

Call for Proposals for Presentation and Publication:

The Museum Experience: Museums, Community Action and Decolonisation

The Research Group Experimental Museology and Image (MEI), the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO) and the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) invite museum professionals, community members and researchers to share their museum experiences in a symposium and a publication on the topic *The Museum Experience: Museums, Community Action and Decolonisation*. The selected works may be presented in a symposium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 3-4 December 2020, and will originate a publication edited by ICOFOM.

The Special Project *Museums, Community Action and Decolonisation (2020-2022)*, proposed by ICOFOM for this triennial, aims to foster international debates and develop theoretical bases for museum practice relating to the claims and actions of communities seeking greater agency through the forum of the museum. By “community action”, we refer to minority groups moved towards a common purpose or social cause that can lead to the decolonisation of the museum device.

What does it mean to decolonise the museum in the 21st century? How are the current debates on the museum decolonisation actually promoting the recognition of local practices and actions? Are communities and activists really being heard by museum professionals who express a more critical approach to these modern institutions? What kind of museum experiences and actions are helping to reshape a post-colonial world?

Interpreting the impacts of colonisation in our present days is a fundamental challenge for institutions that give new life to the representations from the past. New problems such as climate change and the increasing social and economic inequality in all countries and regions, or the persistence of racism, sexism, homophobia, and the reproduction of historical exclusions inside the museum and in the performance of its authority towards societies have shown, once again, a need for revision of practices and priorities in the museums actions.

Based on these questions and recognising contemporary matters for the museum world, the symposium and publication aim to present up-to-date researches and case studies dealing with the social relevance of museums and to gauge the real influence of communities in the transmission and transformation of cultural heritage. Proposals should consider post-colonial views on the museum from the perspective of communities or specialists, according to one of the following subtopics:

- A. Post-colonial experiences of the museum:** While most recent debates on decolonising the museum have evolved around the practical and political

implications of returning cultural goods, most museums are not putting into question their own authority on dealing with the colonial heritage in their collections; neither are communities and social movements truly involved in the museum processes of building new narratives for the present. How are museums decolonising their future, by putting under revision their narration of the past? Is it possible for museums to scape their colonial legacies without redefining their relation to society?

- B. Community action and experimental museologies:** Even though museums have involved communities (and members from civil society) in their basic functions and processes over the years, what are the results of community action and the participation of social groups in the museums of the 21st century? How are community experiences helping to change museums' main functions and their social role?
- C. Queer experiences for museum activism:** Many expressions of museum activism in this century have led to queer approaches to these normative institutions. The new LGBTI+ museums and the critical approaches to gender and sexuality in exhibitions have allowed a critical base of reflections to arise. How can social movements and queer approaches to the museum empower new experiences with our living heritage in the present?
- D. Museums, local heritage and human rights:** Beyond the preservation of indigenous or African-descendants heritage (in diaspora) in the form of ethnographic collections, museums over the years have established new and powerful relations to these populations, involving these agents and knowledge producers in their procedures and sharing an authority that was only granted to scientists in the past. For instance, the active participation of indigenous people in museum actions and practices have a great impact in the recognition of these groups and their rights by these cultural institutions. Proposals should consider the uses of localized knowledge by museums that have decided to decolonise their practices, but also the role of local heritage in the fights for social recognition and human rights.

SUBMISSION DETAILS AND DEADLINE:

The papers discussing the topic *The Museum Experience: Museums, Community Action and Decolonisation* can be presented as short articles, experience reports and essays of maximum **5000 words** (not counting footnotes and bibliographic references) and should be in Arial font, size 11, without indentation and with no spaces between paragraphs. Footnotes and bibliographic references mentioned should also follow APA technical standards.

A short biography (maximum 350 characters for each participant/author) has to be attached in the first page, containing educational background, home institution, practice area and contact e-mail. The references, including all quoted works, should be mentioned at the end of the articles, reports and essays.

All proposals must be sent until **19 July 2020** to the following e-mail: grupodepesquisamei@gmail.com, with the subject “**The museum experience (article)**”.

FORMAT:

- The manuscripts should be submitted as a Microsoft Word file in A4 format, written in English, Portuguese, Spanish or French.
- Texts should be single-spaced with margins as follows: 2.5 cm (top), 2.5 cm (bottom), 3 cm on both sides (.98” and 1.18”).
- Texts must be written in font Arial size 11; both are justified on left and right margins.
- Foreign language words should be put in italics, followed by a translation or explanation in parentheses.
- **Title** in font Arial 14 bold, centralized. A line space (still in Arial 14); next with line in Arial 12 the name of the author with first letter only capitalized. Another line space, followed by a line with the institution, city and country. Two line spaces follow, still in Arial 12.
- **A quote** of more than 20 words should be set in a separate paragraph, without quotation marks, and be indented by 1.25 on both margins. If the quote is a translation, the reference must be to the text in that language. If the author has done the translation from a reference in another language, this should be mentioned in a footnote.
- **Footnotes** are not encouraged. If necessary, they should appear at the foot of the page in Arial 9. They should only be used for content notes for additional information and not for references. Use in-text citations (APA reference style).
- Avoid using underlines and bold font in the text. If the author wishes to emphasize some words, only *italics* should be used.

- **Use of photographs** is *not* encouraged, except for some cases approved by the editors. However, the author can use diagrams to illustrate theory. In both cases, the files must be sent separated and in high resolution.
- For quotations and references, see the [APA guidelines, available at the ICOFOM website](#).

Communications will be organised according to the four Thematic Workshops that will happen in Rio de Janeiro, in the 4th Seminar of Experimental Museology and ICOFOM's International Symposium "*Museums, Community Action and Decolonisation*", in December 2020. A selection of the papers presented will be published in a work in digital format, edited by the Research Group Experimental Museology and Image (MEI) and the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM).

Rio de Janeiro, 23 April 2020.