) along with criticisms of its operation (Lafontant, 1990; Alexis, 1993; Louis, 2021).

Despite the published works so far, the crux of the matter lies elsewhere. Questions arise: Why so much interest in this museum? What can be found inside? What makes this museum unique? The intention of this text is not to conduct an in-depth study of the MUPANAH. More modestly, it aims to briefly present the aspects that evoke its importance in the network of Haitian cultural heritage.

## **Location of MUPANAH**

Before presenting the factors that differentiate MUPANAH from other museums and implicitly give it an innovative character, it is worth recalling that it is located in a sacred place, a symbolic place called Champ de Mars. This site is considered the largest public square in the country. MUPANAH covers part of the heroes' square with its architecture reminiscent of Greek canons. It is an underground structure, circular in shape and characterized by cones. A large central well and seven smaller wells are arranged in a semicircle around the central one. Their function is to illuminate the interior of the building.

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Jenny Janvier, not only for her words of encouragement, but also for her skillful reading, proofreading and translation of my text from French into English.

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## Inauguration and mission

Inaugurated on the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of General Toussaint Louverture, MUPANAH is a state museum funded by the Haitian government. Its mission, among others, is to perpetuate and disseminate the memory of the Founding Fathers, and to participate in the preservation of heritage and the dissemination of national culture.

## Importance of MUPANAH

Although the architecture and mission of MUPANAH are fundamentally remarkable, other aspects such as the Pantheon, the collection, the permanent exhibition, and scientific research give this museum a grand dimension.

## The Pantheon

Unlike other history museums in the Caribbean region, MUPANAH preserves relics. Indeed, it carefully guards the remains of the major figures of Haitian Independence. There are four such figures: François Toussaint, known as Toussaint Louverture (1743-1803), Jean-Jacques Dessalines (1758-1806), Henry Christophe (1767-1820), and Alexandre Pétion (1770-1818). These figures belong to the history of Haiti and even to world history. They ended the colonial slavery system in Haiti, hence their elevation to the status of gods. This is one of the main reasons, in our view, why MUPANAH is an important museum.

## The collection

Without going into many details, the collection of MUPANAH covers successive phases of development. It starts from the Amerindian period, before 1492, up to the present day. In other words, the collection highlights several references to Haitian history. It is worth noting that the collection includes heterogeneous objects from archaeological, historical, and artistic domains, some of which have been studied. They have been classified, firstly, as Taíno objects; artifacts from the Spanish and French colonial periods; or Haitian objects and, as works of art. Based on the above, it can be affirmed that the collection of this museum presents a significant number of objects that testify to both European imperialism and Haitian sovereignty.

It is noteworthy that the most interesting aspect of this collection is that it presents a showcase of 'Haitianité', or Haitian-ness, perceived as the components of Haitian identity.

## Narrativity of Haitian history

Studies on narration in museum institutions allow us to trace and interpret history. MUPANAH, as a historical



*The Central Well. @ Fritz-Gerald Louis*

museum, places particular emphasis on narration through its permanent exhibition. Indeed, Haitian history is told chronologically through the objects on display. The permanent exhibition allows us to grasp the trajectory of this new socio-political entity, to paraphrase historian Carlo Célius.

## Scientific research

In the preceding lines, we have seen that MUPANAH appears as the guardian of essential elements of Haitian cultural heritage, the treasures of the Republic of Haiti. In this regard, the last element to consider is scientific research which is central to the function of a museum. At MUPANAH, it emerges as a major contribution to the museum's importance. In this sense, it can appeal to researchers in various fields of research including museography, scenography, architecture, history, biography, and decolonization, to name just a few examples.

Furthermore, there is a great interest in museums worldwide as well as enthusiasm for museological studies. MUPANAH is not exempt from these two conditions. On the contrary, not only is it an important museum for Port-au-Prince, it is also a hotbed of scientific research in Haiti.

In conclusion, this text attests to the relevance of the Musée du Panthéon National Haitien (MUPANAH). All the elements raised have allowed us to better understand the extent of MUPANAH's importance in the Haitian heritage ecosystem. The text has partially shown us the role that the museum plays in the Haitian capital and of its innovative role in the network. Most interestingly, MUPANAH as a public museum, and more generally



*The Pantheon.*  
© Fritz-Gerald  
Louis

the flagship museum of Port-au-Prince, to borrow the term from museologist Yves Bergeron, with its pantheon and collection can be perceived as an indicator for scientific research. It could propose research programs to universities, heritage professionals, and researchers. Moreover, these programs will incite museum practitioners and researchers to initiate a new reflection on the notion of collection. The latter, abundantly rich, will give rise to new avenues of study, in particular Haitian studies.

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# Arbeidermuseet, Copenhagen. Interview with the Director, Søren Bak-Jensen

PAOLA E. BOCCALATTE\*

The Workers Museum (*Arbeidermuseet*) is located in the original 19<sup>th</sup> century Workers Assembly Building in central Copenhagen. It is dedicated to everyday life in 1950s Denmark and you can visit the apartment of the Sørensen family who moved to Copenhagen (Fig. 1) in 1885. You can also explore the development of industrial work and step in to the lives of working-class kids in The Workers Museum for Children. The Museum offers temporary exhibitions and programs for young and adult audiences.

In May 2023, during EMYA2023 (European Museum of the Year Award) Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony at MUHBA, Barcelona History Museum<sup>1</sup>, the Arbeidermuseet was awarded the prestigious Council of Europe Museum Prize. According to the committee's representative for the Prize, Roberto Rampi, the museum "raises the themes of dialogue, the future development of democracy, climate change, an equal society, the labour market, and political activism; it provides spaces for meetings and encourages people to gather. The museum has the potential to become a beacon of activism, as it was in the past."<sup>2</sup>

Do you recognize your museum in these words? Can we talk about 'museum activism' or is it rather about becoming aware of the social responsibility of the museum, as the 2022 ICOM definition invites us to do?

*I think activism goes beyond awareness of social responsibility. The 2022 ICOM definition encourages museums to develop in ways that take account of social issues, for example through more inclusive audience development, sustainability measures, or representation. I see activism as going beyond the development of the museum and aiming to effect change primarily outside of the institution. It requires taking a stand and engaging in democratic processes. The Workers Museum has done so on several issues, but we are far behind a number of very brave and committed museums. Our primary aim is that a visit to our museum will empower more people to take action on issues that concern them.*

\* Paola E. Boccalatte, freelance museum consultant, grantee of the Culture Moves Europe programme at MUHBA.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.emya2023muhbabcn.com/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pace.coe.int/en/pages/museumprize>



Fig.1. Facade of The Workers Museum. © The Workers Museum

What makes your museum not only a sepia-coloured place of nostalgia, but a place in dialogue with everyday peoples' lives?

*Well, perhaps maybe these are two sides of the same coin. In order to encourage dialogue with, and among, a non-academic audience and among people who are not frequent museum visitors, we start the conversation around displays and recreations of everyday life and thus from a point where most people have prior knowledge. This approach allows a wide section of the population to understand themselves as historic beings, as connected to earlier generations who have also had to make ends meet, but under different circumstances. I love walking around the galleries and hearing people talking about how they recognize the materiality of everyday life, telling their own stories, and criticising the museum for getting things wrong. It is a very good starting point for going into more abstract discussions about why things change, what kind of future we are moving towards, and perhaps the importance of social engagement. (Fig. 2)*



Fig. 2. Assembly Hall. Photo Søren Hytting. © The Workers Museum

In Italy, museums dedicated to work have generally an entrepreneurial slant (company museums) or are linked to rural life and specific territorial characteristics (eco-museums). Do you think that there is a risk for museums on the history of workers or trade unions to be seen as politically biased?

*The Workers Museum is definitely seen as politically biased by many people. And at one level, this is not surprising. The majority of our collections deal with material, organisations, and people committed to making people support social democratic, socialist, or even communist parties and join trade unions. Indeed, the very building we are in was erected as a centre for mass organisation of workers. A particular perspective on society pervades the subject area that we deal with, and some people will of course react to this. We have in our collection a letter from parents who demanded that their child did not take part in an excursion to The Workers Museum because they saw it as politically biased. At the same time, we do enjoy wide recognition for telling and preserving a story of the labour movement as a major factor in the development of modern Danish society. People with liberal or conservative political outlooks will accept this as part of our history that it is important to know about. And most importantly, encountering a museum where a particular political perspective is so obvious in the collections helps visitors to see their own political standpoints more clearly. For these reasons, I think a museum focusing on the social and political struggles of workers is an*

*important and necessary addition to museums that focus on industrial society in general. (Fig. 3)*

I was talking with a colleague about museums as places of reinforcement of the social classes gap and about the issue of poverty as a taboo for most museums. Is social equity an issue you deal with in your museum?

*In Denmark, as probably in most countries, the profile of museum visitors does not mirror the general demographics, certainly not on socio-economic factors. This is true for The Workers Museum as well. If we celebrate museums as inclusive spaces without recognizing who actually uses them, I do think that we contribute to upholding social divides and inequality on a number of levels. And while many museums engage strongly with issues of inequality, only a few are truly able to include for instance skilled and unskilled workers among their audience. A central concern for me is the inadequacy of data that we, among Danish museums but also at The Workers Museum, have about the socio-economic profile of our visitors. It is central to our strategy to appeal to people with short educational backgrounds, and there are many indications that we are on the right path. But reliable data is not yet being produced. Perhaps the challenge is not a taboo of inequality as a theme, but of truly looking it in the eye as central to our visitor profile.*

The Vision of the museum is expressed on your website by a very short statement, only 14 but very powerful words



Fig. 3. The balcony. Photo Malthe Folke Ivarsson. © The Workers Museum

in Danish: “The Workers Museum strengthens the will for an equal and just society by creating engaging meetings with history”. I think it should be the vision of all history museums but I am afraid “equal and just society” are still radical words for many.

*The Workers Museum is a state recognized museum, working from academic principles and broadly looked to as a reliable source of information. At the same time, we are an institution based on values of promoting democracy and reducing inequality. We are acutely aware of the power we as museums have to normalise particular views of history among the general public, and therefore to shape views of society. In order to encourage an open dialogue with visitors, we wish to base our trustworthiness on being transparent rather than on being removed and disinterested.*



Fig. 4. Teaching in permanent galleries. Photo Malthe Folke Ivarsson. © The Workers Museum

*The Vision statement is one important step in communicating our commitment to take part in wider social issues. And talking about social justice is obvious for a museum dealing with the labour movement, especially because there have been so many ways to understand what social justice actually means. Personally, though, I like the part about creating engaging meetings with history very much as well. I think more museums should explore how they can be a call to action for visitors. Explore how people can put the knowledge, wonder, or sense of community they get from a museum visit into action. Leaving a museum should be the start of something, not the end. (Fig. 4)*

The symbol of the museum is not a work tool, but rather a flag, as if the struggle for rights was the focus. It makes me think that those struggles could intersect with others.

*What is labour history today? This is a question that we often ask ourselves. In recent years, we have increasingly gone beyond questions of socio-economic classes in order to include questions of race, gender, and representation in democratic processes. We make exhibitions aimed to raise awareness of vocational educations, we have had a major research project on political activism, and we are currently showing a temporary exhibition on women at work. Still, I believe that questions about equity and justice will remain central, and perhaps increasingly so as we find ourselves in a world horribly affected by climate change and with war raging in Europe. These are developments where I believe labour history offers important perspectives for understanding and reflecting on how not everybody is affected in the same way.*

And, in the end, talking about workers, what about your staff?

*We are about 35 full-time staff, about five of whom are on temporary contracts as part of ongoing projects. In addition, we are about 30 hourly paid staff who work mainly as museum hosts or as guides and educators. In contrast to many museums in Denmark, we do not have a large group of volunteers in our organisation, even though a few retired workers have been doing digitisation work for us on a voluntary basis.*

\* This work was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

# The new permanent exhibition at the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration in Paris: A success or a failure?

ANDRÉA DELAPLACE\*



*New permanent exhibition at the Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration. © Andréa Delaplace, 2023*

Closed since December 2020 due to renovation works, the galleries of the permanent collections of the *Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration* have finally reopened their doors on June 17, 2023. Or more precisely, it is the permanent collections of the museum - located in the Palais de la Porte Dorée - that reopened its doors as the other spaces of the Palais were still open to visitation. An architectural masterpiece in the Art Deco style, the Palais de la Porte Dorée was erected for the colonial exhibition of 1931. It has housed the National Museum of the History of Immigration since 2007.

\* Andréa Cristina Delaplace (PhD) is an art historian and anthropologist. This museum was one of the case studies of her Master's dissertation and also PhD thesis. For more information about the migration museum in Paris (its history and old exhibition) please read the following article: <https://journals.openedition.org/cel/295?lang=en>

The museum undertook this work in order to review the scenography of these galleries, and to install a better air renewal system. During this period of closure, the temporary exhibitions were able to continue, but the public could no longer access the various spaces of the museum, and its permanent collections.

Since the reopening of the permanent galleries, the collections were presented in the form of thematic chapters. From the summer of 2023 the tour route changed, to highlight eleven major dates in the history of immigration, from 1685 to the present day.

Photographs, installations, paintings, sculptures, testimonials, personal objects, videos... The museum's collections tell the many stories of immigration to



The music studio where you can listen to the variety of music genres connected to migration. © Andréa Delaplace, 2023.

France. This scientific and didactic museum explains the main stages of immigration to France, thus approaching the history of the country in a roundabout way. Colonialism and slavery, wars, reconstruction policies, economic and social conflicts, crises, struggles for rights or solidarity, meeting of cultures...such an ambitious scientific project that wanted to face the critics that plagued the previous permanent exhibition.

The immigration history actually covers many themes that intertwine and create an interdisciplinary perspective that is presented to the public. Through nearly 600 works, documents, art or historical objects, video or sound clips, the museum questions the reasons and consequences of human dislocations and movements - chosen or not (ranging from migration workers to war refugees). Several individual portraits are also highlighted in the exhibition, recalling that behind the stereotyped images of migrants, there are real people's struggles, hopes and personal stories. Don't miss the music studio either, which explores all the musical diversity of France, enriched by the different cultures that are present in its territory.

This museum has struggled since its opening to create awareness around the fact that France is a country that integrated migrants since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and even before that. But with all the discussions regarding the latest migration issue in France (such as the vote on a new law, the most harsh in the last 40 years in France). The National Museum of the History of Immigration, remains an essential place in the French museum scenario since it is still there to nourish a healthy debate which can enlighten and deconstruct many prejudices around immigration (and its history) in France. The year

of reopening of the museum 2023 was also that of the celebrations of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the March for All (also known as *la Marche des beurs*) which marked the debate on identity and immigration in France. An important moment in national history which was even more important to celebrate at a time when discussions around the new immigration law were (are) marked by xenophobic speeches.<sup>1</sup>

During my visit in September 2023, my impression was rather positive, and I could see that the exhibition takes up several points of the old exhibition but in more depth. The space is the same but arranged in a different way since the Donations Gallery (Galerie des dons) has been closed and its old space is integrated into the permanent exhibition: now we find the part of the exhibition dedicated to the contemporary era (contemporary migrations in France).

It is also an exhibition which is much denser (and longer) than the old exhibition. It is an exhibition which favors historical documents and a long chronology (from 1685 to today). It is above all a history museum with a classic chronological route. Very different from the scientific project of 2005-2006 which really advocated a multidisciplinary exhibition. It is thus a new project of a history museum dedicated to immigration where several questions and criticisms posed in the face of the previous exhibition have been answered: attention to questions such as slavery, (de)colonization and its heritage in French history (ethnic and cultural issues in a multicultural France are thus put forward). The works of contemporary art, archival documents (including photographs and videos) and the memorial objects present in the exhibition support a discourse well anchored in the history of France, thus creating a real historiographical discourse on immigration. Perhaps the old permanent route was more playful or visually more attractive with monumental works like *Climbing Down* by Barthélémy Toguo, but the new museography enhances the chronological key dates in the migration history of France, including important topics such as the Algerian War<sup>2</sup> (Nov. 1, 1954 – Mar. 19, 1962) and the *Marche des beurs*<sup>3</sup> in 1983.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on this new migration law proposition, please read: <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20231219-french-parliament-adopts-controversial-immigration-law>

<sup>2</sup> The Algerian War was a major armed conflict between France and the Algerian National Liberation Front from 1954 to 1962, which led to Algeria winning its independence from France.

<sup>3</sup> The March for Equality and Against Racism, also called the *Marche des beurs* by French media, was a demonstration concerning issues of racism and immigration that took place in France in 1983, from October 15 to December 3. It was the first national demonstration of its type in France. For photos of this historical event, please check the museum's website: <https://www.histoire-immigration.fr/collections/marche-pour-l-egalite-et-contre-le-racisme-reportage-photo-d-amadou-gaye>



Road to Exile by artist Barthélémy Toguo. © Andréa Delaplace, 2023

One of the particularities of this museum is its contemporary art collection and I was wondering if they would keep the artworks as part of the new permanent exhibition. To my delight, yes, the contemporary artworks are still part of the new exhibition. It was great to see how they chose strategic points where to place them and enhance works by contemporary artists such as Kader Attia, Mohamed Bourouïssa, Gaëlle Choïsse, Claire

Fontaine, Kimsoja, Samuel Fosso, Zineb Sedira, Shen Yuan and many others.

As an example, Kader Attia's *La machine à rêve* (version féminine)<sup>4</sup> artwork can be found at the end of the permanent exhibition. It always attracts curiosity among visitors and it is great to see that the new exhibition kept this artwork as part of their permanent visit route. The day I visited there was a group of veiled young women<sup>5</sup> who felt particularly close to the artwork and were delighted to discover the mannequin (that they initially thought was a real woman from afar) and thought it was very amusing the contents of the *machine à rêve*.<sup>6</sup> By bringing works of art into the exhibition, the curators managed to bring a connection to the public that is very subjective and unique as this example above shows.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For more on the new permanent exhibition please check the museum's website: <https://www.histoire-immigration.fr/en/programmation/expositions/l-exposition-permanente>

<sup>5</sup> I am mentioning here that the young women were veiled as there is a whole polemic in France around the use of veils by Muslim women. The fact that the girls saw a veiled woman represented in that artwork was important to them as they felt directly connected to the subject of the artwork.

<sup>6</sup> I had a quick discussion with the girls to ask their reaction to the work of Kader Attia and the new exhibition.

<sup>7</sup> For more on the use of contemporary art by migration museums please read my article "Migration-Heritage Contemporary Art and Archives Representations Memories and Identities": [https://www.academia.edu/109527543/Motion\\_Migrations\\_35\\_th\\_World\\_Congress\\_CIHA\\_Comite\\_International\\_dHistoire\\_de\\_lArt](https://www.academia.edu/109527543/Motion_Migrations_35_th_World_Congress_CIHA_Comite_International_dHistoire_de_lArt)

Photos of the sections of the exhibition dedicated to the Algerian war and the Marche des beurs. © Andréa Delaplace, 2023





A visit to see the new exhibition is definitely a must for researchers interested in the subject of migration as well as a larger public that would learn a lot about the history of (im)migration in such difficult and hard times where (im)migration history can be easily instrumentalized by politicians to serve their own agenda. Learning about the history of (im)migration as part of the national history is important, as we are in a world where human dislocation and migration fluxes are constant and part of the reality of many countries today (as, unfortunately, xenophobic discourses). Thus, migration museums (and history museums at large, including city museums) can fulfill the role of education, transmission of knowledge and inclusion that is part of its main missions.



Photo from the Salle des fêtes where we can witness all the decor connected to the colonial past of the building © Andréa Delaplace, 2019



La machine à rêves by artist Kader Attia. © Andréa Delaplace, 2023



Artwork of Kader Attia and the young visitors. © Andréa Delaplace, 2023

# How we purposely, though unplanned, build an exhibition about Ghent Turkish heritage in STAM - City Museum of Ghent

NESLIHAN DOĞAN\*

It's November 2023. A diverse group of youngsters from the Turkish diaspora in Ghent are gathered around the table in a community centre. After we have shown them the preliminary and hybrid collection of Ghent-Turkish heritage objects youth organizations have thus far collected, one of the youngsters shrugs her shoulders indifferently and utters: "I'm sorry but why are we constantly talking about the first generation of labour migrants? Why are we in this project if it's going to be constantly about them? Why can't it be about us?" Seconds later another girl joins this opinion: "You act as if children of migrants taking up the role of translators and mediators is something from the past. I still translate for my mother."

\* Neslihan Doğan, 'coordinator of the Ghent Turkish heritage project, STAM - City Museum of Ghent.

The discussion that followed set the baseline for the temporary exhibition: 'Those who preserve, live on' ('Wie bewaart, die blijft!/Koru ve yaşat') we ended up building together.

## Making migration visible in the City Museum

It's 2020, STAM - City Museum Ghent celebrated its 10th anniversary and renewed its permanent exhibition. One of the exhibition rooms, 'The unbridled city', is dedicated to the last 200 years of urban history. The curators chose to tell important events or evolutions through objects. The renewal of the permanent exhibition was also an opportunity to address the diversity-related gap in the previous permanent exhibition. That's how objects like a drum of the lesbian-feminist samba band, Famba and



Youngsters having a brainstorm in a community centre about Ghent Turkish heritage and its significance in their daily lives. © Neslihan Doğan



*The collection of Turkish tapes represents the Turkish migration to Ghent in the permanent exhibition. © STAM*

a collection of Turkish tapes from several Turkish and Kurdish artists ended up in this part of the exhibition.

The story behind the collection of tapes was that children of guestworkers would buy lots of tapes of Turkish and Kurdish artists when they went to Turkey during their summer holidays. In an age before Turkish broadcasting channels and music streaming platforms, this was a way to stay connected to the motherland. In that way the collection of tapes and the story it represented about the Turkish impact on the city were deemed recognisable and generalizable. Choosing an object to represent a specific moment in urban history is also about not choosing so many other objects, stories and perspectives. The object-driven story-telling in the permanent exhibition has its limits. This was also the conclusion when two Ghentian doctors of Turkish descent engaged with the museum about this particular set of tapes.

### **High stakes or high engagement?**

As true advocates, they started the conversation on representation of Turkish heritage in the City Museum of Ghent. They did so simultaneously with both the museum itself, while also engaging Turkish communities in the city by means of their socio-cultural association 'Burgerplicht'. Quickly the discussion was no longer about showcasing

Turkish heritage but about collecting it. The story of Turkish migration to Ghent is well documented and known, but virtually no objects are held by official museums. What started with two doctors grew into a core team of 6 socio-cultural youth organizations. Who is better equipped than the current generation of Ghent-Turkish youths to build a Turkish Ghent heritage collection?

For the first time ever the youth associations started a 'from below' trajectory in search of Turkish-Ghent heritage at the City Museum. Many of these youth associations did not previously find their way to the museum. When talking about participation and co-creation often 'a seat at the table' is a much-referred-to metaphor. In reality, participatory success does not rely on the mere table or gathering itself, but rather lies in the bargaining power available for these non-professional heritage enthusiasts. Guarantees in this case were provided by Burgerplicht vzw on the one hand. They repeatedly vouched for the youngsters and thus themselves waged their huge cultural capital and personal network. While on the other hand, the museum took on an engaged migration historian as project-facilitator on Burgerplicht's request. Only then they deemed it possible to create a safe space for the youngsters in the museum.



*Some of the found Turkish Ghent heritage presented in the temporary exhibition 'Those who preserve, live on'. © Laura Vleugels*

### **Negotiating the angle of the exhibition**

In their quest for Turkish Ghent heritage, the youth associations, engaged from the onset in 2021, identified and questioned historic objects, discussed statements of significance, interviewed their family and presented their findings to a body of elders... Even though the youngsters are in charge during different stages, the project is unmistakably intergenerational. The youngsters ask their parents to join the interviews they have with their grandparents. They also consult the body of elders for their knowledge about a specific object, story, time, neighbourhood, craft or ritual. In doing so, the youngsters accumulated a hybrid collection. Only after the project arrived at this point, the idea of an exhibition was put back on the table.

The youngsters figured that we can't keep on collecting heritage from people without giving it back to the communities. It was important to keep the quest for

heritage as low profile as possible and with a high degree of openness. At the onset of the trajectory, a showcasing of objects was envisioned as a means to communicate about the trajectory. However, the overarching angle of such a small exhibition was a matter of much debate. The youngsters, the youth associations, the board of elders, Burgerplicht and the City Museum negotiated about the outcome. This was a challenging but crucial conversation.

Leading up to the exhibition, new individuals joined the existing group of youngsters, without firm affiliations to those organisations that were already involved. This November 2023 moment marked the second phase of our trajectory in which we no longer only talked about collecting but also about presenting. The quote in the introduction illustrates the diverse motivations of youngsters to participate. Some of them wanted to share a story about their grandparents, tied to an object they had found for the collection. Others wanted to contribute because for them the exhibition was a way to talk about

societal issues like sexism or racism. A third motivation was the perspective of the young creatives in our group, integrating the encountered heritage in their personal artistic practise.

That's how we built an exhibition about our preliminary findings, their significance and our participatory process. Our main goal however remains a collection from below brought together by youngsters of the Turkish diaspora in Ghent. This diverse collection is not only about representation but also about rewriting the story of Turkish migration in Ghent. It's not about diversifying the museum audience but about telling a more true story about the city. A story



*Promotional image for 'Those who preserve, live on'. Mister and Misses Demirci pose in a photostudio in Ghent after their reunion. © Yener Demirci*

that is not just about the first generation, but also about the people born and raised here and about girls that still translate for their mothers.



*Visitors admiring the Turkish wall tapestry with embroidered feminist critique, made by Kübra Kuş and Şeyma Ünlü. © Laura Vleugels*

# *Blocos de Memórias: Social Housing, Modern Architecture and Cultural Heritage* by Flavia Brito<sup>1</sup>

ANDRÉA DELAPLACE\*



The most common notion of cultural heritage that deserves to be listed and protected is associated with grandiose monuments and buildings, but any space considered historic based on its relationship with society must be conserved and treated as such. Therefore, architect Flávia Brito do Nascimento advocates greater attention to large housing complexes built between 1940 and 1960, as they reflect the way in which modern urbanism rationalized the

construction of social housing in accordance with a concept of cities accessible to workers.

Author of the book *Blocos de Memórias: Social Housing, Modern Architecture and Cultural Heritage* (Edusp, 2017), Flávia is preparing a new publication, which expands the approach to the topic. She is also a professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo (FAUUSP) and director of the institution's Cultural Preservation Center (CPC-USP).

In the book *Blocos de Memórias: Social Housing, Modern Architecture and Cultural Heritage*, the approach is based on the lack of recognition of the architecture of housing complexes as cultural heritage. Flávia Brito do Nascimento developed this reflection after a series of research projects she did since her master's degree, in which she discussed the role that social housing in modern architecture had in an international context and, more specifically, in Latin America. She participated in a large research group on the pioneers of social housing, coordinated by her colleague from FAU (Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism) at USP and advisor, Nabil Bonduki. The South American continent was one of those that built the most social housing between the 1940s and 1960s. In European countries such as France and Germany, this production is well recognized and considered heritage. In the Brazilian case, we have a modern architecture that is highly recognized internationally, as in the case of Brasília, with the architecture of Oscar Niemeyer and the works of Lúcio Costa. But social housing was left out and it took a long time to be recognized as heritage and part of the construction of our cities. The reflection of *Blocos de Memórias* is about this contradiction of Brazil being a country that listed as heritage works of modern architecture very

early, like Pampulha, which was not even inaugurated and was already listed, but which took a long time to recognize the production of Social occupation. Article 216 of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution expands the understanding of what can be considered heritage, including many things, and not just that which is very beautiful or very old. Heritage must be recognized on a societal basis. Housing is a great way to reflect on what we can consider heritage beyond the criteria that are commonly accepted, to open a discussion. This was the reflection I brought to *Blocos de Memórias*, when I also focused on a specific case: the Pedregulho Residential Complex, in Rio de Janeiro, which is our most important, most monumental, most studied work and which also has no recognition as national heritage.

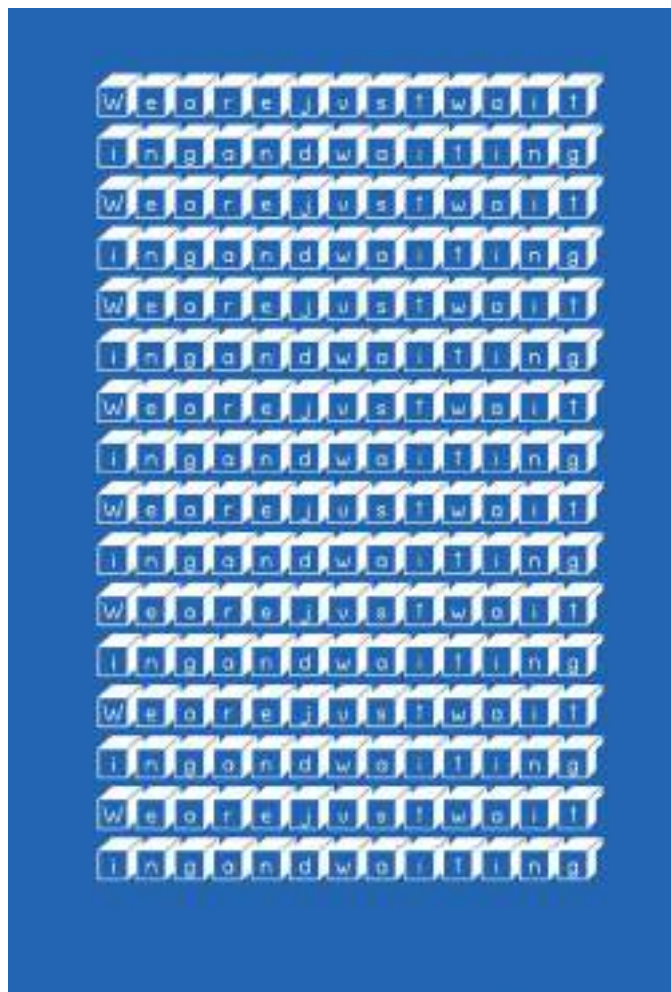
In her book she also develops how housing complexes contribute to telling the history (and stories) of a city. As housing complexes bear witness to the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, workers' struggles for housing and the role of the State in promoting social well-being. The work card, the regulation of working hours, holidays and housing promotion become part of a package of male and female workers' rights that should be the responsibility of the State. In Brazil, until the 1930s, housing was promoted by entrepreneurs who built workers' villages and rented the houses to workers. With urban growth and the demographic explosion of the 1940s and 1950s, the private sector was unable to meet all the demand and, at the same time, Vargas incorporated the transformation of the worker as part, in a certain way, of its civilizing mission. At this moment, Brazilian modern architecture is flourishing, so a team of professionals goes to the Ministry of Education and Public Health and makes several productions linked to the modern movement. Another group goes to the Ministry of Labor and, through the creation of retirement and pension institutes, reverts part of the resources to the construction of housing, which were for an elite of workers because they were unable to cover the demand. But, at that time, there was a bet that the State would be able to solve this problem. These housing complexes tell this story of the State's actions and a story of the modern movement in Brazil, which will encompass all this reflection and concern with the promotion of housing to try to rationalize construction, create means to build housing that was not just a cell but integrated into the city, with large open spaces, equipment, school, daycare center, health center, that in some way helped to train and support this worker. This is also important for understanding the history of Brazilian cities, because they are fragments of metropolises. There are housing complexes in São Paulo, in Mooca, for example, in neighborhoods that remain as vestiges of an area that was still expanding. In Rio de Janeiro, the suburb is industrial, with a lot of empty land, but statistical data show that, at a certain point in the 1950s, these complexes made up 40% of the occupation of the Rio suburb. In other metropolises in countries such as Chile, Argentina and Venezuela, there is a similar phenomenon. These movements are testimony to this way of thinking and building the city.

\* Andréa Delaplace, Editor of the CAMOC Review and CAMOC board member (2022-2025)

<sup>1</sup> This short book review is based on an interview with the author available on the Edusp website: <https://www.edusp.com.br/mais/para-autora-conjunto-habitacional-e-patrimonio-cultural-que-conta-a-historia-de-um-pais/>

# Moving Stories

JAYNE MURRAY\*



"Slum to Slum" and "Still Waiting" posters. © Jayne Murray

I am an artist working in Druids Heath, an estate in Birmingham UK, since 2017. Originally built as social housing much has been bought through the right to buy, excepting the tower blocks. While working across the community to provide an arts programme and more recently create an arts centre, I have spent the last three years working with residents in the tower blocks who are being cleared from their homes in the name of a regeneration programme for the estate. The project started as a way to survey and measure how people centred the clearance process and what effect it has on the health and well-being of those experiencing it. Conversations were ongoing with residents as they went through what can be a year-long process, charting the highs, the lows, and the difficulties. It is a period of uncertainty when people find themselves in limbo, with a loss of control over their lives. Insights and experiences, sometimes unique and sometimes shared were articulated and these were worked up into posters

and other visuals, as a means of sharing the findings and telling the stories.

The clearance process is taking place in the context of a housing crisis, where there are 24,000 households on the council's housing register in Birmingham. Unlike in 1966 no new housing provision has been made for those being cleared from the blocks, which puts added pressure on a system that is already hugely strained.

The work is currently on show at the National Trust Back to Backs in Birmingham. The back to backs story ends in 1966 when they were deemed unfit for human habitation, and the communities were cleared to new estates such as Druids Heath, during large slum clearances with investment by central government. Other parallels that we see today are overcrowding, poverty and poor housing conditions.

It is hoped by working with the Back to Backs site and the parallels between the experiences of the working class then and now that we will raise awareness of the housing issue and possible solutions to it.

\* Jayne Murray, Lead Artist, Druids Heath, Birmingham, England.

# International Workshop on Cultural Heritage, 2023 (Baeza, Spain)

XIMO REVERT\*



Photo of one of the presentations at University of Baeza, 2023. © Ximo Revert

## ***El patrimonio capacitante***

*Hay una dimensión menos mercantil y más humanizadora en nuestra relación con el patrimonio cultural entendido como bien común. Hablamos de pensar y de medir nuestra manera de conjugar el patrimonio desde las capacidades y funcionamientos esenciales para un desarrollo humano y sostenible. Tenemos derecho a ello.*

*Este pasado mes de julio de 2023 se ha celebrado en Baeza (Jaén, España) un Workshop Internacional sobre Patrimonio Cultural. Baeza es reconocida desde 2003, junto a la ciudad de Úbeda, Patrimonio Mundial por UNESCO. Es además una de las sedes de la Universidad Internacional de Andalucía (UNIA), que viene programando cursos especializados y encuentros científicos dirigidos a reflexionar sobre el hecho patrimonial de comunidades y gentes.*

\* Ximo Revert, Dept. H<sup>a</sup> del Arte Universitat de València  
Co-director de IWCH 2023

## ***Cultural heritage & capabilities: the cultural heritage that enables us***

There is a less commercial and more humanising dimension to our relationship with cultural heritage understood as a common good. We are talking about, thinking about, and measuring our way of combining heritage from the capacities and functions that are essential for human and sustainable development. We have the right to do so.

In July 2023, an International Workshop on Cultural Heritage was held in Baeza (Jaén, Spain). Baeza has been recognized since 2003, along with the city of Úbeda, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is also one of the sites of the International University of Andalusia (UNIA), which has been programming specialised courses and scientific meetings aimed at reflecting on the heritage of communities and people.



*En este último encuentro internacional el debate (con sus ponencias y comunicaciones) ha girado en torno al tema de "Patrimonio, ética y sostenibilidad. Bienes comunes culturales ante la Agenda 2030". Ha sido dirigido por los profesores Ximo Revert y Ester Alba (Universitat de València), y por Maurizio Vitella (Università degli Studi di Palermo).*

*El objetivo de este Workshop ha estado centrado en colocar los temas de patrimonio cultural (identificación, conservación, gestión, comunicación y uso) en las estrategias de desarrollo humano sostenible. El patrimonio cultural resulta un ineludible aliado para avanzar en el cumplimiento de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), aunque la cultura y el patrimonio estén escasamente representados y pensados en el relato de la Agenda 2030. El patrimonio cultural, como expresión secular de la creatividad humana, no puede ser ajeno a las políticas públicas y privadas a favor del desarrollo humano sostenible.*

*Muchas políticas públicas y privadas pueden usar el patrimonio cultural para promover un enfoque de sostenibilidad y cultivar en la sociedad una conciencia de desarrollo. Al fin y al cabo, ese patrimonio debe entenderse como una herencia de creatividad y de soluciones experimentadas con éxito por nuestros antepasados para seguir adelante con la vida.*

*El punto de partida ha sido entender que la humanidad, y sus comunidades y pueblos, son cada vez más conscientes del aporte que la existencia y disfrute de bienes comunes culturales tiene para preservar su desarrollo digno. Hemos tratado de comprender los bienes del patrimonio (tangibles o intangibles) como parte del remanente de bienes comunes a nuestra disposición, como dotaciones que nos habilitan a lograr y mejorar nuestros funcionamientos valiosos y capacidades, empoderando así a las gentes para constituir su propio proyecto de desarrollo humano sostenible personal y colectivamente.*

*Desde esta perspectiva catorce ponencias y decenas de pósteres se han sucedido y discutido en las cuatro sesiones principales que han vertebrado los debates: Derecho a la cultura y al patrimonio vs Derecho al desarrollo; Ética, educación y patrimonio cultural; Sostenibilidad e innovación: cultura y patrimonio; y por último el patrimonio cultural y natural como bienes comunes y capacidades.*

*Entre los objetivos de este encuentro ha estado ir más allá de la mercantilización del producto patrimonial y superar la visión tradicional que viene asociando el uso del*

In this workshop, the debate revolved around the theme of "Heritage, ethics and sustainability. Cultural Commons in the face of the 2030 Agenda". The workshop was organised and directed by professors Ximo Revert and Ester Alba (Universitat de València) and Maurizio Vitella (Università degli Studi di Palermo).

The objective was to place cultural heritage issues (identification, conservation, management, communication and use) within the context of sustainable human development strategies. Cultural heritage is a natural ally to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), although culture and heritage are scarcely represented and thought about in the narrative of the 2030 Agenda. Cultural heritage, as a secular expression of human creativity, cannot be alienated from public and private policies in favour of sustainable human development.

Many public and private policies can use cultural heritage to promote a sustainability approach and cultivate a development consciousness in society. After all, this heritage must be understood as a heritage of creativity and of solutions successfully experienced by our ancestors to move forward with life.

The starting point was to understand that humanity, and its communities and peoples, is increasingly aware of the contribution that the existence and enjoyment of cultural commons have to preserve dignified development. We have sought to understand heritage assets (tangible or intangible) as part of the remnant of commons at our disposal, as endowments that enable us to achieve and improve our valuable functioning and capacities, thus empowering people to constitute their own project of sustainable human development personally and collectively.

From this perspective, fourteen papers and dozens of posters were presented and discussed in the four main sessions that structured the debates: The right to culture and heritage vs. the right to development; Ethics, education and cultural heritage; Sustainability and innovation: culture and heritage; and finally, cultural and natural heritage as commons and capacities. Among the objectives of this meeting was to go beyond the commodification of the heritage product and overcome the traditional vision that has associated the use of heritage as a tourist resource (often despite the very communities that sustain it).

On the first thematic axis, the voices of Jesús Prieto de Pedro, Beatriz Barreiro and Andréa Delaplace highlighted

*patrimonio como recurso turístico (muchas veces a pesar de las propias comunidades que lo sustentan). Sobre el primer eje temático las voces de Jesús Prieto de Pedro, Beatriz Barreiro y Andréa Delaplace pusieron de relieve los avances que el ámbito jurídico, el tejido social y las instituciones van haciendo a la hora de armonizar los derechos de gentes y su ineludible participación en el hecho patrimonial que les rodea, incluyendo procedencias diversas: la figura jurídica de la función social que debe cumplir el patrimonio reflejada en numerosas cartas magnas de algunos países, las convenciones y tratados internacionales ratificados y la solución jurídica internacional a algunos conflictos sociales por cuestiones de patrimonio, centraron el debate sobre hechos como el genocidio cultural. Las cuestiones migratorias ponen de manifiesto la necesidad de avanzar en la reformulación de muchos discursos patrimoniales y museísticos. A la gobernanza de las administraciones públicas se les reclama ejercer su capacidad de acrecentar más patrimonio y ponerlo a disposición de la ciudadanía para su uso a través de planes de participación.*

*En el segundo eje, las ponencias de Rafael Cejudo (Córdoba, España), Jorge Fernández (Academia de España, Roma), Manel Miró (Barcelona, Catalunya) pusieron de relieve la urgencia de identificar las expresiones del patrimonio cultural como bienes comunes de las gentes desde los que fomentar el arraigo, la comprensión de las razones culturales y de vida entre personas que conviven en un mismo territorio con procedencias diferentes; el debate giró en torno a la dimensión ética ineludible que conlleva la presencia, los discursos y la gestión patrimoniales.*

*Las aportaciones al tercer tema eje del Workshop versaron, en las aportaciones de Ester Alba (València), Maurizio Vitella (Palermo), Mar Gaitán (México) y Paulo Bernardes (Portugal), sobre la inequidad existente todavía en muchas declaraciones y recomendaciones internacionales en las que no se tiene en cuenta la perspectiva de género o la accesibilidad a un patrimonio secuestrado. Las nuevas museologías críticas demuestran el rol activo que pueden llegar a tener los museos participando, fomentando y dando luz a reflexiones de la comunidad, buscando puntos de encuentro, la identificación de discursos compartidos y construyendo significados conjuntos entre todos los sectores sociales concernidos.*

*La última sesión evidenció a través de la voz de Gustavo Pereira (Uruguay), Joao Teixeira (Porto, Portugal), Ángel Isac (Granada, España) y Ximo Revert (València) cómo*

the advances that the legal field, the social fabric and institutions are making when it comes to harmonizing the rights of peoples and their unavoidable participation in the heritage that surrounds them, including diverse origins: The legal concept of the social function that heritage must fulfil, reflected in numerous Magna Cartas, ratified international conventions and treaties and the international legal solution to some social conflicts over heritage issues, focused the debate on events such as cultural genocide. Migration issues highlight the need to move forward in the reformulation of many heritage and museum discourses. Public administration governance is required to exercise its ability to increase wealth and make it available to citizens to ensure its use by citizens through participation schemes.

In the second axis, the presentations by Rafael Cejudo (Córdoba, Spain), Jorge Fernández (Academy of Spain, Rome), and Manel Miró (Barcelona, Catalonia) highlighted the urgency of identifying expressions of cultural heritage as common goods of people from which to promote a sense of identity and understanding of cultural and life reasons between people who live in the same territory but have different origins. The debate revolved around the inescapable ethical dimension that entails presence, discourses and heritage management.

The contributions to the third central theme of the workshop were by Ester Alba (Valencia), Maurizio Vitella (Palermo), Mar Gaitán (Mexico) and Paulo Bernardes (Portugal), on the inequality that still exists in many international declarations and recommendations in which the gender perspective or accessibility to a sequestered heritage is not taken into account. The new critical museologies demonstrate the active role that museums can have by participating, encouraging and giving light to community reflections, looking for meeting points, the identification of shared discourses and constructing joint meanings among all the social sectors concerned.

The last session showed through the voice of Gustavo Pereira (Uruguay), Joao Teixeira (Porto, Portugal), Ángel Isac (Granada, Spain) and Ximo Revert (Valencia) how cultural heritage can function as cohesion and dignification of public space, urban and rural space; the opportunity to align the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda with the possible uses of heritage through the identification of valuable functions and personal and collective capacities, proposing their identification and incorporating into cultural heritage inventories not only the historical, artistic or subjective dimension, but also

*el patrimonio cultural puede funcionar como cohesión y dignificación del espacio público, del espacio urbano y rural; se hizo manifiesto la oportunidad de alinear las metas y objetivos de la Agenda 2030 con los usos posibles del patrimonio a través de la identificación de funcionamientos valiosos y capacidades personales y colectivas, proponiéndose su identificación e incorporando a los inventarios de patrimonio cultural no solo la dimensión histórica, artístico u objetual, sino también su dimensión capacitante para las gentes como instrumento de planificación de políticas públicas, socializando medios de producción y uso cultural.*

*El contenido de las sesiones de trabajo, junto a las diversas aportaciones en forma de pósteres, se publicarán tras el actual proceso de edición. Una reflexión conjunta vino a cerrar estas sesiones de trabajo:*

*“Entendemos el patrimonio cultural como expresión de capacidades colectivas orientadas a la autonomía y la libertad individual y al progreso social, siempre a través del diálogo activo, la inclusión y la participación. El patrimonio se constituye, así, como posibilitador de logros valiosos de las personas y las comunidades en el marco de los Derechos Humanos”. Baeza, julio de 2023.*

its enabling dimension for people as an instrument for planning public policies, became apparent, socialising means of production and cultural use.

The content of the working sessions, together with the various contributions in the form of posters, will be published after the current editing process. A joint reflection closed these working sessions: "We understand cultural heritage as an expression of collective capacities aimed at autonomy and individual freedom and social progress, always through active dialogue, inclusion and participation. Heritage is thus constituted as an enabler of valuable achievements of individuals and communities within the framework of Human Rights." Baeza, July 2023.



Group photo of the participants of Baeza's Workshop, University of Baeza 2023. © Ximo Revert

# Notes from MINOM 2024 (Catania, Sicily, Italy)

FEDERICA SANTAGATI, GIUSY PAPPALARDO, MANUELINA MARIA DUARTE CÂNDIDO\*

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Created in 1984 in Quebec (Canada) in continuity with the principles expressed within the Chile Roundtable (1972), the International Movement for a New Museology (MINOM) emerged with the aim of extending the function of museums beyond “its traditional attributions of identification, conservation and education, to a broader set of social practices [...] for the development of populations, reflecting the driving principles of their evolution while associating them with projects for the future”<sup>2</sup>.

With this aim, MINOM had a progressive and regular inflection towards the global south, in the attempt to try to break with the hegemony of museology from the northern hemisphere<sup>3</sup>. Notwithstanding, the north-south dichotomy is not only a geographic but also a social condition to be tackled at large in various contexts of the world, where conditions of exclusion, deprivation, and marginalization exist, despite the hemisphere where they emerge.

Forty years after the Quebec Declaration<sup>4</sup>, after the approval of the new museum definition at ICOM Conference in Prague (2022), and the subject of the International Museums Day 2023 “Museums, Sustainability and Wellbeing”, in the light of the current challenges that societies at large are facing, the MINOM 2024 Conference has been hosted in Sicily, Southern Italy, in the city of Catania and its surroundings, as an opportunity to nurture a new, wide reflection about the social function of museums in various contexts of the globe.

Referring to Márcio d’Olne Campos’s expression *sulear*, that recalls the expression of reorienting from a Southern perspective, this conference is thus aimed at discussing if

and how museums – in alliance with other social actors, – and museology – in alliance with other disciplinary fields, especially with urban planning – can contribute to reversing various forms of subalternity. Museums of cities are welcome to join to contribute to the broad debate opened before, during, and after the conference.

## 2. Why Sicily for MINOM 2024: rationale of a choice

The idea of hosting MINOM 2024 in Sicily came after a first set of initiatives aimed at creating trans-national and trans-disciplinary connections<sup>5</sup> focused on the transformative role that museums<sup>6</sup> can have in contributing to tackling pressing social issues for underrepresented communities<sup>7</sup>.

The choice to host MINOM 2024 in a southern region within the so-called global north – Sicily – is aimed at stressing, and practically exploring, the possibilities of reactions to conditions of exclusion, deprivation, and marginalization, and their context-based specificities.

In Sicily, echoes of the so-called *Questione Meridionale* are still in place<sup>8</sup>, despite years of massive State investments<sup>9</sup> that were meant to create the conditions for a national balance, and other recent policies in the framework of the EU territorial cohesion.

Alongside alarming socio-economic criticalities<sup>10</sup>, cultural poverty is a key issue for the Sicilian island. Here, according to ISTAT 2018, 80% of the population does not visit museums, 70% does not read books, and 55% does not even go to cinemas<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Although this article is the result of a collaboration amongst the authors, the Introduction is based on a contribution developed by Manuelina Maria Duarte Cândido, Section 2 has been developed by Giusy Pappalardo, and Section 3 has been developed by Federica Santagati. The authors warmly thank Mario Chagas, Mario Moutinho, and Aida Rechená for their precious contribution to the development of the reflections at the base of this text, and for the joint organization of MINOM 2024 in Catania.

<sup>2</sup> MINOM Quebec Declaration, 1984, [http://www.minom-icom.net/\\_old/signud/DOC%20PDF/198402504.pdf](http://www.minom-icom.net/_old/signud/DOC%20PDF/198402504.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Chagas, M. (n.d.) Le mouvement international pour une nouvelle muséologie et la Déclaration de Córdoba – Argentine. *Les cahiers de muséologie* 1.

<sup>4</sup> See note 2.

<sup>5</sup> Duarte Cândido, M.M. and Pappalardo, G. (eds.). (2022). *Babel Tower: museum people in dialogue*. Paris: ICOM/ICOFOM. This collaboration has been also conducted in the framework of the Italian-Brazil Cooperation Charter. <https://sites.google.com/view/drops-platform/cooperation/italy-brasil-cooperation>

<sup>6</sup> De Varine, H. (2017). *L'écomusée singulier et pluriel*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

<sup>7</sup> Primo, J., and Moutinho, M. (eds.). (2021). *Sociomuseologia: para uma leitura crítica do mundo*. Lisbon: Edições Universitárias Lusófonas.

<sup>8</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/graph/poster2021/eu27.png](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/graph/poster2021/eu27.png)

<sup>9</sup> Nucifora, M. (2022). *Il coordinamento impossibile: tecnocrazia, amministrazione pubblica e regionalismo nell'intervento per lo sviluppo del Mezzogiorno (1943-2013)*. Milan: FrancoAngeli.

<sup>10</sup> Sicily was the Italian region with the highest index (41%) of population at risk of poverty in Italy in 2021. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/647996/at-risk-of-poverty-rate-italy-by-region/>

<sup>11</sup> ISTAT, *Statistiche culturali*, tav. 5.15, <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/251882>.

This pairs with other issues, such school dropout: Sicily has the highest national educational poverty index in Italy, followed by Calabria and Campania<sup>12</sup>. This is a condition that – combined with lack of opportunities, increasing poverty rates, and the use of violence – generates a situation of great alarm about the future of children in fragile conditions<sup>13</sup>.

### 3. Catania, the Benedictine Monastery and the neighbourhood Antico Corso

Catania is a city of about 300,000 inhabitants, on the slopes of Mount Etna<sup>14</sup> (the tallest active volcano in Europe), and has a UNESCO Heritage late baroque city center. Beyond its astonishing heritage<sup>15</sup>, the socio-economic fabric *silently* gives an example of what was mentioned above: high levels of school dropouts and juvenile deviance, with a significant rate in the historic center. Catania is the only city in Italy wherein there are two juvenile penal institutions in about 20 km<sup>2</sup>.

According to ISTAT 2019, in Catania 26% of the population lives in “relative poverty” and 27% in “absolute poverty”; its educational poverty index is similarly high and on par with the level of the Sicily region: about 75% of minors are excluded from cultural services (libraries, museums, concerts, reading, cinema, etc.), and 50% from sports and internet connection.<sup>16</sup> Only 19% of the local population is satisfied with the national indicators of the Equitable and Sustainable Well-being Index<sup>17</sup>, and thus fully enjoys cultural activities.

In this context, the Benedictine Monastery (within a UNESCO area since 2002<sup>18</sup>) was the venue for MINOM 2024 and is a university campus located in a neighborhood called Antico Corso, that has just few cultural facilities for young people. Back in the eighteenth century, at the time of the rebuilding of the Benedictine monumental complex, the neighborhood was already one of the poorest in the city: the reconstruction of the Monastery only moved



*The Benedictine Monastery from the outside. Photo by the authors*

the most socially degraded area further west, which even today is difficult to engage in cultural initiatives.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, upon the recent closure of three hospitals located here, no healthcare centers or social services were replaced to support residents’ needs; as a result, several economic activities had to close. Organized crime (the mafia) took advantage of this vacuum.

According to a survey conducted in 2018,<sup>20</sup> out of a sample of 100 people living in the neighborhood, it turns out that a large proportion of the residents are not aware that the entrance to the Monastery is free. In fact, 44% says they believe that entering inside the Monastery is reserved exclusively for university graduates, civil servants and tourists.<sup>21</sup> The “barriers”<sup>22</sup> that impede the visit to the Monastery by the residents of the neighborhood are therefore social barriers: according to many of the residents is impossible to go inside without a permit<sup>23</sup>. Some of them do not associate the name of the Monastery with the place (they do not know its correct name).

57% of the respondents do not possess a high school diploma, and nearly 70% of the entire sample in the past year have not participated in even one cultural activity.<sup>24</sup> It is significant to note that a large proportion of the sample consists of unemployed people.

<sup>12</sup> Save the Children (2022), <https://s3.savethechildren.it/public/files/uploads/pubblicazioni/alla-ricercadel-tempo-perduto.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> See Save The Children (2019), [https://s3.savethechildren.it/public/files/uploads/pubblicazioni/x-atlante-dellinfanzia-rischio-il-tempo-dei-bambini\\_2.pdf](https://s3.savethechildren.it/public/files/uploads/pubblicazioni/x-atlante-dellinfanzia-rischio-il-tempo-dei-bambini_2.pdf); Santagati, Federica (2023). “L’Arte e i musei, veicoli di sensibilizzazione sociale”, in Pitotto (ed.), *MHS XXIV*, Mantova, 57-70.

<sup>14</sup> Etna is UNESCO Heritage Site for its outstanding universal value, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1427/>

<sup>15</sup> Catania has a late baroque city center, considered part of an UNESCO area, because it is one of the late baroque towns of the Val di Noto (Caltagirone, Militello Val di Catania, Catania, Modica, Noto, Palazzolo, Ragusa and Scicli), a unique UNESCO heritage. See <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1024>

<sup>16</sup> BES - ISTAT (2019), [https://www.istat.it/it/files/2019/12/Bes\\_2019.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files/2019/12/Bes_2019.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> See note 15.

<sup>19</sup> The Antico Corso, despite being in the historic center, has many characteristics of social and economic degradation typically seen more in the suburbs (like in central districts of other southern cities).

<sup>20</sup> Fichera, G. (2017-2018.) Il paradosso del centro storico di Catania, Indagine esplorativa tra patrimonio artistico e povertà educativa, tesi di laurea, Dipt. DEI, Università degli Studi di Catania.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>22</sup> On access and barriers see Sandell, R. (2006). Misurarsi con la diversità e l’uguaglianza: il ruolo dei musei. In Bodo, S., and Cifarelli, M.R. (eds), *Quando la cultura fa la differenza: Patrimonio, arti e media nella società multiculturale*. Rome: Meltemi, pp.136-148.

<sup>23</sup> Fichera (2017-2018), p.92.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*



*The Benedictine Monastery from the inside. Walking through its gardens. Photo credit: Officine Culturali (top). Educational activities at the Monastery. Photo credit: Officine Culturali. © Salvo Puccio (bottom)*

Antico Corso, etc.) have been working<sup>27</sup> to create alternative conditions.

Hosting MINOM 2024<sup>28</sup> here was, therefore, an opportunity to discuss this and other similar contexts, questioning the role of museums in cities, insurgent practices, and museum/heritage people as catalysts for change.

Catania has welcomed participants willing to share their experiences and reflections on the



In the neighborhood, the socioeconomic situation with the consequences of COVID has been worsened, as not all families in economic hardship can secure a useful web connection for their children to attend school classes remotely<sup>25</sup>; therefore, the level of educational poverty increased, as the barriers of access to heritage education activities did.<sup>26</sup>

### Final remarks

As a response, local organizations based in the neighborhood (Officine Culturali, Comitato Popolare

topic of “Rethinking museologies as transformative transdisciplinary alliances for more just societies”, in a non-hierarchical and inclusive gathering.

The outcomes of the conference and of the preparatory workshop – held in another marginal neighborhood but still with enormous potential (Librino) – will be published and disseminated soon, to continue to nurture reflections on social museology and its various practices.

<sup>25</sup> Santagati, F. (2021). Il Monastero dei Benedettini di Catania: fruizione, pubblico, comunicazione. *Bollettino Telematico dell'Arte* 905, <https://www.bta.it/txt/a0/09/bta00905.html>

<sup>26</sup> Bollo, A. (2020). Processi Partecipativi Sul bordo del cambiamento: Pratiche, transizioni e sfide della cultura ai tempi della pandemia. *AgCult*, <https://agcult.it/a/28586/2020-12-01/processi-partecipativi-sul-bordo-del-cambiamento>

<sup>27</sup> See for example: <http://www.zammumultimedia.it/unni-stai-di-casa-i-racconti-del-quartiere.htm>

<sup>28</sup> The call, the updates and details are published here: <http://www.minom-icom.net/noticias/save-date-international-conference-minom-2024-catania-sicilia-it>. MINOM 2024 has the support of the ICOM Strategic Allocation Review Committee to support young scholars in the participation of the Conference.

# Museums as common spaces for living together in a context of crisis

ANDRÉA DELAPLACE\*

If the traditional mission of museums remains fundamentally centred on the safeguarding of tangible and intangible heritage for future generations, these institutions are, nevertheless, increasingly confronted with political, social, economic and cultural issues. During discussions on the new definition of museums within ICOM<sup>1</sup>, we have seen the emergence of a debate on the role of museums as safe spaces for critical dialogue and social justice.

While many history museums until now offered a single narrative story, generally based on an official vision (supported by elites and other government institutions), today, multivocality, advocated by social museology since the 70s and 80s, is at the centre of the new exhibitions of numerous history and society museums.

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<sup>1</sup> Article published on ICOM's website on 24/08/2022. <https://icom.museum/fr/news/icom-approuve-une-nouvelle-definition-de-musee>

In organising the conference “Museums as common spaces for living together in a context of crisis by - economic, identity, cultural, ecological, political, diplomatic”, held on 23 April 2024 at the MEM - Centre des mémoires montréalaises<sup>2</sup>, I wanted to highlight how museums are becoming common spaces for living together (or the concept of *vivre-ensemble*)<sup>3</sup> in our highly polarised contemporary societies. However, this concept remains challenges for museums to integrate the stories often deemed to be those of “others” (e.g. those of indigenous, immigrant populations, etc. – in other words,

<sup>2</sup> The MEM - Centre des mémoires montréalaises, previously called Centre d'histoire de Montréal, is the local city museum. It reopened to the public in September 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Living together in a city is a dynamic process that all stakeholders put in place to promote inclusion, as well as the feeling of security and belonging. Promoting Living Together means recognizing and respecting all forms of diversity, fighting against discrimination and facilitating harmonious cohabitation. In the implementation of living together, the different stakeholders in the community work together to facilitate the emergence of common values which contribute to peace and social cohesion.



Opening of the conference on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2024. © Institut du Patrimoine/UQAM

## CONFERENCE REVIEW

ethnic, racial and cultural minorities) into the grand national narrative.

In the context of postcolonial thought, and following the various “decolonisation” movements, museums are becoming aware of the diversity of historical stories as well as the different narrative perspectives that can coexist within their museographic discourse. Furthermore, museums must deal with collections that take cultural diversity into account. This is one of the great challenges facing the museum world today. The main objective of this conference is therefore to show how museums approach the question of the representation of “the other” or “otherness” in our contemporary societies.

This “other” can be the immigrant (theme of my PhD research) the indigenous who has historically been relegated to a category of otherness (through interpretations such as the myth of the noble savage) since the “period of discoveries” (since 1492). Reinforced by colonial processes, a system of exclusion, oppression and exploitation of these different indigenous communities throughout the American continents and beyond.

But, if we push our thinking further, processes of exclusion are developing in our contemporary societies polarised, divided and deeply fractured by “culture wars” at an astonishing speed. Exclusion is present whenever there is a divergence in lifestyles or political visions. Issues related to immigration, gender minorities or the recognition of systemic racism have become political and ideological disagreements.

This situation becomes more difficult in the context of the economic fragility that we have observed since the Covid-19 pandemic and the increase in the cost of living around the world caused by inflation, as well as the precariousness of the labour market. The question of housing has also become crucial in several large cities around the world (Montreal, New York City, Paris, London, São Paulo among others).

It is in these perspectives that history and society museums can play a conciliatory and benevolent role by favouring reconciliation in our fractured societies. The museology of reconciliation (Galla, 1995, Guzin-Lukic, 2001) suggests that museums can integrate the idea of reconciling different multicultural and multi-ethnic communities.

The creation of a dialogue between the different communities that make up our contemporary societies is at the centre of numerous exhibitions in Montreal and Quebec museums, as demonstrated by texts on their websites. The McCord Stewart Museum describes its

permanent exhibition as “driven by the hope of initiating a dialogue for better mutual understanding”, thus proposing “a real encounter.” Or, the Musée de la civilisation which uses the tagline “Experiencing the world...together.” Or the MEM - Center for Montreal Memories: “You are the history of Montreal, together let’s talk about you!” (Websites consulted in November 2023.)

Social museology emphasises the participation of different communities and populations from territories (Brulon Soares, 2015). If we consider this influential museological point of view in Quebec, we can pursue a more in-depth analysis of the concept of living together in history and society museums.

The introductory panel at the conference comprised of three presentations that complemented each other and set, the conceptual frame for the two roundtables:

In a talk entitled "Museums and social issues: what priorities?", Jean-Michel Tobelem (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) explored how museums are the subject of intense demands, in the educational, social, economic, diplomatic and even environmental fields. Faced with these various injunctions, and while the means at their disposal remain limited by increasing budgetary constraints - with some exceptions - how can we avoid the dispersion of actions, the simple response to fashion movements or the effect of pressure from more active players? or less well intentioned? In the context of cultural rights, DEAI logic, participatory approaches and the rise of digital technology, is there therefore an original path for museums to favour?

In his introduction to the round table, Louis Jacob (UQAM) examined the notion of “cultural citizenship”. This set of practices and discourses, which can first be placed in the extension of fundamental rights, is now an essential element of individual and collective identities, and of the regulatory mechanisms of States which intend to enforce the promotion of cultural pluralism. The call for participation and expression leads to new complications or tensions, as well as notable changes in practices, in cultural and artistic networks, as well as in cultural institutions. He then proposed some avenues for reflection based on recent work which highlights the issues of cultural citizenship at different scales, and which questions the persistence of social inequalities, exclusion and discrimination.

Finally, Raymond Montpetit (UQAM) showed how a renewal of museology took place in Quebec, in the wake of the Quiet Revolution and Expo 67, by examining its three



main actors: 1) the interventions of the Ministry of Culture, 2) Parks Canada and the current of interpretation, and 3) French ecomuseology. Without a long museum tradition, Quebec has succeeded, beyond utopian discourse, in implementing an interpretive and social museology, at the service of its visitors and the community, now well embodied in several museums which have been able to contribute and innovate.

The first roundtable was dedicated to the concepts of “otherness and reconciliation”: highlighting museums that work in co-creation with communities. This roundtable focused on the representation of otherness and the processes of decolonization and reconciliation in history and society museums. Decolonial thinking, with its increasing emphasis on notions such as intersectionality and intergenerational ethics, introduces new and creative ways to reinterpret this relationship and (re)define museums as proactive agents in quest for social and environmental justice. Such a shift in thinking requires repositioning museum efforts, and the curatorial work carried out within (and through) museums, as a means of preserving the continuity of different epistemologies and worldviews. In this context, co-creation with communities becomes an essential practice. The circulation of knowledge and the exchange of professional practices have helped evolve the processes of exhibition creation. As calls for the “decolonization” of knowledge, collections and the management of heritage organisations multiply, institutions are called to modify their perspectives and participate in conversations around cultural rights, post-colonialism, restitution, appropriation, interreligious dialogue, etc.

This roundtable offered a space for reflection on how to articulate so-called “minority” stories that diverge from “official” stories and interculturality/cultural diversity in museums (collections, temporary and permanent exhibitions), as well as museum-organised cultural events (festivals, mediation activities, partnerships with associative events), in order to consolidate practices of co-collection, co-conservation, co-mediation and co-creation.

Participants reflected on the evolution of institutions and their cultural missions, thus making it possible to renew approaches to cooperation, collaboration, participation and co-production in the field of heritage and museums. What are the new practices that make it possible to make cultural institutions (museums) places of “reconciliation” and intercultural dialogue? The speakers included Catherine Charlebois, head of exhibitions and collections at the MEM - Centre des mémoires montréalaises; Matthieu Gill-Bougie, indigenous affairs advisor at the Musée de la Civilisation; and Éric Giroux, director of the Écomusée du fier monde. The chair of this roundtable was Nada Lukic Guzin, a professor at the UQO and specialist on the concept of museology of reconciliation and migration studies.

The second roundtable on “living together and citizenship” was moderated by Laurier Turgeon, professor at Laval University. It focused on the concepts of “living together”, memory (collecting the memories of city residents) and citizenship. The concept of living together is at the centre of the construction and maintenance of our societies. This key concept is linked to principles which structure our contemporary societies such as democracy and respect for human rights. These principles generate fundamental values such as respect for human dignity, pluralism/multiculturalism, non-discrimination, tolerance, social justice, solidarity, gender equality and economic equity.

In the field of management of heritage sites and events, local, national and international scales are increasingly intertwined, while studies conclude that democratisation and cultural democracy remain a challenge. The speakers thus discussed professional practices which aim at real co-creation work with the different audiences and communities who frequent (or not) the museum as, for example, neighbourhood associations, city residents, etc. The emergence of the construction of knowledge/ memories shared by citizens and the search for “alternative” meeting places to heritage institutions, such as, for example, the increased role of cultural events in city spaces like (festivals, live art shows, cultural “Olympics” and cities of culture).

How can the concepts of citizenship and interculturalism (re)define relationships within a rapidly changing heritage and museum sector (in the face of the multiple crises mentioned in the introduction to the conference)? What are the new practices that make it possible to engage cultural institutions as before places for the democratisation of culture? How can the museum be an actor in citizenship education? In what way does the museum participate in learning to “live together” in our fractured and increasingly polarised contemporary societies?

For these discussions, we had the help from the Canadian Museum of history with Sandra M. Zapata, exhibition manager, the Musée de la civilisation with Sophie Giroux, head of cultural mediation and education, the Musée Pointe à Callière with Katy Tari, and Eugénie Forno and Mohamed Fariji: creators of the Citizens museum project of collective city memories. The scientific conclusion of the event was held by professor Yves Bergeron, and director of the Institut du Patrimoine de l’UQAM.

As a conclusion to the discussions of this conference, we can say that today museums are at the heart of processes of co-creation, identity negotiation and the promotion of living together. By evolving from simple guardians of heritage to inclusive and participatory spaces, they



MEM - Centre des mémoires montréalaises. © Sylvain Légaré, 2024

play a crucial role in building a more equitable and harmonious society. The challenges are numerous, but so are the opportunities for transformation and growth. By continuing to engage with communities, rethink their practices and promote inclusion, museums can truly become places of positive power and peaceful coexistence for all.

### Representation and Inclusion

The transformation of museums into spaces for co-creation, identity negotiation and living together is not without challenges. Museums must navigate complex power dynamics, balance competing interests, and often face financial and institutional constraints.

The representation of different cultures and identities in museums is a political act. The choices of what is exhibited, how it is exhibited, and by whom these decisions are made, reflect power dynamics. By giving a voice to “marginalized communities”, museums can play a key role in recognizing and valuing these identities. For example, highlighting non-Western cultures and collaborating with experts and indigenous communities to ensure authentic and respectful representation.

### Educational and Community Programs

Educational and community programs play an essential role in promoting living together. By organizing workshops, conferences and cultural events, museums create opportunities for visitors to come together and engage in dialogue on current topics of common interest. These initiatives promote intercultural understanding and strengthen the social fabric. In the coming months, a scientific article reuniting the main discussions of the event will be published.

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# Four important lessons I take away from CAMOC in New York

METTE STAUERSBØL MOGENSEN\*

Every major city in Denmark has a city museum. A museum that communicates and collects the city's history. With some generalization, city museums in Denmark have for many years resembled each other, in terms of both collections and exhibitions. In recent years there has been a tendency for city museums to focus on historical features related to a local person, a local cultural environment, or a theme with a special connection to that city, instead of the broader city history. When I became responsible for the development of the city museum in Odense, Denmark's third largest city, in 2023, I needed to look outside Denmark to see how other city museums around the world are developing. Therefore, the CAMOC conference in New York was a great opportunity to gain insight into this topic. In the following writeup, I will highlight points from some of the many exciting and inspiring ideas from the conference, which I have already taken home with me to Odense's city museum, Møntergården.

## **The city museum should be a place that facilitates sharing of stories.**

Conference keynote Garnette Cadogan opened the conference with several interesting observations about the city and its museum. One of his observations was about the role of the museum as a place that creates space for stories to be shared and a place that creates curiosity. This observation was made in a number of the conference presentations.

One example was the city museum in Montreal, Canada, MEM - Centre des mémoires montréalaises. Catherine Charlebois presented their development work in preparation for the museum's reopening in 2023. MEM made two interesting choices: The museum was moved away from the tourist center of the city and into an area where more of the city's inhabitants spend their daily lives, based on the idea that the city museum should be where the people were. Therefore, the museum was moved to an area where there was a greater daily contact with the city's inhabitants. The second choice was to invite the city's inhabitants to



*In front of the conference screens at the Museum of the City and New York. A little tired but excited.  
© Mette Stauersbøl Mogensen, 2023*

help create the museum and select the stories the museum would showcase. Here, the museum had set up different citizen groups that worked on different parts of the museum. This meant that the citizens who knew the most about a given area were the ones who had a say in that part of the museum. Among other things, this led to a much greater focus on the current city in the museum than on the city's history.

Kristi Paatsi from Kalamaja Community Museum presented how they had created a new museum in Tallinn together with the inhabitants of Kalamaja. Through interviews, focus groups, brainstorming sessions and a wide range of other activities, the museum team created the new museum. A key takeaway from the presentation was that the residents of Kalamaja were seen as colleagues, rather than just guests of the museum.

## **A city museum must be able to respond to what is happening in the city.**

One of the biggest challenges for a city museum is to be able to keep up with the pace of change and be part of

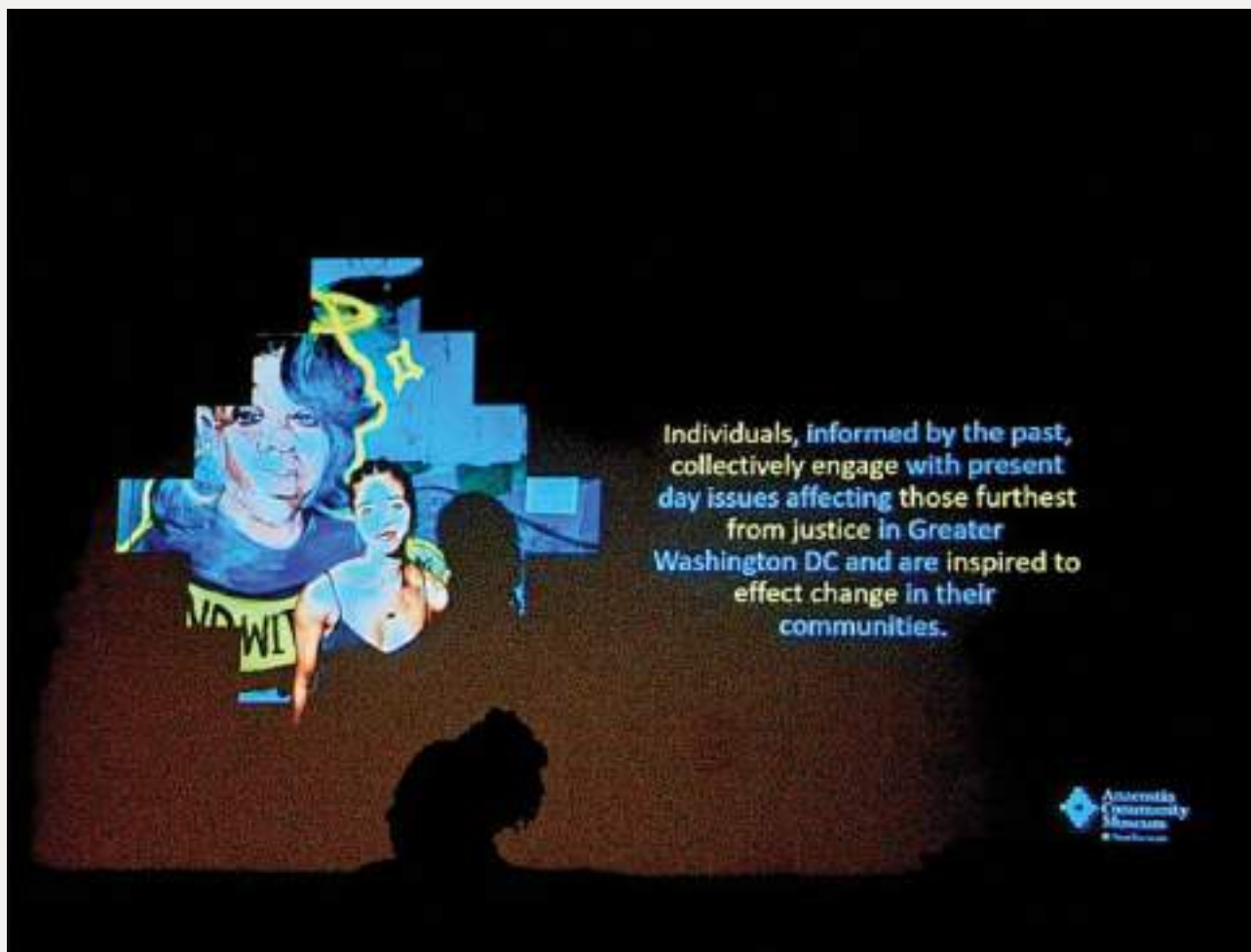
\* Mette Stauersbøl Mogensen, Møntergården, Odense City Museum, Denmark.

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the city's present. This applies both to the exhibitions, which often require months or years, of preparation, and to the collection of artifacts for the museum's collection. One example presented at the conference was from Carol Hart from the Greensboro History Museum. The city was home to some of the largest Black Lives Matter demonstrations and riots in the wake of the murder of George Floyd by police. To protect stores during violent demonstrations in the city center, windows and doors were sealed with sheets of plywood. As the days passed, the boards were gradually painted over by locals with messages related to the protests. The boards were then collected and, within days of the protests, were displayed at the Greensboro History Museum which postponed a planned exhibition in order to respond to what was happening in the city at that moment. It became an exhibition that had a huge impact on the city and created a whole new audience for the museum.

### **City museums need to work on their impact on the city.**

Rachel Seidman presented on how the Anacostia Community Museum, a community museum in a 92% African-American neighborhood in Washington D.C., has been working to create impact for their community. The museum presented their mission: "Together with local communities, the Anacostia Community Museum illuminates and amplifies our collective power". The museum developed a special tool that showed them whether an initiative was living up to their mission and their goal of inspiring visitors to take action in their own communities. In the most recent exhibition "To Live and Breathe: Women and Environmental Justice in Washington, D.C." invited citizens from their neighborhood to share their own actions that have created a larger impact, while the museum educates and exhibits objects that create challenges and issues in the area.



*The impact phase from the Anacostia Community Museum, which helped the museum create impact in their community.  
© Mette Stauersbøl Mogensen, 2023*

## **Everyone in the community has an important history for the city museum.**

Several presentations touched on an issue that exists in many city museum collections: that there is a predominance of rich white people's stories represented in the collections.

Sandra Kočevár from Karlovac City Museum emphasized that the city museum lacks the ability to relate to history from the perspective of certain population groups and that there is a need for the museum to do so. However, this requires the museum rid itself of the notion that it is not a political space.

The Museum of the City of New York (hosting the conference) invited the citizens of New York City to join them in this endeavor. In connection with the museum's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023, the museum created the exhibition: People, place and influence: The collection at 100. In the exhibition, guests were invited to reflect on the collection and the museum's work, and also on what the collection lacked and what stories it could not tell.

The final presentation: "Curating new narratives: Challenges and lessons learnt" gave an extra boost to this perspective. Monxo López from the Museum of the City of New York and Imara Limon from the Amsterdam Museum had invited Chief Vincent Mann, of the Turtle Clan Chief of the Ramapough Lenape Nation to talk about the work done on the New Amsterdam 400 exhibition. Chief Vincent Mann gave an emotional perspective on how museums must become better at listening to the people who have experienced the pain inflicted on them in history. The work that the Museum of New York City and the Amsterdam Museum were doing around the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of New Amsterdam, later New York, will therefore not just be a celebration of an anniversary but also a look at and recognition of the people whose land was taken when the city was founded.

## **One more point**

I presented during the session "Environmental transformations in changing cities" about the project "It Socks". An important agenda across the Danish museum landscape is the work to make museums more sustainable. My own museum, Møntergården, received the Danish "Green Attraction" award in the fall 2023 for our efforts towards a more sustainable museum, and

in "It Socks" we communicated the transformation of urban life through activities, exhibitions and invitations for reflection and participation. In the session's debate after the presentations, it was clear that several city museums across the world are faced with both having to communicate and relate to the consequences of climate change and how their city should be able to act on it. Therefore, I would like to humbly add another pin to the task of city museums: The city museum must help support the green transition.

When I went to the CAMOC annual conference, I hoped to learn more about city museums, be inspired to act in new ways in my own city museum and grow my network. All three expectations have been fully realized and I can only recommend to others to attend the CAMOC conferences.



*The little sock animal "Sokki", who travelled to New York to talk about the clothing industry's negative environmental impact and engagement with the city museum in Odense.  
© Mette Stauersbøl Mogensen, 2023*

# How to navigate 'Changing Cities, Changing Museums' for the voices unheard: Reflections on the CAMOC 2023 Annual Conference

ELIF ÇIĞDEM ARTAN\*

The dynamic forces of globalization have paved the way for changes in city museums, prompting a critical examination of the narratives they convey alongside the changes in cities. The critical eye on contemporary museology poses one fundamental question to be discussed by museum professionals, curators, artists, and citizens: *Whose stories are privileged to be collected, and whose remain untold or overlooked?* The call for the CAMOC 2023 Annual Conference, themed 'Changing Cities, Changing Museums,' addressed the profound impact of these inquiries.

From October 16-18, CAMOC member museum professionals and researchers convened at the Museum of the City of New York to share their diverse projects, exhibitions, public events, and studies. The focus was on analyzing the discourse surrounding the dynamic interplay between changing cities and city museums. In exploring often overlooked museum narratives, the spotlight illuminates marginalized communities, spanning national and global landscapes, such as LGBTQ, Black, Indigenous, people of color, migrant and refugee communities. In this framework, in this conference review, I first elaborate on the keynote speech; secondly, I discuss two selected sessions from an intersectional perspective; and finally, I reflect on the concluding session, during which I also delivered a short talk about gender, ethnic, and social class diversity in city museums.

In his keynote speech, Garnette Cadogan, author and lecturer in Urbanism at the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, expressed his engagement with urban landscapes. Cadogan defines strolling around the city as a zigzag rather than a linear walk. From what I gathered, it's as simple as spotting a store, a friend, or just a poster and crossing the street to explore it. Furthermore, zigzag walking in a city lacks

a clear starting or ending point. It repeats itself in different ways at different times, reminding me of temporality, briefly defined as the rhythm in a city, as referred to by Henri Lefebvre.

The keynote speech's crucial focus was addressing the fundamental question of simultaneous changes in cities and city museums: "What's happening in their [museum's] walls should reflect what's happening in the city." Cadogan's final note on museum collections underscored the political engagement of museums: 'Showing or not showing is not an aesthetic choice.' After he concluded his talk by calling New York home, he faced a fundamental question from the audience: *What about homeless people?* In my talk, I added to it: *What about women in shelters or Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ, migrant, and refugee communities, who must hide to survive in a city?*

Among a myriad of mind-opening presentations and workshops, I'd like to highlight one workshop and one presentation that put a particular focus on participatory museology and discussed different aspects of working with migrant and refugee communities:

- 1) a toolkit developed as part of the Collecting the City programming in the Amsterdam Museum, Netherlands presented by Gonca Yalçınır;
- 2) an experience of learning following the challenges with the exhibition collaborators in Museum Gouda, Netherlands presented by Femke Haijtema.

Gonca Yalçınır initiated the workshop titled 'Collecting the City through Co-creation' by introducing the methodology employed to collect and present 'topical or underexposed stories from the city.' In this context, the toolkit establishes four core values to develop programs about or for communities: equality, reciprocity, empowerment, and belonging. Each element distinctly emphasizes a particular aspect of democratic participation. However, faced

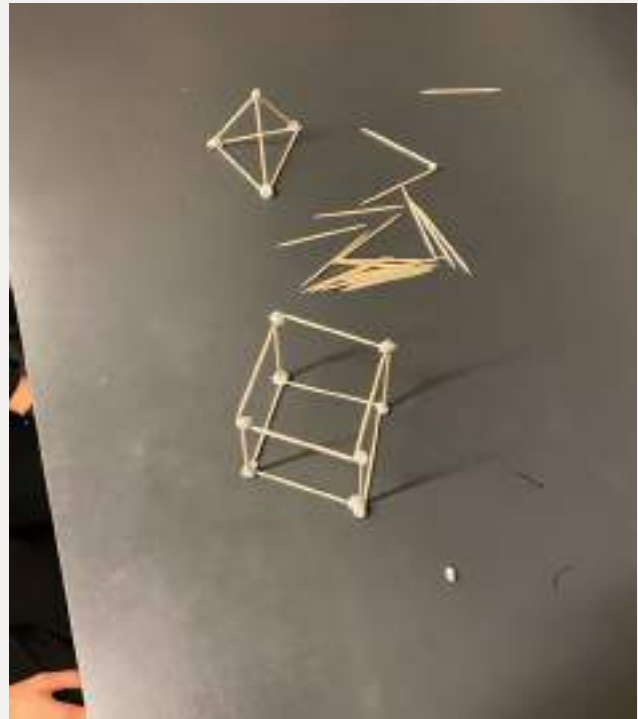
\* Dr. Elif Çığdem Artan, Sociologist | UX/UI Product Designer, Berlin, Germany



*Photos of the workshop in NYC © Elif Çiğdem Artan*

with changing cities, defining underrepresented communities is crucial. In this manner, in my presentation at the conference's final session, I proposed defining diversity as one of the core elements of co-creation and co-curation. The toolkit presents a fifteen-step plan outlining the Amsterdam Museum's methodology for co-creation. Yalçiner mentioned that focusing on the co-creation process is more critical than the toolkit because their methodology is open to discussion, review, and update when necessary. In this framework, the workshop sparked lively and productive discussions. Participants directed specific questions to Yalçiner, seeking her experiences concerning the challenges they faced in their own museums.

While the toolkit itself deserves a comprehensive analysis, the conclusion drawn from the workshop suggests that there is no single, definitive method for working with communities. It should be shaped according to the needs of the communities. Yalçiner noticed that women who immigrated from Turkey discussed different topics with her in Turkish compared to the stories they shared with her museum colleagues in Dutch. Yalçiner speaking Turkish has facilitated a more intimate and heartfelt relationship with the community. In this context, I believe only an intersectional feminist pedagogy can fulfill the



essential need for an ethical approach to co-creation and co-curation.

The panel session entitled 'A Hitchhiker's Guide to Reaching Out,' presented by Femke Haijtema from the Museum Gouda, Netherlands, exemplified the challenges that can arise from inadequate planning when working with communities. As Haijtema recounted, the museum staff prepared an exhibition to narrate the history of migrant workers employed in a meat factory. However, they did not seek consent from the individuals whose photos were featured in the exhibition. Consequently, they received requests to remove certain photos; for example, a photo depicting two men hugging and smiling at the camera. Later, the museum staff received a phone call informing them that the men in the photograph were identified as gay by the migrant community at the time the photo was taken. Additionally, in this phone call, they also learned that some workers did not want it known that they had worked in a factory producing pork due to their Muslim identity.

Although focusing on the exhibition's content to the extent of forgetting to obtain consent may sound naive, it is actually due to the lack of an intersectional feminist pedagogy. Obtaining consent may be seen as a legal necessity. However, from a participatory

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perspective, consent means, in this case, recognizing migrant communities as a museum, informing them about the project, and inviting them to be part of it.

The closing general session, titled 'Changing Intersections, Changing Narratives,' of which I was one of the speakers, aimed to address fundamental issues related to contemporary museology and elaborate on the discussions held at the conference. In my talk titled 'Representing Intersectional Communities: How to Increase Gender, Ethnic and Social Class Diversity in City Museums?' I proposed to use the Istanbul Convention as a guide to define ethics for the museum definition accepted in 2022 at ICOM Prague. For those who are not familiar with the Istanbul Convention it is the largest women's rights treaty.

The shortened name of the Istanbul Convention, formally titled 'The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence,' derives from its signing in Istanbul in 2011. Today, the Istanbul Convention stands as the most comprehensive treaty in protecting and ensuring women's rights. What sets the Istanbul Convention apart from other pioneering conventions (e.g., Beijing+25 and CEDAW) is its recognition of 'gender' as a binding element of the treaty and its provision of a comprehensive plan to prevent, and protect and support individuals against all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence. Additionally, from an intersectional feminist perspective, the Istanbul Convention offers full protection to ALL regardless of their gender, ethnic background, religious identity, political opinions or residency status, including migrants or refugees.

Within this framework, I argue that, the principles outlined in the Istanbul Convention can serve as guiding principles in defining the fundamentals of community engagement within museum practices according to ICOM's renewed museum definition to amplify the voice of marginalized communities in city museums. To this end, in my talk, by referring to the workshop and panel mentioned above, I kindly reminded the audience to discuss the following question widely and deeply: *How do we choose the communities we work with in museums?* In other words, it's worth regularly questioning with which communities we predominantly work in museums. For instance, *white privileged communities or minority groups?*

The final panel continued with a discussion on

collecting born-digital materials online circulated during the COVID-19 pandemic, presented by Foteini Aravani from the Museum of London, and a comparison of local policies for community museums in Hong Kong and Singapore, presented by Ian YH Tan from the University of Hong Kong. However, the special guest invited to introduce the upcoming joint project between the Museum of the New York City and the Amsterdam Museum to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of NYC next year put the general focus of the audience on the local American communities. On the one hand, it provided a priceless opportunity to listen to a history of Indigenous people; on the other hand, it hindered a comprehensive elaboration on the discussions on 'Changing Cities, Changing Museums' held at the conference. In this manner, after reflecting on a series of mind-blowing presentations and engaging workshops, the conference left one question still open to me: *What do they unspoken stories have in common, and can we collectively define and address them?*

To conclude, I am grateful to the CAMOC Board for providing me with a travel grant enabling me to participate actively in these discussions in New York. I also want to thank the Museum of the City of New York team for their warm hospitality and the opportunity to explore exhibitions aligned with the conference theme. Lastly, I appreciate all the participants for engaging in enlightening exchanges of ideas on contemporary museology.



# The importance of housing in the city: Creating social inclusion and equity

ANDRÉA DELAPLACE\*

Finding a place to live has been a constant challenge for most people in big cities around the world. Now that housing is once again back at the forefront of most cities' political agenda, it is more important than ever to take a longer-term historical overview in city museums. The exhibitions can survey the actions undertaken by government institutions to face the housing crisis as they can give a voice to community leaders and housing activists. Museums could create a better understanding of a city's urbanistic web and highlight the importance of housing in terms of belonging and identity making.

That's why most museums that talk about housing also talk about other thematics connected to belonging such as migration, as new migrants look for housing as a way of establishing themselves in their new city and new homes. Their struggle to find appropriate housing is the same to adapt to a new reality. In the roundtable we examined how museum professionals are creating exhibitions dedicated to the thematics of housing and migration (October 18). Equity in terms of living conditions are essential to understand the challenges of cities today where inflation and economic fluctuations make it almost impossible for younger generations to acquire houses or simply find proper accommodations. In a city like New York, whose identity is strongly marked by the different migrant groups that arrived through the gates of Ellis Island and settled in the tenements, housing is a central part of its history and we are happy to have brought this theme to the 2023 annual CAMOC conference. On October 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, the annual conference of CAMOC took place at the Museum of the City of New York, which was celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The conference brought together people from all over the world to discuss our changing times post pandemic as suggested by the name of the conference "Changing cities, Changing Museums".

## "Migration and social housing in Museums: creating participatory projects with communities" :

- Annie Polland (Tenement Museum)
- Diana Pardue (Ellis Island Museum)

- Linda Norris (International Coalition of Sites Sites of Conscience))
- Elena Pérez Rubiales & Joan Roca (MUHBA)

In this issue of the *CAMOC Review* is an article dedicated to MUHBA's project, the Cases Barates in Bon Pastor that was transformed into one of the city museum's branches that presents the history of social housing in Barcelona and Europe: a scientific and participatory approach, connecting history to community memories, with a museography that presents different decades of housing from 1929 to the 2010. We had previously published other articles in the social housing thematic by Fabrice Langrognet (2023) and Andréa Delaplace (2022). The idea was to create a series of webinars on the subject – with the next taking place September 19, 2024.

The main questions that were addressed in this panel:

- How do museums work with residents to convey experiences, preserve histories, illuminate what needs to be changed, and imagine alternative futures?
- What are the participatory practices developed by your museum / project?
- How did you develop an inclusive narrative in your museum?
- All three cities (NYC, Chicago and Barcelona) were fast growing urban environments where the migrant working class found difficult housing solutions. Are urban transformations (in the cities, neighbourhoods, etc.) during the decades also present in the narratives about migrant workers (and the difficulties or improvements they encountered over the years in their living conditions)?
- From a (cross)cultural mediation perspective, how are the images, narratives and films (if any) presented during the guided tours, received by the public? What is the image of these working class migrants that is conveyed to the visitors?

We discussed the different ways in which museums, dedicated to housing and migration issues, can start a real dialogue with the communities concerned (Fig. 3 and 4). Presentations began with Diana Pardue from the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. She explained

\* Andréa Delaplace, Editor of the CAMOC Review and CAMOC board member (2022-2025)

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how the museum team participates in training dedicated to staff from different American organisations dedicated to welcoming immigrants. These courses focus on the history of American immigration, providing a new perspective and new knowledge for officials in immigration offices, so that they can better understand the different concepts and laws (and how they have evolved over the decades) regarding the treatment and reception of immigrants in the United States. She also presented the project for the museum's new permanent exhibition (the first time that the museum has undertaken such an important project since its opening in 1990).

Linda Norris from the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience presented different projects and museums that are affiliated with her organisation including the Public Housing Museum in Chicago. This museum is dedicated to the history of social housing in the US and to creating an exhibition that is going to present the different aspects of public housing in Chicago and more broadly in the US.

Annie Polland, President of the Tenement Museum, presented the goals and exhibits of the museum, whose heart lies in the history of New York's Lower East Side. The museum draws on the lives of former inhabitants of the museum buildings to tell their stories and personal journeys (memories, personal objects and personal testimonies - oral history).



Fig. 1. View of the Tenement Museum, 2014. © Andr ea Delaplace

The MUHBA team presented the beautiful Bon Pastor project with the participation of many museum and community members from Barcelona through Zoom. It was a very rich and productive discourse. Where people could create an interactive exchange discussing the many forms of community engagement in the curatorial process of creating exhibitions about migration and public housing.

One of the main questions that were highlighted is the need to talk about the translations of the concept of community in other languages. Being called neighbours, residents or simply the community, the sense of the

Fig. 3 and 4. Photos of the roundtables during the CAMOC Conference. © Andr ea Delaplace, 2023



people who actually are directly concerned by migration and social housing are the heart of all the projects of exhibitions and museums that were presented and discussed during this roundtable.

The conference was preceded by a day (October 16) dedicated to visiting two important New York museums: the Tenement Museum and the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. Since I knew the Ellis Island Museum very well (it was the subject of my doctoral thesis), I decided to visit the Tenement Museum in the Lower East Side neighbourhood (Fig. 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6) to see their new exhibitions dedicated to contemporary migrations in the new building at 103 Orchard Street. This museum presents different guided tour routes on the different migratory groups that historically make up the New York population (the museum presents routes dedicated to migratory groups from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but also from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries).



Fig. 5 and 6. Photo of the roundtables during the CAMOC Conference. © Andréa Delaplace, 2023

# Museums, housing and the city: international perspectives and challenges online roundtable - September 19<sup>th</sup> 2024

ANDRÉA DELAPLACE\*

During the webinar, moderated by Andréa Delaplace, the focus will be on discussing how museums that have exhibits on social/public housing (or are completely dedicated to it) are developing co-creative methods with local inhabitants of a city or neighbourhood as well as the different communities that composes these environments. We will also broaden the discussion to the housing crisis in many cities around the world.

Affordable housing is one of the main demands of citizens as the prices of houses and rent are skyrocketing. Climate change and gentrification are also factors that contribute to the difficult housing situation in many cities around the globe. The speakers participating in the webinar come from different cities such as Barcelona, Birmingham, Paris, Chicago, New York City and Miami. Some of our invited speakers will be:

**Jayne Murray - Druids Heath - Birmingham** We are delighted to be developing a partnership project with the *National Trust Back to Backs* in Birmingham and the Moving Stories work we have been making since 2021. The Back to Back's story ends in 1966 when Druids Heath was just beginning. This project will bring the story of working class housing up to the present day. Work will be on show at the Back to Backs from June 14<sup>th</sup> in their two galleries. Entry to the exhibition is free through the bookshop on Hurst Street.

<https://prospectors.org.uk/>



Photo: National Public Housing Museum  
Kingsbury St, Chicago, IL, USA.

\* Andréa Delaplace, Editor of the CAMOC Review and CAMOC board member (2022-2025).

**Lisa Lee - National Public Housing Museum - Chicago**

The National Public Housing Museum is the only cultural institution devoted to telling the story of public housing in the United States. Our mission is to preserve, promote, and propel the right of all people to a place where they can live and prosper — a place to call home. Our permanent home is under construction at the last remaining building of the 1930s WPA-era Jane Addams Homes in Chicago's Near West Side and will open to the public later this year.  
<https://www.nphm.org/>

**Hilary Sample - architect Columbia University - New York City**

In 2017, Mexico's Institute for the National Fund for Workers' (INFONAVIT) Center for Research for Sustainable Development launched a program to solicit new approaches to affordable housing. To better understand the possibilities, and to better educate developers, workers, and students about the research, INFONAVIT engaged with MOS to develop a master plan for a campus of 32 built prototypes and design an education centre to promote awareness and study of workers' housing typologies.

<https://actar.com/product/housing-laboratory/>

**Robin Bachin, Ph.D.- Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education Founding Director, Office of Civic and Community Engagement**

Miami is seen by many as "ground zero" for two of urban America's most pressing problems: housing affordability and climate change. The lack of affordable housing and rising housing costs in Miami have made headlines as Miami has become the least affordable housing market in the nation. Compounding this vulnerability is the city's location in a coastal zone, which brings ever-increasing climate risks. The pressures of the housing and climate crises are most acutely felt by vulnerable populations and experienced at the neighborhood level. And the current housing and climate vulnerabilities are part of the legacy of racialized planning and zoning practices implemented over the last century. This presentation will highlight the work done at the University of Miami to build coalitions across sectors to recover stories of racialized displacement in Miami, utilize big data and civic tech to map these changes, and propose policy solutions grounded in neighborhood history and sense of place.





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