



ANTIGUA GUATEMALA CHARTER

In Antigua Guatemala, on this eighth day of December of the year 2004, the participants in the Thirteenth ICOFOM LAM Regional Meeting, organized by the ICOFOM Regional Subcommittee for Latin America and the Caribbean and ICOM Guatemala, held at the *Casa K'ojom* and the *Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española* wish to thank Dr. Tereza Scheiner, member of the ICOM Paris Executive Council, Dr. Hildegard Vieregg, President of ICOFOM and Prof. Nelly Decarolis, Vice-President of ICOFOM and President of ICOFOM LAM, and voice their deep acknowledgement to all those persons and entities which provided their support and collaborated in the organization of this meeting.

They wish to highlight the importance of having participants from Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Japan, Mexico, the United States and Venezuela to discuss the topic of *Museums, Museology and Intangible Heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean: an integrated view* and reassert the validity of the recommendations arising from the *Convention to Safeguard Intangible Cultural Heritage*, held in Paris, in October 2003, the *Shanghai Charter*, the *Bahia Declaration* and the *Montevideo Charter*; and state that they were set up into two working groups which identified, discussed and thoroughly analyzed the following topics:

Topic 1: *Categories of intangible/immaterial heritage*

Topic 2: *Latin American identities: heritage and memory*

Within this context, they state that the concepts herein set forth, summarize the line of thought of the representatives of the countries attending the conference and that such notions, reflected under the **Antigua Guatemala Charter** will be disseminated at the national and international forums of ICOM, ICOFOM, ICOFOM LAM and other institutions involved in the preservation of material and immaterial heritage.

Topic 1 - Categories of intangible heritage

- 1.1 *Different expressions of immaterial heritage*
- 1.2 *Immaterial nature of objects: symbol, sign, meaning*
- 1.3 *Musealization of objects: value attribution*
- 1.4 *Virtuality in the museal field*
- 1.5 *Towards an ethics of the new images*

Considering

that material objects of cultural heritage are the physical support of intangible values which provide them with a meaning;

that they are polysemic and with different symbolic meanings

that the natural heritage also supports immaterial values to which mankind assigns spiritual meanings linked to his identity;

it is recommended

that the attribution of immaterial values be based on sound ethical grounds, acknowledging the existence of cultural diversity within a framework of reflection and respect for other symbolic universes;

that the active participation of representatives of the community in which the objects originally acquired their meaning be promoted, respecting and considering that those who have ancestral knowledge are living human treasures;

Considering

that conservation of immaterial heritage can only be addressed by acknowledging its own dynamics;

that the objects, when withdrawn from their context to be musealized, are resignified and lose their original meaning;

that vis-à-vis the fragility of the immaterial component which supports the tangible object there is a risk that its values be altered;

that such value attribution is never happenstance and is carried out according to each museum's objectives, policies and strategies;

it is recommended

that spirituality as the immaterial value of objects be recovered, avoiding folkloric and picturesque situations;

that the multiplicity of resignifications in discourses and narratives which support the exhibition system in museums be duly recognized;

that an attempt be made to have research teams agree on the placement of each object in time and space, particularly emphasizing the conservation of heritage contexts;

that the participation of interdisciplinary groups be promoted for identifying, evaluating and studying immaterial values attached to objects so as to approach their communicational contents through different positions;

That an appeal be made to the ethics of museum professionals and of those from related disciplines to explicitly set forth the ideological standpoints from which resignifications are made, avoiding any manipulation and the conceptual rigidity that ignores the emotional component.

Considering

that the introduction of new technologies and the concept of virtuality have deeply altered the notions of heritage and cultural identity;

that the constant flow of innovations has led museums to permanently reviewing and updating their postulates and substantive functions;

that nowadays the notion of museums incorporates a virtual reality into their physical reality, expressed by their presence on websites as an extension of their activities and as a way to come closer to a global audience;

it is recommended

that the following virtual experiences be included in the field of museology:

1. Real museums which have their web page to allow visits and other virtual activities which can be accessed through different operating systems.
2. Museums present only on the web, set up with digitalized objects which exist in physical reality.
3. Museums which exist only on the web, created by using specific IT programs (cyberart and cyberdesign).

Considering

that the different possibilities IT systems and virtual reality offer to museums in no way substitute the real object and its intrinsic value;

that the virtual visit cannot replace the physical visit to a museum, since these are two different experiences;

it is recommended

that it be recognized that the museological theory must provide an ethical support to the presentation of new virtual museum images;

that the resolution taken in October 2004 at the ICOM General Conference in Seoul be supported and applied, in its intent of making an addendum to the ICOM Code of Professional Ethics and Deontology on the topics of museums, virtuality and new technologies;

that –within the framework of museums and the museological theory- a balance be struck between the mass media and the use of new technologies for promoting and appraising the different identities and their cultural expressions.

Topic 2. Latin American identities: museums, heritage and memory

- 2.1 *Genesis of identity processes: the aftermaths of memory.*
- 2.2 *Ideological and mythical nature of cultural identity: myths and reality*
- 2.3 *The challenge of contemporary times: cultural diversity and globalization.*
- 2.4 *Interpretation, presentation and transmission of immaterial heritage*
- 2.5 *The Latin American experience and preservation of immaterial heritage.*

Considering

that the identity processes can be found both in the acknowledgement of the past as well as in current times;

that in these processes there co-exist signs and expressions which recognize and appraise the heritage context and others which show a lack of appraisal and the indirect deformation of their meaning;

that historically, the presence of values originating outside the communities have had an impact on the heritage context –and on their cultural identity- thus generating new dynamics;

it is recommended

that actions be promoted to reappraise the communities so that they recover their sense of belonging;

that the object as a whole be recovered, that is to say, with its immaterial signification in association with its tangible representation;

that an appropriate museological and museographic treatment be enabled so as to facilitate acknowledgement of the wealth of the community context, both material and immaterial;

that the museum promotes an active participation of the community in the recognition and appropriation of its heritage;

that preservation and development of cultural identities be favored.

Considering

that the excessive progress in globalization alters and/or deteriorates the immaterial values of the various communities, thus turning them into alienated contexts;

that this process distorts the environment in which it takes place, disconnects the inhabitants from their past and predisposes them to uprooting and manipulation;

that some communities ignore the true magnitude of the immaterial value of their own heritage;

that museums, as an inalienable part of the community, are meant to shape minds capable of transforming valid structures;

it is recommended

that the development processes involving cultural identity preservation be envisaged, undertaking the commitment towards their authentic evolution;

that the museum promotes the strengthening of national and regional identities through actions for the self-assertion of the communities;

that negotiation spaces be opened to allow interaction with scientists, politicians, business groups and other entities interested in the appraisal and preservation of material and immaterial heritage.

Considering

that at the UNESCO Convention to Safeguard Intangible Heritage, held in Paris, in October 2003, intangible cultural heritage was defined by a mere listing of its components;

it is recommended

that a space for reflection be left open to allow for progress in the listing of concepts regarding the traits of intangible heritage;

that research methods be articulated to create theoretical structures applicable to Latin American heritage in its different regions.

Motion

It is requested that the participants in this Thirteenth Regional Meeting of ICOFOM LAM - to the extent of their possibilities- motivate their governments to sign and ratify the UNESCO Convention to Safeguard Intangible Cultural Heritage.

La Antigua Guatemala, 8 December 2004.

WORKING GROUP I

Categories of intangible heritage

Coordinators	Astudillo, Lucía Durand, Karina Franco, Samuel Gorgas, Mónica Nazor, Olga	Ecuador Mexico Guatemala Argentina Argentina
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Secretaries	Barrera, Rocael Ramos, Marco Antonio	Guatemala Guatemala
Participants	Águila, Patricia del Arreola, María Margarita Caxajl, Mario Enrique Castellanos, María Eugenia Chex, Angélica Escobar, Armando O. García-Vassaux, Alcira Godoy, María Antonieta Gómez, Flavia González, Marta Julia Jickling, Cynthia López Nol, José Luis Ortiz, Walter Paz, Lucía Puac C., Rosaria Rosalina. Ramos, Oscar Rodríguez, Cristina Taj, Edwin	Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala United States Honduras Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala

WORKING GROUP II

Latin American identities: museums, heritage and memory

Coordinators	Mercuri, Mónica Ojeda, Gina Peña, Nelly Pulgar, Nilda Vázquez Olvera, Carlos	Argentina Venezuela Ecuador Venezuela Mexico
Mode rators	Arathoon, Bárbara de González, Emma Marroquín, Luz Midilia Sáenz, Fabiana de	Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala
Secretary	Polanco, Rosario M. de	Guatemala
Participants	García, María Antonieta Gonzáles, Breitner Rivera González, Mynor Kwabaro, Azumi Alfaro Martínez, Sonia Méndez, María Eugenia Méndez, Michelle Orrego, José Daniel Pérez C., Juan Carlos Pérez G., Mónica A.. Tobar S., Telma María Vásquez R., Felipe Juan	Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Japan Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala Guatemala
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