

EDITORIAL

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Dear readers,

Over a year of pandemic has gone by. In retrospect, one can see this unfortunate experience has been a rollercoaster of emotions: we have gone from fear and uncertainty to tragedy, from despondency to hope, and lived in a very unusual state that swings between denial, expectations, languidness and despair. The pandemic has begun to fuse with the start of the so-called “new normality”, which implies the acceptance—as I recently heard Donna Haraway say—that the coronavirus is here to stay: we must learn to coexist with it.

As an academic medium for research, reflection and dissemination which strives to keep in touch with relevant contemporary matters, *Intervención* must embrace the new challenges and topics that have developed, and will continue to develop, in the “pandemic-new normality” stage. In the cultural and heritage sector, the wake of economic and labor devastation that occurred over the past year has revealed unseen facets: it is no longer only a question of the millions of jobs lost or in the process of disappearing, but also the lack of resources to implement or continue plans for maintenance, prevention, attenuation or management of risks. Fires, floods, earthquakes, wars, thefts and a long etcetera have intensified their destructive power in the face of underfunded and overwhelmed governments and institutions, due to the cost of the pandemic. We are therefore pleased to share in our SPECIAL SECTION the *Programa de manejo de riesgos para la conservación preventiva y la prevención del tráfico ilícito de bienes culturales*¹ which the Coordinación Nacional de Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (CNCPC-INAH), has been implementing since 2020, thanks to financing from the Embassy of the United States of America in Mexico. Their awareness campaign *¿Qué perdemos cuando nos roban nuestro patrimonio?*² is a notable breath of fresh air and hope in a context of dejection and loss.

¹ *Risk Management Program for Preventive Conservation and to Avoid Illegal Trafficking of Cultural Property*, Editorial translation.

² *What do we stand to lose when our heritage is stolen?* Editorial translation.

Another contemporary challenge which has garnered much space and energy in recent public debate is criticism of various forms of domination and oppression that prevail in language, public monuments, social relations and ways of acting and thinking. In issue No. 23 we present contributions that reflect on this subject in original and brave approaches: the *ESSAY* by Mariela González questions the principles of conservation of cultural heritage imbued in a vision that not only perpetuates colonialist practices, but also seems to value objects over people. Similarly, but from a Colombian perspective, Carolina Chacón reveals the ways in which such authoritarian practices continue to impact museums' operation and policies, institutions whose history implies a genealogy of privilege as well as oppression and disavowal of minorities and their memories. Both essays also share a common vision of possible changes in, and indeed concrete examples of, new ways of relating cultural heritage, its conservation and exhibition, with the various communities involved, particularly those most wronged.

In this issue, readers will also find another kind of questioning of the above-mentioned practices of oppression and domination: those related to the language we use to name, store and conserve cultural property, whether documents, works of art or of any other sort. Reflecting from the field of documentary archives, Jaime Sánchez condemns the omissions and exclusions—that is to say, the symbolic violence—behind the production and safekeeping of documents. Linked to this discussion on the importance of expanding or changing terminology, Claudia María Coronado suggests a wider, less orthodox, vision of the concepts of *author*, *authenticity* and *originality*, as a fundamental step to conserve products and emerging artistic proposals.

As usual, this new issue of *Intervención* presents contributions on one of the journal's "cherished" subjects: the social function of museums. In their *RESEARCH ARTICLE*, Liliana Natalia Bazán and Raúl Fernando Ajmat describe the results of a lengthy and methodologically sound quantitative analysis in four case studies in Argentina: the criterion of *satisfaction* is relevant to gain deeper understanding of the people who visit museums and generate enhanced experiences. From the field of exhibition design, Alejandro García reflects on the urgent requirement to transform it, so as to connect with new conditions and needs, not only those of users but also of our natural environment. His review incorporates reflections emanating from four digital roundtables—with a wide array of participants—that took place in November 2020. Meanwhile, Gloria Donají Velasco, Dalton Lopes, Luciana Conrado, Claudio Molina

and Pedro Ángeles share a binational project in Mexico and Brazil which used digital resources, such as the Tainacan open-source software and metadata standards, to generate an economically viable option to access and conserve museum collections.

The cover of *Intervención* No. 23 somehow embodies most of the themes outlined herein: it concerns both what can be seen and what cannot (that which is left out) or that which is merely hinted at, as well as the heritage objects and those who possess, enjoy and conserve them. Furthermore, the photograph features in the article by Chacón, which serves as a reminder of the solid presence the journal has achieved in Latin America over its now 11 years of existence: this issue includes contributions from Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia, in addition to Mexico.

With this Number, I bid farewell to my post as editor of this unique journal, and I do so joyfully, full of satisfaction, not sadness. I learned countless things throughout the year and a half I had the honor to direct it, and I collaborated with a team that has not only shown commitment, but also affection for this publication. Certainly, implementing this new era, which unfortunately coincided with the pandemic and, therefore, with a series of administrative, logistical and human setbacks, was a major challenge. But *Intervención* allowed me to expand my professional and intellectual horizons to unexpected reaches and, hence, the effort it took to edit numbers 21, 22 and 23 were amply rewarded.

I end by thanking all those whose support made this journal possible month after month: from INAH's Subdirección de Publicaciones Periódicas to our professional service partners for proof reading, translating and designing, social service and postgraduate interns; and of course, ENCRYM's Dirección and Subdirección de Investigación, as well as the Editorial Committee of *Intervención*. I am particularly grateful to Isabel Medina-González and Gerardo Ramos for their vote of confidence in my work and I deeply appreciate the unwavering support I received from Yolanda Madrid, Paula Rosales and Eugenia Macías during this period. I take this opportunity to welcome and wish the best to Eugenia, who joins as the new editor from issue 24 onward. Her wide experience, critical sense and commitment will doubtless take the journal to new heights.

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