Collaborative Practices: Rethinking Narratives and Processes of Musealisation

Rita Juliana Soares Poloni, Diego Lemos Ribeiro and Elizabete Mendonça

Editorial
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Since the 1960s, various academic disciplines have placed the collective construction of knowledge at the forefront of their debates. In this context, the convergence of diverse narratives, actors, and worldviews has taken on particular significance in advancing scientific development. Fields such as public history, community archaeology, and collaborative museology have emerged from this movement, intertwining their practices in projects designed to address political demands and drive social transformation.

In the field of history, the rise of public history in the 1970s in the United States reflected profound social and economic changes brought about by capitalism, alongside the growing need for professional historians to enter the corporate market. At the same time, this movement underscored the importance of engaging diverse audiences with historical knowledge, fostering the public appropriation of science. Consequently, it engaged with themes such as historic preservation, oral history, archaeological heritage, museology, and archival science[1].

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1 Marko Demantowsky, ed., *What Is Public History? International Perspectives* (Berlim: De Gruyter, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110466133-001; Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

A decade earlier, the field of archaeology and material culture studies witnessed the emergence of latin american social archaeology (arqueología social latinoamericana), a movement originating from the periphery that emphasized the humanity of Indigenous and native peoples[2]. Not coincidentally inspired by Gordon Childe, this movement contributed to the establishment of the World Archaeological Congress in 1986[3]. This anti-hierarchical process fostered cooperation with Indigenous peoples, "ordinary" individuals, the "subaltern", and scholars from various fields, including historians and linguists[4]. The adoption of an ethical code in 1990 marked a pivotal moment, as the field began to address the needs of living communities, moving beyond the purported technical expertise of specialists. Human remains, for instance, began to be considered in relation to the communities and individuals they represent. Over subsequent decades, the concept of public archaeology gained prominence, culminating in the launch of the first journal dedicated to the subject, *Public Archaeology*, in 2000[5].

According to merriman, public archaeology centres on the general public's interests[6]. As Garraffoni points out, it encompasses the dissemination of research results, the sharing of knowledge and practices derived from the theoretical-methodological fields of the discipline, and the values and knowledge concerning heritage generated by the scientific community, engaging with various audiences[7]. A more focused ap-

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2 Hugo O. Benavides, Sérgio Almeida Loiola, Maria Lemke e Alecsandro José Prudêncio Ratts, "Retornando à origem: arqueologia social como filosofia latino-americana", *Revista Terceiro Incluído* 1, n.º 2 (2011): 164-192, https://revistas.ufg.br/teri/article/view/17779.

3 The second phase of Gordon Childe's work (during the second quarter of the 20th century) is characterised by a historical materialist approach, focusing on the role of productive forces, relations of production, and economic changes as drivers of social transformations. Childe was a forerunner of latin american social archaeology, inspiring more critical scientific approaches committed to social issues, such as the impact of colonialism and the appreciation of Indigenous heritage.

4 Pedro Paulo A. Funari, "The World Archaeological Congress from a Critical and Personal Perspective", *Archaeologies* 2, n.º 12 (2006): 73-79.

5 The journal was initiated and overseen by Peter Ucko following his appointment as Director of the Institute of Archaeology at University College London (UCL). The journal's first editor was Tim Schadla-Hall, succeeded by Gabe Moshenska.

6 Nick Merriman, "Introduction – Diversity and Dissonance in Public Archaeology", in *Public Archaeology*, ed. Nick Merriman (London: Routledge, 2004), 2.

7 Renata Garrafonni, "Arqueologia pública: diálogos sobre experiências e práticas no Brasil", in *A multivocalidade da arqueologia pública no Brasil: comunidades, práticas e direito*, ed. Juliano Bitencourt Campos, Marian Helen da Silva Gomes Rodrigues e Pedro Paulo Abreu Funari (Criciúma: UNESC, 2017), http://repositorio.unesc.net/bitstream/1/5477/1/EBOOK.pdf.

proach to the field is often referred to as community archaeology, which goes beyond fostering social engagement with archaeological science: "it means involving the local population in archaeological research and in policies of cultural heritage representation"[8].

Drawing from contemporary perspectives in social anthropology, research on cultural heritage has shifted its focus from heritage as a fixed substance to the concept of patrimonialities. Jean Davallon, a key theorist in museology and heritage communication, argues that heritage is not a "natural" given but a cultural and social construct. He highlights that cultural or natural assets attain heritage status when chosen and recognized as such by a community or social group. Heritage, therefore, results from a process of patrimonialisation, involving the attribution of symbolic, cultural, or historical value to objects, places, or practices. Other scholars, such as Dominique Poulot and Laurier Tourgeon, emphasize aspects such as the emotional, symbolic, and identity-based connections between individuals or communities and heritage, the role of heritage in constructing collective identities and preserving social memory, and its capacity to foster critical reflection and promote intercultural dialogue[9]. This perspective represents more than a terminological shift; it involves reimagining heritage as the substratum of culture, a sensory experience, rather than as a static entity.

Highlighting patrimonialities introduces unprecedented challenges that must be addressed through various preservation policies. Western epistemology has historically sought to categorize and confine materi-

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8 Although it is not the analytical focus of this article, it is important to highlight that the historical process of constructing the category of "cultural heritage" cannot be naturalised. The notions and practices associated with this category have historically been linked to the humanist project of modern Western societies, to the context of colonialist structures, to the selection of processes of patrimonialisation, and to problematic actions of "cultural objectification". Lúcio Ferreira, "Sob fogo cruzado: arqueologia comunitária e patrimônio cultural", *Revista Arqueologia Pública* 3 (2015): 81, https://doi.org/10.20396/rap.v3i1.8635804.

9 Jean Davallon, "El juego de la patrimonialización", in *Construyendo el patrimonio cultural y natural: parques, museos y patrimonio rural*, ed. Xavier Roigé, Joan Frigolé e Camila del Mármol (Valencia: Editorial Germana, 2014), 47-76; Dominique Poulot, *Uma história do patrimônio no Ocidente* (São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 2009); Laurier Tourgeon, "Do material ao imaterial: novos desafios, novas questões", *Geosaberes* 5, número especial (dezembro 2014): 67-79.

alities into rigid frameworks, treating them as if they held innate value and represented the synthesis of a nation's social identity. In contrast, collaborative practices have emerged as central to advocating for cultural democracy. These practices promote a shift towards incorporating diverse ontologies, acknowledging that heritage generates effects and is best understood within a dynamic field of intertemporal and intercultural relations, often serving political and reivindicatory purposes.

These movements have driven a profound theoretical and epistemic reassessment of how materialities are handled in memory institutions, particularly museums. Historically shaped by colonialist thought, museums have categorized collections through rigid classifications, engaging in a form of "domestication of things", beginning with the act of naming. Naming confers existence. Reexamining materialities thus requires addressing practical questions:

- What exactly are these objects?

- Whom do they serve?

- How did they come to be here?

- What political role do they occupy within institutions?

- What is their intended fate?

- Who decides their fate?

These revisions gained momentum in museums during the 1970s, fostering new models and expanding the concept of musealisation. As Soares notes, through this revision, musealisation came to be understood "as the symbolic action that operates on reality, changing the order of things to produce new meanings from objects"[10]. Today, the concept incorporates political and administrative dimensions, encompassing "a set of actions, measures, strategies, and procedures of a symbolic, political, technical, and administrative nature applied to cultural

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10 Bruno Brulon Soares, "Passagens da museologia: a musealização como caminho", *Revista Museologia e Patrimônio* 11, n.º 2 (2018): 206, http://revistamuseologiaepatrimonio.mast.br/index.php/ppgpmus/article/view/722/657.

references by the museum – aiming to assign to the object the function of a document, reveal its meanings, contribute to the informational potential about the cultural reference, and also contribute to the preservation of material integrity, bringing together theory, practice, and political awareness"[11]. Key questions related to musealisation now include: Why (the purpose)? For what (the goal)? By whom (the agent)? For whom (the audience)? How (the methodology)?

As social movements increasingly advocate for the management and co-management of their heritage, particularly *in situ*, discussions on living and dynamic cultures have gained prominence, alongside collaborative practices that present both opportunities and challenges[12]. Understanding heritage and material culture as processes under continual construction, rather than as completed biographies, necessitates genuine collaboration. This implies being open to controversies and embracing the plurality of interpretations. Addressing these issues requires horizontal dialogue, avoiding unilateral approaches that risk falling into neocolonial traps.

This thematic issue aims to explore collaborative practices and how they operate in rethinking musealisation processes and reconstructing narratives surrounding musealised cultural heritage. It features eight articles, four reviews, and an interview, offering a diverse panorama of initiatives in this field.

At the field of musealisation processes, Jessica Minier's article, "L'acquisition conjointe et la garde partagée dans les musées d'art: le cas du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada", examines collaborative acquisition practices in a Canadian art institution, focusing on public access and shared custody between museums and communities. In turn, Anna Bottesi, Elayne Silva, and Helane Tavares, in the article "De Museu Indígena Anízia Maria a Museu dos Povos Indígenas do Piauí:

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11 Elizabete de Castro Mendonça, "Museu, patrimônio imaterial e performance: desafios dos processos de documentação para a salvaguarda de bens registrados", *Museologia & Interdisciplinaridade* 9, n.º 18 (2020): 194, https://periodicos.unb.br/index.php/museologia/article/view/34749.

12 Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998).

processos museológicos colaborativos contra-narrativas e protagonismo político dos Tabajara e Tapuio – Itamaraty/PI", investigate tensions in the establishment of the Indigenous Museum of Piauí in northeastern Brazil. In "Encruzilhadas e itinerários da escrita multivocal de exposições no Museu Histórico Nacional: em favor de quê e/ou de quem", Julia Nolasco de Moraes, Bruna Pinto Monteiro, and Carolina de Oliveira Silva discuss the challenges of curating exhibitions at the National History Museum in Rio de Janeiro. Finally, concluding the discussions directly related to museum collections and exhibitions, Sibelle Barbosa da Silva and Vanessa Barrozo Teixeira Aquino explore the invisibility of women in the world of football and the possibilities for collaborative action involving athletes, former athletes, fans, and researchers at the Grêmio Museum in Porto Alegre, in "A coleção de futebol de mulheres do Museu do Grêmio – Hermínio Bittencourt (Porto Alegre, RS): quando a musealização proporciona experiências colaborativas".

Other contributions delve into museumised cultural narratives. Nina Vieira, Raquel Janeirinho, Rui Venâncio, and Cristina Brito highlight the cultural heritage of whales in Portugal, highlighting the cultural heritage related to these animals in "A casa da minha avó: uma exposição colaborativa sobre a história das baleias em Atouguia da Baleia". Exploring the Brazilian context, Anna Carolina Gelmini de Faria Marlise Giovnaz, Ana Celina Figueira da Silva, and Maria Eduarda Bergmann Hentschke de Aguiar, in the article "A musealização de um acervo fotográfico da Parada Livre: reflexões sobre gestão compartilhada do patrimônio", reflect on re-signifying a photographic collection from nuances – Grupo pela Livre Expressão Sexual, from Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul. Pablo de Castro Albernaz, in "*Ättä Edemi Jödö*: música e memória em um ritual de inauguração da casa redonda Ye'kwana", examines the musical rituals of the Ye'kwana in northern Brazil (Roraima) associated with the construction of their traditional round house, a ritual that had not been performed for a long time. In this context, the author discusses the importance of listening as the privileged sense for accessing knowledge within this Indigenous community, through the concept of "cosmosonia". While Luis Carlos Toro

Tamayo and José Ignacio Henao Salazar, in "Memorias y experiencias compartidas. Análisis de producciones museográficas realizados a partir de imágenes y objetos cotidianos", explore personal collections in contexts shaped by violence, focusing on the case of Colombia.

This issue also includes an interview with Davi Kopenawa, conducted by Pablo de Castro Albernaz. The interview addresses childhood memories and the Indigenous perspective on museums and museality, presenting a critical indictment of the violence the Yanomami people have endured, particularly as a result of illegal mining in their territories in recent years. Complementing these articles are reviews of significant works, such as *Museus e etnicidade: o negro no pensamento museal*, a work by Nila Rodrigues Barbosa published in 2018, that discusses the concept of ethnicity in the Museum of Inconfidência (Ouro Preto/MG) and the Museum of Gold (Sabará/MG), reviewed by Carolina Nogueira. *A terra dá, a terra quer*, by the recently deceased *quilombola* thinker Antônio Bispo dos Santos, about the important concept of countercolonisation from an Afro-diasporic perspective, is reviewed by Henry Vallejo Infante. Helena Thomassim Medeiros reviews *Futuro ancestral*, a book by Ailton Krenak, an important Indigenous leader, environmentalist, philosopher, poet, and Brazilian writer, recently made a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, whose writings encourages readers to revisit ancestral knowledge to address important environmental and social issues on a global scale. Finally, Eliana Delgado and João Victor Oliveira de Oliveira review *A queda do céu*, by Davi Kopenawa and Bruce Albert, published in 2015. A writer, shaman, and Yanomami political leader, Kopenawa presents in this seminal work a powerful autobiographical account of Indigenous experiences in a world dominated by the Western worldview and capitalist ways of life.

This collaborative effort between the Collaborative Museology Laboratory (CoLab) of the Federal University of Pelotas (UFPel), and the Multidimensional Centre for Heritage Management and Museum Documentation (NUGEP) of the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO), underscores the need to challenge colonialist

narratives, fostering inclusive, interdisciplinary, and intercultural approaches to heritage and museology, aiming to question the intrinsic connections between the formation of grand narratives and universalist explanations. Museology and museums, from this perspective, represent a confrontation with authorised heritage discourses[13]. Collaborative practices in museums and around cultural heritage must be aligned with experiments that challenge and question colonial projects of musealisation and heritage-making, incorporating a spirit of preservation that is in harmony with the native perspective of museums and heritage. This approach should be guided by the demands of the communities that are directly concerned – particularly Indigenous peoples, traditional African-descendant communities, and *quilombolas*, though not exclusively. Thus, it must also incorporate experiences and reflections that touch on shared curatorial practices and collaborative heritage management, based on an epistemic, political, and practical stance. Its basic premise is that actions must be intercultural, intertemporal, and interdisciplinary, with a focus on the confluence of epistemes. This implies a necessary rupture of hierarchical power when working with objects – objects that do not belong to specialists. Practicing "museology of and with the other" means, therefore, is open to controversies and the plurality of possible readings of collections. Last, but by no means least, it means decolonising museological and heritage canons. And, of course, making museums think and act better.

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13 Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006).

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