

ICOFOM STUDY SERIES

Call for articles for ICOFOM Study Series, Vol. 50, Issue 1

Due date: November 10, 2021

Terms of Submission

Articles should be 6000 words maximum (notes and references included, [as specified in our guidelines](#)) and must be sent by November 10, 2021 (at the latest) to the address icofomsymposium@gmail.com. The proposals will have to integrate one of the five proposed axes of analysis. They should follow the formatting rules of ICOFOM, which can be found on [our website](#), and be written in one of the three official languages of ICOM (English, French or Spanish).

Theme

50 YEARS OF THE DECLARATION OF THE ROUNDTABLE OF SANTIAGO. CURRENT KEY READINGS

In 1972 a meeting was held in Santiago de Chile on “**La importancia y el Desarrollo de los Museos en el Mundo Contemporáneo**” (“The Importance and Development of Museums in the Contemporary World”), which gave rise to a statement known as the Declaration of the Roundtable of Santiago (UNESCO, 1973). The origins of this initiative date back to the 16th General Conference of UNESCO, which approved a Resolution to promote the development of museums in the Member States and stimulated them to adapt to the requirements of their current reality. Simultaneously, within the framework of the recently concluded Third United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD III), a call for proposals was launched to conduct a meeting in Chile that would include

museum professionals and specialists in other areas. This event was convened by UNESCO, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the Chilean Committee of Museums (ICOM-Chile), at that time chaired by Dr. Grete Mostny. From 20 to 31 May 1972 meetings, field visits and encounters were carried out, which culminated in resolutions that were followed by the signing of the Declaración de Santiago.

At a moment when many of the countries of the area were facing a period of authoritarianism and various forms of national social control, that Declaration became a key milestone in reflections on the role of the museum in the contemporary context. It also established the basis for an openness to different approaches (new museology and other forms of museology: critical, social, participative, experimental, community-based, etc.) in a discussion that became paradigmatic regarding new ways of conceptualizing, managing and understanding the museum, as well as its actions and links with society and community. A so-called “postcolonial” turn in the world of museums might well be rooted in this political event, which included the participation of representatives of multiple states and, for the first time in the history of ICOM, was held in Spanish.

Another element highlighted in the Declaration is the designation of the MUSEO INTEGRAL or INTEGRADO (integral or integrated museum), which defined itself as “... an institution at the service of society, of which it is an inalienable part, and which owns the ingredients that allow it to take part in the process of bringing awareness to the communities it serves. Through this awareness it can contribute to put into action those communities, projecting their activity into the historical field that might have led to the present situation; in other words, building links between past and present, engaging with prevailing structural changes and motivating others within their respective national realities” (Resoluciones, 1972: 5). This social role of the museum has transcended time and represents a debate that we consider a key issue in the context of the current Call for Papers.

In addition to its importance for Latin American museologists, the notion of “integral museum” (museum integrated into its society) has been revisited through the concept of “ecomuseum”, proposed in France in 1971 by Hugues de Varine and defined by means of French practices which embraced that label from 1973 onward. The opening up of museums to all areas of society that occurred at the end of 20th century was based on the idea of the museum as a tool for social

transformation, concerned with the problems of “the communities to whom it serves” (UNESCO, 1973, p. 199). Inspired by the idea of the “integral museum”, in the decades following the 1970s Latin American museologists have developed a basis for critical reflection on the “universal pretense of the museum” (Rússio, 1974, p. 47), which led to the “new” museum defining itself as a “living institution, integrated into society” that must assume the active role of “continuously forming and transforming its environment” (Rusconi, 1987, p. 241). The intended break with the “traditional museum” enabled the appreciation of new experiences that have in common a receptiveness to cultural difference and to a social participation unprecedented in the history of museology.

Despite the existence of an extensive literature that considers the social role of museums and whose framework is the basic principles stated in the Declaration of Santiago, a contemporary reinterpretation of the issues and challenges present during the Roundtable event has not yet been made. What are the major influences of the Mesa in the current practices of museums in Latin America? Which are the challenges that have not yet been overcome? To what extent have the claimed ideas, considered by some as utopian, enabled the change dreamed by thinkers present in Santiago?

On the basis of these and many other questions, we wish to invite researchers to a situated reflection from the museums in 2022, in order to celebrate 50 years of the Declaración de la Mesa de Santiago but with a longer-term perspective. This call for proposals references a desire of ICOFOM to present a review of the perspectives on museums and museology in the world fifty years after the Roundtable. Thus, we will receive contributions that will address experiences and reflections around some of the issues raised in the Declaración de Santiago, as well as its resignification:

- 1.- The redefinition of cultural heritage according to its social role, with an emphasis on Latin America;
- 2.- The use of technology applicable to the museum and for the improvement of the community;
- 3.- The organization of itinerant exhibitions and the creation of regional/territory museums;
- 4.- Museums in local or rural environments: neighborhood museums, community museums, etc.;
- 5.- The importance of museum education to fulfill the museum’s didactic and social functions;
- 6.- School museums, collections and exhibitions;
- 7.- The resignification of heritage and the museum in the current situation;

8.- Museological contributions to decolonization and anti-racism;

9.- Ideas and challenges for the future of museums.

(Text translated from Spanish by Beatriz Sánchez Santidrián and Natalie McGuire, revised by Elizabeth Weiser).

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