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The Challenge of Time in Museology:

Capturing the Changing Narrative of Historical and Social Events:

The Case of the Museo de América in Madrid: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The societal role of museums has changed and is still constantly changing, the Museo de América in Madrid, Spain, is no exception. This research aims to capture the evolving role of museums by taking on the Museo de América as a case study. The Museo de América was chosen due to the limited international scholarly literature on the relationship museums in Spain, a once powerful and important colonial power, have with contemporary museological discourse. The research question is therefore, to what extent is the Museo de América able to create ‘contact zones’ and capture the changing narrative about indigenous communities in the Americas. This thesis uses Anthony Shelton’s methodology underlying critical museology as a set of tools as well as James Clifford’s concept of ‘museums as contact zones’. This research provides a better understanding of how an ethnographic museum in Spain addresses the colonial and authoritative practices in which museums were built on. The analysis of the Museo shows that some of the Museo’s underlying curatorial practices are consistent with Shelton’s methodological interdictions. However it also identifies a few limitations to the Museo’s capacity to navigate the challenges of bridging historical and cultural gaps across centuries. The most significant being the lack of an indigenous voice regarding the conquest itself. By including indigenous voices and presenting them as active participants, museums can play a critical role in providing visitors with the tools to better understand the evolution of modern society’s values.

Keywords: critical museology, ‘contact zones’, representation, indigenous people, indigenous communities, colonialism, Spanish Conquest

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Introduction

The importance of the role of museums in society has significantly evolved since the establishment of the first museums in the 19th century. Throughout the 20th century, a major rethinking of the world's various societal frameworks occurred, ranging from the democratisation of nations and the emancipation of women to the decolonisation of former colonies and institutional setups as well as the critical thinking about how the past was discussed and taught. In this context, since the 1980s an increasing awareness and debate about the ethical and social responsibilities of museums have developed amongst members of the general public, academics, and museum professionals. Considering this significant shift, today many museums are understood as institutions that showcase society's past and/or present underlying societal dynamics. These dynamic processes are especially evident when it comes to historical events that have been subject to major changes in interpretation such as colonisation and the treatment of indigenous populations in the Americas. The issue here lies in the sharp contrast between the representation of indigenous people in the 15th and 16th centuries and our current knowledge about these communities and their cultures. How can we best bridge this divide in representation, bring more context, and enable a more informed debate that would better involve the affected populations, and could provide a more balanced approach towards these historical events?

The field of museology also known as museum studies is the “critical and theoretical examination of the museal field.”¹ It concerns the practices of preservation (object acquisition, conservation, and the management of collections), research, and communication (education and exhibitions).² Within the field of museology, various methodologies attempt to capture how to analyse museums practices, one of which is critical museology. It entails thinking critically about all the different narratives, practices, and tasks that departments and institutionalised places of knowledge adopt, create, and practice, as will be detailed in Chapter 1. This thesis will apply some of the analytical tools of critical museology to analyse the narratives and practices of the Museo de América, an ethnographic museum in Madrid, Spain. By assessing the Museo's exhibitions

¹ François Mairesse and André Dessalées, introduction to *Key Concepts of Museology*, ed. François Mairesse, André Dessalées et al. (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 19.

² Mairesse and Dessalées, introduction to *Key Concepts of Museology*, 20.

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through the lens of critical museology, the objective of this thesis is to research the extent to which the Museo is able to create ‘contact zones’, and its ability to capture the changing narrative about indigenous communities in the Americas.

The Museo de América is a national museum in Madrid, Spain; it aims to provide a space where its artistic, archaeological, and ethnographic collections from the Americas, collected during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, can be admired and studied.³ Although the Museo de América covers all the territories in the American continent, comprising of North, Central, and South America, the Museo’s collections mainly focus on the Spanish speaking regions in Central and South America.

While there is ample research and literature analysing how museums in other former colonial powers, such as France and the United Kingdom, address their colonial pasts, there is limited international academic work about Spanish museums’ reflections on the country’s colonial history. Most literature is predominantly conducted by Spanish speaking scholars in Spanish. Nevertheless, its location in Spain allows museum professionals, and by extension the museum’s visitors, to explore the Spanish perspective on colonialism in the Americas. In this context, this research will also attempt to examine how the Spanish conquest and its impact on native communities in Central and South America is being addressed. It will examine how the museum addresses the historic event of the Spanish Conquest from a Spanish perspective and provide insight about how the museum seems to deal with any moral or philosophical aspects of the Conquest and its repercussions.

In order to answer the main research question, we will assess the narratives and wording used in the text labels, the way the artefacts are displayed, and the use of technology and activities to make the spaces more interactive. A description of the Museo in addition to a summary of my interview with the Director of the Museo de América, Ms. Encarnación Hidalgo-Cámara, will provide context about the Museo’s organisation and its mission. Finally, I will try to demonstrate, that despite the Museo de América’s limitations, its exhibitions are able to create “contact zones”, and to convey a sense of multidimensionality by presenting different perspectives and stories about people. Hence, I will argue that although the Museo de América does not actively use critical museology to pursue its mission, certain aspects of its permanent exhibition are consistent with the recommendations derived from critical museology.

³ “Un Poco de Historia,” Museo de America- Gobierno de Espana: Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte, accessed December 8th, 2018, <http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/museodeamerica/el-museo/un-poco-de-historia2.html>.

Introduction

The thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces and discusses the core concepts instrumental to critical museology. It mainly focuses on outlining the epistemological positions and the methodological interdictions Anthony Shelton highlights in his article, “Critical Museology: A Manifesto.”⁴ The chapter will also explain the theories and practices regarding: *collaboration, consultation, decolonisation, repatriation*, take form. This discussion provides the background framework to our key concept of ‘contact zones’, as expressed by Mary Louise Pratt, and to Jennifer Kramer’s thoughts on word choice.

Chapter 2 provides context and background information on the history of Spain’s colonial rule in Central and South America. It will also discuss the history of visual and literary representation in Europe of indigenous people and communities in Central and South America.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to describing the history of the museum and its collections, the interior and exterior architectural structure and style of the museum, the overall and detailed layout of the permanent exhibition halls, and finally, a summary of my interview with the director of the Museo de América, Ms. Encarnación Hidalgo-Cámara.

Chapter 4 proceeds with an analysis of the Museo’s curatorial practices with the application of the methodological framework presented in Chapter 1, and the key concept of museums as ‘contact zones’.

Finally, *Chapter 5* analyses the Museo de América’s past and present representation of Central and South American indigenous populations. It looks at how the museum represents the history of the Spanish conquest in relationship to critical museology’s take on decolonisation.

⁴ Anthony Shelton, “Critical Museology: A Manifesto”, *Museum Worlds* 1, no. 1 (2013): 7-20.

Chapter 1 ~ Analytical Framework: Critical Museology

Museology is the scientific study of museums. It is divided into multiple approaches as how to analyse museums as institutions. Anthropologist Anthony Shelton explains the differences between the various approaches in his article, “Critical Museology: A Manifesto.”⁵ He claims that on the one hand there is operational museology which regards the “organisational structures” and the “procedural and ethical protocols [...] that constitute the field of ‘practical museology’.”⁶ While, on the other hand there exists critical and praxiological museologies. These two approaches relate to the study of operational museology’, in that, “critical museology [stems] from a narrative multidisciplinary perspective, and praxiological museology through visual and performative media.”⁷ In addition to discussing the differences in the approaches, Shelton also outlines, the four main epistemological positions that critical museology holds as well as the seven methodological interdictions it calls for. It is important to keep in mind that while some museums have explicitly integrated some of the recommendations and methodologies that Shelton describes as part of their objectives, a number of museums, such as the Museo de América, have not. It is possible, however, that some of these museums may implicitly follow some of the methodologies pertaining to critical museology and they might be consistent with the tools Shelton discusses. The four epistemological positions that Shelton outline are:

“1- History does not exist independent of human perception and cognition, and is constructed by society. [...] Furthermore, history is not unitary or unified, but is constructed in distinct ways by different societies.

2- The figure of the collector has long been prioritized to give operational museology historical continuity and impart it an object legitimacy. [...] The justification of such activity however, in operational museology, is not attributed to its origin in history [that of collecting] but to a transcendental psychological drive.

3- Operational museology has constructed the museum’s institutional authority on an uncritical acceptance of empirical methodologies anchored in theories of objectivity. The institution of curatorship, based on the privilege it accords material or visual culture as its source of knowledge, is one of the essential guarantors of this self-same authority. [...] Objects, in the context of human displays, not only acts as signifiers but signifieds

⁵ Shelton, “Critical Museology: A Manifesto”, 7-20.

⁶ Ibid.,8.

⁷ Ibid.

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too. Their presence is not only a condition of their existence, but also a guarantor therefore of their meaning.

4-Operational museology develops within a field whose reality is constantly manipulated and attested through its own operations where politics are inseparably embroiled in its 'truth'.⁸

With these four positions, critical museology helps to analyse the ways in which museums present the knowledge they communicate, from the linear concept of human history they project to the institutional authority and privilege they carry in their collecting methods and exhibition display practices. Shelton also describes seven methodologies part of the theoretical framework of critical museology. They can be understood as suggested tools which can be used when analysing a museum through the lens of critical museology. They are summarised below.

“1-Agency- Was almost entirely ignored by operational museology. Not only the agency of the institutions themselves, but also the agency implicit in the construction and institutionalization of collections, exhibitions, and related pedagogic work, was effectively eluded in the institution's public presentation. Critical museology needs to uncover these occulted relations, and also examine the intersections and struggles between different types of agencies represented by distinct groups and cultures.

2- Reflexivity-This reflexivity is a necessary precondition for establishing a theory of practice, from which a practice of theory can emerge. Only by theorizing museum practices do we become conscious of the presuppositions that we apply to our everyday work, and only through a rigorous deconstruction and reflexivity of that work can we develop fresh insights and innovations necessary to ensure the future development of museums.

3-Distinction between museology and museography- To distinguish between museology as the study of museums and museography as a configuration of scientific, technical, and managerial knowledges (architecture, environmental controls, lighting, conservation, visitor studies, management) eludes the essential and dependent relations between the two systems of knowledges and obscures their points of articulation, relations of dependency, common epistemological origins, and political linkages and

⁸ Shelton, “Critical Museology: A Manifesto”, 9-13.

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functions. By distinguishing between applied and intellectual knowledge we obscure the close relations between them and the way they are mediated through social relations. This only reinforces their appearances as closed, systematic, and coherent fields devoid of social and cultural operations.

4-Social, political, and economic relations- Museums, along with museology itself, are part of wider fields of social, political, and economic relations and cannot be understood when segregated from other museums and galleries, heritage sites, monuments, and formulations and counterformulations of 'patrimony' and national or regional identities.

5- Assessment of collections- The institutionalization by museums of, for example, collections therefore needs to be critically assessed and the analysis of its effects examined for their political implications. It is usual for museums to elide the presence and agency of Western institutions and individuals, including themselves, in the history of assembling collections and imputing them meaning. The circulation between different cultures of 'works' and the construction of their specific arenas or fields of political and cultural meaning are broken and obscured by the geographical separation of collections from one part of the world from those from another. Difference is created by the imposition of a limit, which draws a boundary around one category while at the same time delineating what becomes an absence. Limits are constructed by linguistic discrimination-the differentiation of signs that intervene between the undifferentiated experience of the world and its conceptualization through language.

6-Critical museology is never exhausted by the act of deconstruction- The purpose of critical museology is not, however, to reform institutions or to claim a privileged position for its own practice, but to sustain an ongoing critical and dialectical dialogue that engenders a constant self-reflexive attitude toward museum practices and their wider constituencies. As theoretical knowledges move from intellectual to museum fields, they inevitably undergo a process of mediation, and reintegration within museum practices, objectives, vision, and values. Within this process, adopted perspectives become relationally and sometimes epistemologically transformed within new determinate fields.

7- Inclusion of adjacent institutions and national and international organizations-James Clifford (1997) and Mary Louis Pratt (1992) formulated the concept of the contact zone, museums have moved beyond easily definable, geographically circumscribed arenas of

interaction. Globalization, the formation of extraterritorial political and economic federations, and inter-territorial organizations, together with the growth of the Internet and social networking sites, have contributed to phenomenal increases in connectivity between institutions. Such networks connect museums, the subject positions represented within them, professional organizations, and management structures. They also connect museums with diverse client communities, including those from where their collections originated. Geographical distance is no longer sufficient to ensure the separation of object and subject, as evidenced by the growing and rightful refusal of communities, artists, and individuals to remain silenced.”⁹

The combination of the first four principles and the seven methodological interdictions provide a framework of guiding principles for museums according to Shelton’s perspective. However, for this purpose of this thesis, I will mainly focus on the second, fifth, sixth, and seventh methodological interdictions discussed by Shelton, as they provide the tools to best analyse the Museo de América’s curatorial practices. Shelton’s statement that, “the purpose of critical museology is not, however, to reform institutions or to claim a privileged position for its own practice, but to sustain an ongoing critical and dialectical dialogue that engenders a constant self-reflexive attitude toward museum practices and their wider constituencies” relates to some of the broader concepts embedded in deconstruction.¹⁰ The sixth interdiction encompasses the other ones being considered, *collaboration*, *consultation*, *decolonisation*, and *repatriation*, and will be used the most.

Consultation and *collaboration* relate to the broader practice of *collaborative museology* which entails the development of relationships with communities of origin. They are both different and complementary. The practices of *consultation* and *collaboration* relate to the development of relationships with communities as reliable and valuable sources of knowledge. *Consultation* and *collaboration* differ and are complementary. Consultation involves the development of relationships with communities for a period of time, such as for a specific project.¹¹ Collaboration is the process of developing relationships with communities over an extended period of time, it is meant to be continuous.¹² The actual practices of

⁹ Shelton, “Critical Museology: A Manifesto”, 7-20.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹¹ Viv Golding, “Collaborative Museums: Curators, Communities, Collections,” in *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections, and Collaboration*, (London: A&c Black, 2013): 20-21.

¹² Golding, “Collaborative Museums: Curators, Communities, Collections,” *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections, and Collaboration*, 20-21.

consultation and collaboration relate to both the deconstruction and reflexive methodologies Shelton describes, as they involve a reflection about the museum's position as a figure of authority. It asks the museum to confront the fact that other sources of knowledge, distinct from itself, are also valuable. The idea behind these practices revolves around the notion that "the museums could, and should, be a dialogic space- that to give meaning and value to objects was to invite source community members into the museum to add their voices to the objects."¹³

The Anne Frank House in Amsterdam provides a good example of *consultation*, *collaboration*, and reflexivity. It collaborates with the contemporary Jewish community members in the Netherlands in order to have an accurate understanding of how the effects of World War II and anti-semitism still affect them today. Communities in this sense refer to groups of people who share similar experiences derived from their cultures and/or their religious beliefs. A community can also refer to any group of people who share something, whether it be an experience, a culture, an interest; it provides a safe space for people to come together.¹⁴ Within the scope of the term community lies the term *communities of origin* which refers to the experiences communities have suffered and still are suffering from as a result of colonialism. Museums like the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver collaborate and consult with First Nations communities when curating exhibitions, creating educational and public programs, practicing conservation, or when processing an acquisition as well as the loans and/or repatriation of certain artefacts.

Decolonisation is the process of undoing practices that were established during a colonial regime. While it clearly relates to Shelton's overarching concept of deconstruction, it also concerns the methodologies of reflexivity, the assessment of collections and the issues lying in language discrimination, as well as the building of partnerships with other institutions. First, decolonisation entails the acknowledgement that museums as institutions were created on the basis of a colonial and authoritarian way of valuing and dispersing knowledge that also heavily influenced the process of object acquisition.¹⁵ Second, it involves the development of initiatives and methods to deconstruct the ways in which museums traditionally displayed and conveyed knowledge, and allow for new and dialogic ways of learning to occur.¹⁶ The process

¹³ Robin Boast, "Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited," *Museum Anthropology* 34 (2011): 66.

¹⁴ Dr. Ian R. Simpson, "The Cult of Community" (lecture presentation, Heritage and Museum Studies II Masters Course at Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands, April 2, 2019).

¹⁵ Shelton, "Critical Museology: A Manifesto", 17-18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

of decolonisation is one that encompasses a large spectrum of different methods in an attempt to achieve more inclusive, interactive, and accurate learning spaces. An example of a decolonisation practice relating to Shelton's point about language discrimination can be found in the text labels of the Musée d'Orsay's (Paris, France) current exhibition, *Le Modèle Noir de Géricault à Matisse* (The Black Model from Géricault to Matisse).¹⁷ In this exhibit the curator insisted on finding the names of the models of colour that were featured in artworks from 1794, the first abolition of slavery in France, until Matisse's discovery of the Harlem Renaissance in the early twentieth-century. Several titles of artworks were changed from 'black model' to feature the actual names of the models when they could be identified. In British Columbia, the Museum of Anthropology has also changed the text labels from saying "artist unknown" to "artist unrecorded".¹⁸ This was done to emphasise that the makers of the works were known within their communities but their names went unrecorded by researchers or collectors. This act of undoing the ways artworks were titled and changing the ways in which the creators or models are presented to the public is an act of decolonisation in itself. These references will be used when drawing comparisons with the labels at the Museo de América, providing a better understanding of the narratives the museum's permanent exhibition creates.

The practice of *repatriation*, also functions within the scope of deconstruction but more importantly it is a practice that relates to the third methodological interdiction about assessing the origins and relationships museums have with their collections. *Repatriation* refers to the process of returning something to its rightful owner; it can refer to a multitude of things ranging from artefacts to human remains.¹⁹ With respect to this thesis research, *repatriation* will be understood as the return of indigenous artefacts and knowledge. The process is quite complicated as many different stakeholders can be involved in addition to the judiciary and financial agreements and conditions that need to be agreed upon and met. However, *repatriation* will not be analysed in depth as the Museo de América is not currently an institution that partakes in repatriations. Nevertheless the fact that it does not will be understood as part of the museum's museological practices.

Another example of the practice of Shelton's second methodology on reflexivity and language discrimination concerns the importance in labelling native indigenous communities

¹⁷ "Le Modèle Noir de Géricault à Matisse," Musée d'Orsay, accessed April 9th, 2019. <https://m.musee-orsay.fr/fr/expositions/article/le-modelenoir-47692.html>

¹⁸ Dr. Karen Duffek, (curator of Pacific Northwest Coast), Exhibition Tour, November 22, 2017.

¹⁹ Bruce Bernstein, "Repatriation and Collaboration: The Museum of New Mexico," *Museum Anthropology* 15, no. 3 (1991): 19.

as *communities of origin* as opposed to *source communities*. Anthropologist Jennifer Kramer at the University of British Columbia has argued that the term *source communities* implies a form of continued extraction.²⁰ As many indigenous communities have faced exploitation of their cultures and creations, the term *source community* still assumes an unbalanced power dynamic between an institution and a community. The power dynamics between native indigenous communities and institutions such as museums and universities are still unbalanced. However, changing the language used to describe their position is worthwhile. It is worthwhile because it forces the museum to reevaluate the ways in which it values relationships with communities, their knowledge, and the values it aims to convey to its audiences. The term *communities of origin* elevates their position to one of an equal stakeholder in the museum's processes and mission. However, this implies more than a simple name change. Scholar Michael Ames has urged that in the case of anthropological museums, for communities of origin to be considered as equal stakeholders they must be seen as the *clients* and the curators as the *facilitators*.²¹ This is to say that anthropological museums are working with communities of origin; the curators help facilitate the creation of exhibition, providing the materials and resources needed for the curatorial process, while the communities of origin are the clients in that the museum staff is prioritising their voices, opinions, and responses to the museum's museological practices. Using the term *communities of origin* as opposed to *source communities* reflects a desire for equality as it deemphasises notions of exploitation, it also helps promote the understanding that the knowledge provided by communities of origin is valuable.

In addition to thinking critically about the rhetoric and the narratives created between museums and the communities with whom they collaborate, critical museology also recommends thinking critically about the physical spaces in which exhibitions take place. Shelton's last methodological interdiction about the inclusion of adjacent institutions cites linguist and literary scholar Mary Louise Pratt's concept of engaging with social spaces as 'contact zones'. It refers to "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination-like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today."²² Pratt

²⁰ Jennifer Kramer, "Museum Practice and Curatorship", (lecture, Anthropology 341 at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, November 2017).

²¹ Jennifer Kramer, "Möbius Museology in the Multiversity Galleries at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia", *International Handbook of Museum Studies: Museum Transformations*, ed. Annie E. Coombs and Ruth B. Phillips, Vancouver, BC: John Wiley and Sons (2015): 591.

²² Mary Louise Pratt, "Introduction", *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, UK: Routledge (1992): 4.

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further clarifies the meaning of “contact” in her terminology, “it treats the relations among colonisers and colonised, or travellers and “travellee,” not in terms of separateness of apartheid, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.”²³ This is to say, that, a ‘contact zone’ is a space where social engagement occurs between people of different backgrounds and experiences, often times ones that exist(ed) in opposition to one another. In the context of this paper, a contact zone will be interpreted as a space that forces people to address issues from a variety of perspectives, a space for social engagement that is charged and at times uncomfortable for some. In 1997, anthropologist James Clifford published a book, “Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century”, that applied Pratt’s theory of a contact zone to the museum sphere. He argued that “when museums are seen as contact zones, their organising structure as a *collection* becomes an ongoing historical, political, [and] moral *relationship*- a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull.”²⁴ Clifford’s analysis of his experience in The Portland Museum’s basement with representatives of the Tlingit Nation as a contact zone, presents museum events and exhibitions as being multidimensional. He explains that while being present in a conversation in the basement of the Portland Museum, something beyond the act of *consultation* occurred. He states, “a message was delivered, performed, within an ongoing contact history. As evoked in the museum’s basement, Tlingit history did not primarily illuminate or contextualise the objects of the Rasmussen Collection. Rather, the objects provoked ongoing stories of struggle.”²⁵ The process of learning goes beyond merely reading a text panel, it involves conversations and experiences; in this case a contact zone refers to, in large part, an experience.

Pratt’s explanation of a contact zone addressed two things, the fact that it requires social engagement and that it forces people’s opinions to clash, both taking place in a ‘safe’ space. It is also worthwhile noting that how one individual defines a ‘safe’ space may not be the same for another individual. A museum may feel like a safe space for some people; however, for others it is not. Taking this into consideration is part of the critical process some museums prioritise in their museological practices, examples include the Museum of Anthropology and the Museum of Vancouver. Clifford’s interpretation of the term adds political and moral dimensions to it. Within the scope of this thesis, a ‘contact zone’ will refer to a combination of

²³ Pratt, “Introduction”, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, (1992): 7.

²⁴ James Clifford, “Museums as Contact Zones”, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1997): 192.

²⁵ Clifford, “Museums as Contact Zones”, (1997): 193.

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both Pratt and Clifford's definitions when analysing the Museo de América's curatorial practices. The concept will be used as part of the analytical tools to analyse the Museo de América.

In today's society, museums are inevitably places of political and moral narratives, the complex histories and difficult stories they aim to represent clash with the mere fact that several museums as institutions have a colonial and authoritarian past. The Museo de América is no exception, it communicates a political and moral position while facilitating engagements between both, the public and the artefacts, and, between the artefacts themselves. It promotes contact zones that bring people and historical artefacts together, that may clash and have tensions against one another, in order to develop greater understandings of various historical stories that relate to Spain's colonial presence and relationship to Central and South America. The following chapter will provide a contextual background behind Spain's colonial rule in Central and South America, and the history of how indigenous people in these regions were represented in Spanish society historically.

Chapter 2 ~ Historical Background: The Spanish Colonisation and the Representation of Indigenous Communities from Central and South America

In order to understand how indigenous people from Central and South America have been and still are represented and perceived in Spain it is necessary to provide some historical context about the Spanish Empire. While the fascination with the American continent commenced in 1492, with Christopher Columbus' first trip to the island of Santo Domingo, present day Dominican Republic, the actual empire only started in 1535 with the establishment of the first viceroyalty, Nueva Hispaniola - New Spain (Figure 1).²⁶ The Spanish monarchy worked alongside both the Portuguese monarchy and the Vatican throughout the colonial rule. The Spanish had four main aims for colonising and conquering the Americas: the further development of their trade, countering the competing expansion of the Habsburg and Portuguese empires, the evangelisation of the local indigenous people, and finally the personal ambition of explorers and their desire to acquire wealth.²⁷ The Spanish monarchy gained control over a majority of the islands in the Caribbean, all present day countries in Central America, and most countries in South America with the exception of Brazil, Suriname, French Guiana, and Guyana. It commanded its power and control through the establishment of viceroalties, each of which represented the monarchy in the new colonies. The viceroalties "functioned as political, social, and administrative institutions that connected the monarchy to the local indigenous and expatriate communities."²⁸ They were governed as provinces of Spain. Between 1535 and 1776 four viceroalties were founded: Nueva Hispaniola, also known as New Spain, that of Peru, of New Granada, and Mar del Plata.²⁹ Although there is no scholarly consensus about the exact size of the populations of indigenous people prior to the Spanish conquest, estimates range between 30 and 100 million indigenous people over all the Americas.³⁰

²⁶ Kelly Donahue Wallace, *Art and Architecture in Viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 159.

²⁷ Donahue, *Art and Architecture in Viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821*, (2008), 159.

²⁸ Nora van Trotsenburg, "Representation of Indigenous People in the Spanish Royal Collection During the 16th and 17th Centuries," unpublished Masters course paper, (Leiden University, 2018).

²⁹ Donahue, *Art and Architecture in Viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821*, (2008), 160-162.

³⁰ Woodrow Borah, "Historical Demography of Aboriginal and Colonial America: An Attempt at Perspective," (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992): 13-32.



Figure 1. Map of Central and South America under the Spanish Empire with the viceroalties labelled. Accessed December 12th, 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Viceroyalty-of-New-Spain>

Considering the religious mandate motivating the exploration of the Americas and the conquest, it is not surprising that a large part of the artworks created at the time “portrayed” the dissemination of Christian values. This created an unbalanced power dynamic based on the precept that both the Spanish people and Christianity were superior to the ethnicity and religious beliefs of the indigenous people.

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Religious conversion was one of the main priorities the Spanish had, since Pope Alexander VI gave them “virtually unlimited authority in America.”³¹ They had “complete governmental and religious control over their colonies, in turn blurring the separation between Church and State.”³² They presented themselves as the connection between the local indigenous people and the Papacy. Hence, the monarchy used the moral authority of the Pope in conjunction with the values set by the Catholic Church as one of the primary methods to stay in power. Throughout the colonial rule, it was believed that in order for the indigenous peoples to be ‘saved’, they needed to relinquish their beliefs deemed ‘paganist’ and they had to convert to Christianity. The colonial rule maintained this unbalanced power dynamic between the indigenous people, on the one hand, and the monarchy, the governing officials and religious priests, and the Spaniards who had settled in the New World, on the other hand.³³

The representation of communities of origin in the visual arts further contributed to reinforce these unbalanced power dynamics. Scholar Carlos Reyero from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, explains that paintings, such as *Primer Desembarco de Cristóbal Colón en América* (The First Landing of Christopher Columbus in America), portray indigenous figures as half-naked without any aesthetic differences distinguishing hierarchies amongst them.³⁴ In this work the artist, Dióscoro Teófilo Puebla Tolín (1831-1901) depicts Christopher Columbus and his team of explorers as active participants; while Columbus is kneeling to pray, some of the men are desperately climbing out of the water onto the stones carrying flags with a crucifix. The sun’s rays shine directly on them, conveying their sense of command over the land and difficult circumstances they faced at sea. In contrast, the local indigenous people are illustrated on the left-hand side of the work. They are sitting in the shade cast by the tree, separated from Columbus and his team, gazing at the Spaniards. They appear withdrawn. Reyero further argues that this representation conveyed the image that the indigenous person was inferior to their European counterpart. Reyero also comments on the fact that the indigenous people are depicted as being half-naked without any visual hierarchical differences, which he interprets as follows, “they form an undifferentiated group, which represents, in the

³¹ Marjorie Trusted, *The Arts of Spain: Iberia and Latin America 1450-1700*, (London: V&A Publications; The Hispanic Society of America, 2007), 160.

³² Trusted, *The Arts of Spain: Iberia and Latin America 1450-1700* (2007), 170.

³³ van Trotsenburg, “Representation of Indigenous People in the Spanish Royal Collection During the 16th and 17th Centuries.”

³⁴ See Figure 2 on following page for the image of painting.; Carlos Reyero, “Pasivos, exóticos, vencidos, víctimas. El indígena en la cultura oficial español del siglo XIX”, *Revista de Indias* 64, no. 232 (2004): 724.

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face of a sophisticated iconographic characterisation of the conquistadors, the “savage’.”³⁵ Reyero, further argues that the representation of the indigenous persona and the ‘savage’ was prevalent during the Early Modern Period in Europe.



Figure 2. Dióscoro Teófilo Puebla Tolín, *Primer Desembarco de Cristóbal Colón en América* (The First Landing of Christopher Columbus in America), 1862. Oil on canvas. Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.

³⁵ Reyero, “Pasivos, exóticos, vencidos, víctimas. El indígena en la cultura oficial español del siglo XIX”, (2004): 724

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The work by José Garnelo y Alda (1866-1944), *Primeros homenajes a Colón en el Nuevo Mundo* (First Tribute to Columbus in the New World), also illustrates the relationship between the colonised indigenous people and the colonising Spaniards.³⁶



Figure 3. José Garnelo y Alda, *Primeros homenajes a Colón en el Nuevo Mundo* (First Tribute to Columbus in the New World), 1892. Oil on Canvas. Museo Naval de Madrid, Madrid.

Artists represented indigenous people in various ways, nevertheless, the narrative of the “exotic other” permeated; the indigenous other, at the time known as ‘indian’, was always in a position of submission and passivity which contrasts that of the Spanish conquerors, who were illustrated as sophisticated, active, and educated.³⁷ The depiction of indigenous people as both ‘savages’, passive and in submission to the Spanish Crown, as well as to the Pope, was a main feature of their representations in Spanish artworks. Theatrical and literary works such as, “Relación Acerca de las Antigüedades de los Indios” (An Account Of the Antiquities of the Indians), by Fray Ramón Pané also discusses the Spaniards’ perspective on the importance of converting the local indigenous people of the then island Española, now Haiti, to Christianity. This play focuses on a Spanish monk, Ramón Pané’s experience with the indigenous people and their belief system during the time of Columbus’ arrival in the Americas. A quote of the text reads, “Digamos ahora cómo se hicieron cristianos los primeros que recibieron al santo

³⁶ Reyero, “Pasivos, exóticos, vencidos, víctimas. El indígena en la cultura oficial español del siglo, 724

³⁷ Ibid.

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bautismo y lo que es necesario hacer para que se hagan todos cristianos.”³⁸ This text translates to: “Let me now tell how the first Indians to receive baptism were made Christians, and what is required to make them all Christians.”³⁹ In this context the Spanish priest imparts himself a position of power and somehow of authority, to determine that all indigenous people must convert. The conversion of indigenous communities to Christianity was central to Spain’s colonial rule and is known to have occurred in all colonies in the Spanish Empire. These forms of visual portrayal represented indigenous people as submissive, passive, and “primitive”, promoted the idea in the general public in Spain that colonisation was a non-violent and non-invasive process. When in reality, it was not.

Understanding the history of representation in both the visual and literary arts allows us to better understand how the Museo de América represents indigenous people in the past and today. The following chapter will provide a presentation of the Museo and is divided into three sections. The first is about the history of the Museo, the second is a description of the Museo’s architecture and permanent exhibition, and the third is a summary of the interview with the Museo’s director, Ms. Encarnación Hidalgo-Cámara.

³⁸ Ramón Pané, and José Juan Arrom, “Relación Acerca De Las Antigüedades De Los Indios : El Primer Tratado Escrito En América”, (Nueva Versión, Con Notas, Mapas Y Apéndices by José Juan Arrom.. ed. México, Siglo XXI, 1974): 54

³⁹Constance G. Janiga-Perkins, "Translation and Healing in José Juan Arrom’s 1974 Relación acerca de las antigüedades de los indios (c. 1498)", *The Translator* 12, no. 1 (2006): 122.

Chapter Three ~ Presentation of the Museo de América

3.1 The Museo's History

The Museo de América was founded in 1941, shortly after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).⁴⁰ Its collection is comprised of 25,000 objects, which are divided up into three categories: pre-Columbian, ethnographic, and viceregal.⁴¹ The pre-Columbian collection relates to works made before Columbus' arrival to the Americas, the ethnographic collection consists of works that were acquired during scientific expeditions carried out during the colonial period (1535-1776), and the viceregal collection is composed of works about or created for the viceroys during the Spanish Empire in the Americas.⁴²

The Museo publishes a journal annually with articles about research conducted on specific artefacts, the histories of the cultures displayed, and the representations and narratives about indigenous populations local to the Central American and South American regions. The Museo's original aim and purpose are explained in the first journal publication in 1993.⁴³ One of the editors, Paz Cabello-Carro, wrote the preface in which she expresses the overall objectives and structure of the journal: "Pero su objetivo a más largo plazo es ser, además, un vínculo entre las instituciones museísticas americanas y las europeas."⁴⁴ This translates to, "But its longer term objective [of the museum] is, in addition, to be a link between museological institutions in the Americas and in Europe."⁴⁵ Hence, the museum acts as a correspondent to museums in Europe and in the Americas, in order to facilitate relationships between museums on both continents. Cabello-Carro further explains that the journal is meant to be open to change and innovation. It is designed to meet the needs and obligations of the Museo and to integrate the concept of "americanismo".⁴⁶ "Americanismo" is the term referring to the academic study of the Central and South American continent and cultures within it; it relates to a variety of disciplines such as linguistics, anthropology, archaeology, and postcolonial and cultural studies.⁴⁷ The first article in the first publication is an account of the history of the evolution of

⁴⁰ "Un Poco de Historia," Museo de América, accessed March 8th, 2018, <http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/museodeamerica/el-museo/un-poco-de-historia2.html>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² "Anales del Museo de America no. 1", Centro de Publicaciones (Ministerio de Educación, Cultural, y Deporte no. 1, 1993), 17-18.

⁴³ "Anales del Museo de America no. 1, Centro de Publicaciones, (1993): 17-18.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Author's translation.

⁴⁶ "Anales del Museo de América no. 1", Centro de Publicaciones, (1993): 7.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

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the Museo into the institution we know today. Cabello Carro, also the author of this article, emphasises that although the establishment and opening of the Museo is fairly recent, the history of the collections goes back to the eighteenth century.

The Museo's collection currently stems from a diverse set of collections, drawn from the Museo de Ciencias Naturales (Museum of Natural Sciences) and the Royal Cabinet of Natural Sciences.⁴⁸ The original collection, however, was composed of the ethnographic section from the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (National Museum of Archaeology). It featured works from the Philippines, Oceania, and some works from Africa. It was meant to cover the whole Spanish Empire.⁴⁹ The idea to have an institution dedicated to indigenous creations only came to light in 1572; however, due to fires in both of Madrid's Royal Palaces during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, all of the 'non-painting' works were destroyed.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, these artefacts were considered to be the most valuable acquisitions of the entire collection. In 1771, King Charles III of Spain founded the Royal Cabinet of Natural History, displaying the remaining collection. It was based off of the collections from the antiquities, of curiosities, of minerals, and of zoology that Pedro Franco Dáila had collected during his time in Paris. The Cabinet of Natural History only collected indigenous objects from the pre and post-columbian periods; no colonial objects were collected.⁵¹ After the last colonies gained independence - Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in 1898- Spanish society became heavily disinterested in the Americas. It was not until the twentieth century that an appreciation for indigenous works began to develop. In 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, the Spanish government decided to create a Library-Museum about Indigenous people, the, "Biblio-Museo para los Indios".⁵² This institution was meant to centralise all objects that had been acquired from indigenous people in Central and South America. It eventually led to the development and establishment of the Museo as we know it today, in 1941. It was temporarily closed for renovation from 1981 to 1991.⁵³ Today, the Museo's collection is composed of artefacts collected during the viceregal period of the Spanish empire.

The Museo is a state museum, managed by the Ministerio de Cultura (Ministry of Culture) within the Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Bienes Culturales and the Subdirección General de Museos Estatales (General Department of the Fine Arts and Cultural

⁴⁸ "Anales del Museo de América no. 1", Centro de Publicaciones, (1993): 18.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

Assets, and, the General Sub-Department of State Museums).⁵⁴ It is the only museum in Spain that is dedicated to the study and research of the Americas.⁵⁵ As a public entity, the Museo's collaborations and consultations are primarily conducted with similar institutions in the Americas. The museums in the Americas act as mediators between the communities of origin and the Museo, enabling it to access information about the local communities through a different type of collaborative and consultative process.

3.2 Description of the Museo

a. Interior and Exterior Architecture

The Museo de América is located in the Parque Jaime del Amo (Jaime del Amo Park), in the university district of Madrid. It sits on a hill overlooking the Monument of General San Martín and the Avenida de la Memoria. The architects of the Museo de América, Luis Feduchi and Luis Moya Blanco, wanted the building to embody architectural elements that were both neocolonial and historical. The architecture aims to refer to Spain's "missionary and civilizing labour" in the Americas.⁵⁶ Although the concept of having a museum specifically about the American continent dates back to the 16th century, the actual construction of the building did not begin until 1942, and was only completed in the early 1990s. During the construction period the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (National Archaeological Museum) housed the Museo de América, by creating a section dedicated to displaying the future museum's collection. It is important to note that a large part of the Museo de América's collection came from the National Archaeological Museum's collection.

The main structure of the building is in the shape of a rectangle (Figures 4 and 6). It contains a courtyard in the centre; the building surrounds the courtyard so visitors inside can look out into the courtyard while visiting the museum. Moreover, it also contains a more narrow rectangular addition on the bottom left-hand side, in which there is a tower. The building was visibly built from stone and decorated with bricks. The mixture between the two materials in the exterior façades creates a duality between traditional Spanish architectural styles and classic

⁵⁴ María Concepción García, and Félix Jiménez Villalba, "Museo de América, mucho más que un museo". *Artigrama: Revista del Departamento de Historia del Arte de la Universidad de Zaragoza* 23 (2009): 84.

⁵⁵ Concepción García and Villalba, "Museo de América, mucho más que un museo", (2009):84

⁵⁶ "El Museo de América, una joya arquitectónica", Museo de América- Gobierno de España: Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte, accessed June 10th, 2019, <http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/museodeamerica/el-museo/un-poco-de-historia2/una-joya-arquitect-nica.html>

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white stone/marble characteristics. The presence of a courtyard in the centre of a building is a traditionally Spanish architectural style. It is present in many buildings built during the viceregal period in Central and South America. The entrance of the Museo de América is characterised by a large stairway leading to a balcony and then an oversized arch with Spain's national flag waving in the centre. The arch contains a pyramid-like roof with the "Museo de América" inscribed on it (Figure 4). The pyramid is topped off by multiple tree-like embellishments. The visitors enter the museum below the balcony, there are three mini-arches with glass doors. Apart from the entrance, the building's right-hand side façade also contains tall arches. The added tower at the end of the building refers to the baroque churches built in the Americas.⁵⁷ The tower and arch are reminiscent of the Church of San Esteban in Salamanca; many missionaries from this church went to the Americas. Moreover, the large staircase recalls the outdoor staircases found in royal palaces. They serve to amplify the entrance and create a sense of awe and grandeur. The fact that the museum was constructed on a hill that overlooks the Avenida de la Memoria further creates a sense of grandeur for the museum's visitors. It recalls the traditional structures and the ambiances museums had when they were first established in the 17th and 18th centuries.



Figure 4. A photograph of the Museo de América's exterior. March 20th, 2019.

⁵⁷ "El Museo de América, una joya arquitectónica", Museo de América- Gobierno de España: Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte, accessed June 10th, 2019, <http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/museodeamerica/el-museo/un-poco-de-historia2/una-joya-arquitect-nica.html>



Figure 5. A photograph of the Museo de América front exterior. March 20th, 2019

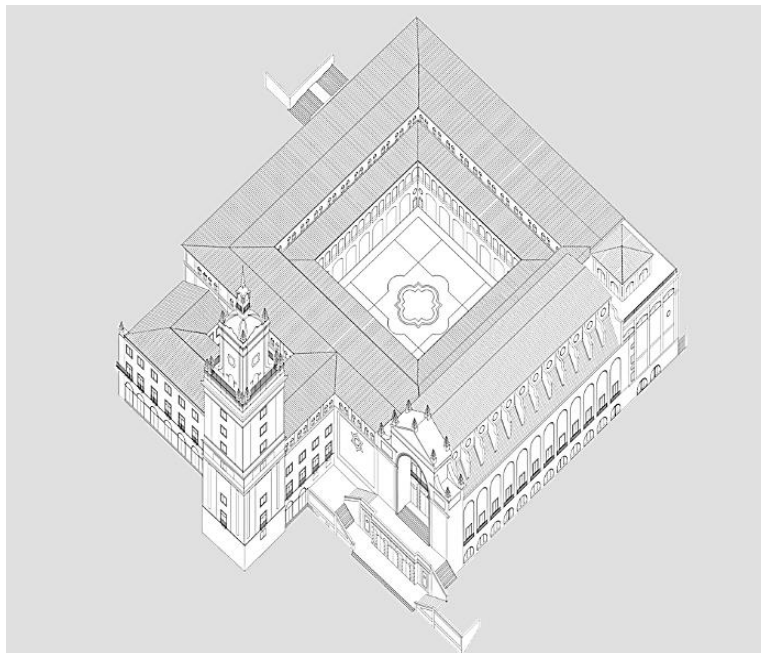


Figure 6. A screenshot of the architectural layout of the Museo de América. April 16th, 2019.

The interior of the Museo de América (Figures 6 and 7), contains elements of traditional Spanish architectural styles: an outdoor courtyard with a garden and fountain in the centre of the structure completely surrounded by the physical building with windows looking out to the plaza, and in a square shape. The ceilings are relatively high and arched, also an architectural element that is recurrent in Spain. Furthermore, both the floor and indoor stairway are made of

white/beige marble. Like the outdoor stairway and balcony, it creates a sense of grandeur and importance.

Indoors, the museum is composed of three floors. The ground floor, also the first floor, consists of the gift shop, the welcoming office, and the hall where the temporary exhibitions are held. The second and third floors house the permanent exhibition. In addition to being a museum, the building also houses the offices for the museum's staff and a library open to the public on the second floor. The architectural framework of the Museo is significant to our research because although it was built quite recently it displays various architectural styles, structures and features. It therefore contributes to expanding our comprehension about how we can understand the Museo through the lens of critical museology.

b. The Permanent Exhibition

The permanent exhibit has remained the same since the Museo de América's opening in the 1990s. It is divided into five main themes in order to explain how the different cultural influences in the Americas first came together, how they have evolved, and how they relate to one another. The first theme is *El Conocimiento de América* which translates to the knowledge about the Americas, the second is *La Realidad de América* which is the reality of the Americas, the third is *La Sociedad* which translates to the society, the fourth is *La Religión* which is religion, and the fifth is *La Comunicación* which is communication.⁵⁸ The first, second, and first half of the third themes are located on the second floor, while the second half of the third theme, the fourth, and fifth themes are found on the third floor. The first thematic room, *El Conocimiento de América* (The Knowledge of the Americas), focuses on the myths about the Americas that were prevalent in Europe and the realities the Spanish chroniclers actually faced. It also addresses the scientific discoveries made during the expeditions throughout the colonial rule.⁵⁹ The second thematic room, *La Realidad de América* (the Reality of the Americas), explains the immensity of the American continent and the diversity of its cultures. Following this section, comes the largest thematic room on *La Sociedad* (The Society); it is divided into two subsections, *Las Sociedades Igualitarias* (Traditionally Equal Societies) and *Las Sociedades Complejas* (The Complex Societies). The first subsection exhibits the most traditional communities and their day-to-day lives. The second subsection about Complex

⁵⁸ "Un Poco de Historia", Museo de América, <http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/museodeamerica/el-museo/un-poco-dehistoria2.html>.

⁵⁹ Concepción García and Villalba, "Museo de América, mucho más que un museo", (2009):92.

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Societies discusses societies that were organised in hierarchies, such as local chiefs and the practice of a statehood.

In the fourth thematic room, *La Religión* (Religion), we find accounts of the different religious practices provided through explanations of the deities, temples, and priests, the different types of rituals that were created, from funerary to fertility. Here we discover sacred objects and their related myths as well as a juxtaposition between the realities and worldview of indigenous peoples and those of the European societies. Lastly, the fifth thematic room, *La Comunicación* (Communication), exhibits the different types of pre-Columbian writing and calendars. Texts are translated into Spanish as currently spoken in that particular region. This room is centred on the role and importance different languages, indigenous and European, have had and still have in societies throughout the Americas.

Entrance and Room 1: El Conocimiento de América



Figure 7. A photograph of the entrance on the second floor, leading to the first hall in the permanent exhibition. A panel with the different themes and the model from the National Cathedral are present. March 20th, 2019

The entrance to the permanent exhibit, on the second floor, is in a large hall surrounded by multiple windows. It contains a series of panels explaining the setup of the exhibition and all of its thematically organised rooms. It also contains a miniature model of the Cathedral in

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Mexico City located on the main square, known as the Zócalo (Figure 8). The square was formerly the centre of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec Capital.⁶⁰ The cathedral was constructed on top of the Templo Mayor which was the main temple for the Mexica peoples of the Aztec civilisation. Currently visitors can visit the cathedral as well as the ruins of the temple. The model in the Museo de América features this characteristic; however, the text label does not explain these details and focuses on the cathedral's construction process, inaugural ceremony, and purpose.



Figure 8. A photograph of the model of the National Cathedral in Mexico City near the entrance to the permanent exhibition. March 20th, 2019

The first thematic room, The Knowledge of the Americas, is organised into three halls. The first is about the representation of the Americas in Europe ranging from German prints depicting 'exotic' creatures supposedly from the Americas and quotes taken from the journals of explorers such as Christopher Columbus and Hernan Cortés. Two pillars in the entrance contain labels about how much the Europeans knew about the Americas.

It draws attention to the ways in which Europeans imagined the Americas prior to the conquest. It also includes the journal entries by the explorers and colonisers to complement the

⁶⁰ I learned this during my education in Mexico (2007-2009). More information can be found: J. Burton Kirkwood, *The History of Mexico*, Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group Incorporated, 2000.

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displayed objects of the indigenous people. On the one hand the objects demonstrate that these civilisations were extremely rich and multidimensional. While, on the other hand the quotes also show the ways in which the Spanish tried to understand the local indigenous populations, their cultural traditions, and daily habits. This room covers various geographic areas such as, Peru, Mexico, Colombia, and Ecuador. It presents a diverse continent filled with many cultures and people.



Figure 9. A photograph of the entrance into the first themed hall, *El Conocimiento de América*. March 20th, 2019

The room also contains glass cases with quotes taken from different explorer's journals, ethnographic objects, and paintings. In the centre of the hall another cubicle displays prints drawn by European artists depicting their ideas about the flora and fauna in the Americas (Figure 10). It also contains a glass painting of America as a woman. On the outside walls of the three-walled cubicle there are also paintings of scenes between the explorers and the indigenous populations. The prints show the different ways Europeans imagined the people who lived in the Americas, Figure 10. It aims to show the limited knowledge about the

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Americas. The exterior of the three-walled room contains paintings of the colonisation and conquering process, such as Hernan Cortés' arrival in Mexico.



Figure 10. A photograph of the prints exhibited in the three-walled room in the centre of the first hall. March 20th, 2019

The second hall contains two weavings from the Pacific Northwest Coast as well as a text and a text label explaining the meaning behind the next hall.



Figure 11. A photograph of the second hall, a weaving from the Pacific Northwest Coast is exhibited; there is visibility into the third hall. March 20th, 2019.

The third hall is designed as if it were a Cabinet of Curiosities from the 17th century (Figure 14). The floor and walls are made of wood. The objects are displayed in cases that are embedded in the walls. At the end of the hall a replica of the *Piedra del Sol*, the Stone of the

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Sun from Mexico, sits over the door. It represents the aztec/mixtec calendar. The label states that the reproduction was donated by the Mexican government in 1892 for the *Exposición Histórico-Americana* (Historical American Exhibition) in Madrid.⁶¹



Figure 12. A photograph of the third hall looking into the last hall in *El Conocimiento de América*; the *Piedra del Sol* (Stone of the Sun) is visible in the back. March 20th, 2019

The last hall in the first thematic room focuses on the representation of the Americas in maps and globes dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. They represent the world as it was known at the time.

⁶¹ Museum label for Piedra del Sol, Permanent Exhibition: *El Conocimiento de América*, Madrid, Spain, Museo de América, March 20th, 2019.



Figure 13. A photograph of the last hall in *El Conocimiento de América*. March 20th, 2019

Room 2: La Realidad de América

The second thematic room, the Reality of the Americas, draws attention to the geographical and cultural landscape of the continent. It is composed of three halls; they each discuss a different aspect of “the Reality of the Americas”. The first contains a large physical model of the continent with all its geographical landscapes, the second is about the human development on the continent, and the third focuses on the cultural developments.

The first hall, the *Geografía y Paisaje*, features a replica of the continent illustrating all the major rivers, lakes, mountain ranges, and geographic landscapes (Figure 14). The amazon rainforest in South America and the boreal rainforest in North America are also featured. The model of the continent sits on a model of the ocean, the visitor therefore gets the impression that they are flying above the continent. One is able to see the varying features both on land and in the ocean. The model also demonstrates how vastly diverse the continent is in terms of its landscapes and climates. The visitor walks on the bridge-like structure from the Southern tip of the continent to the Northern one.

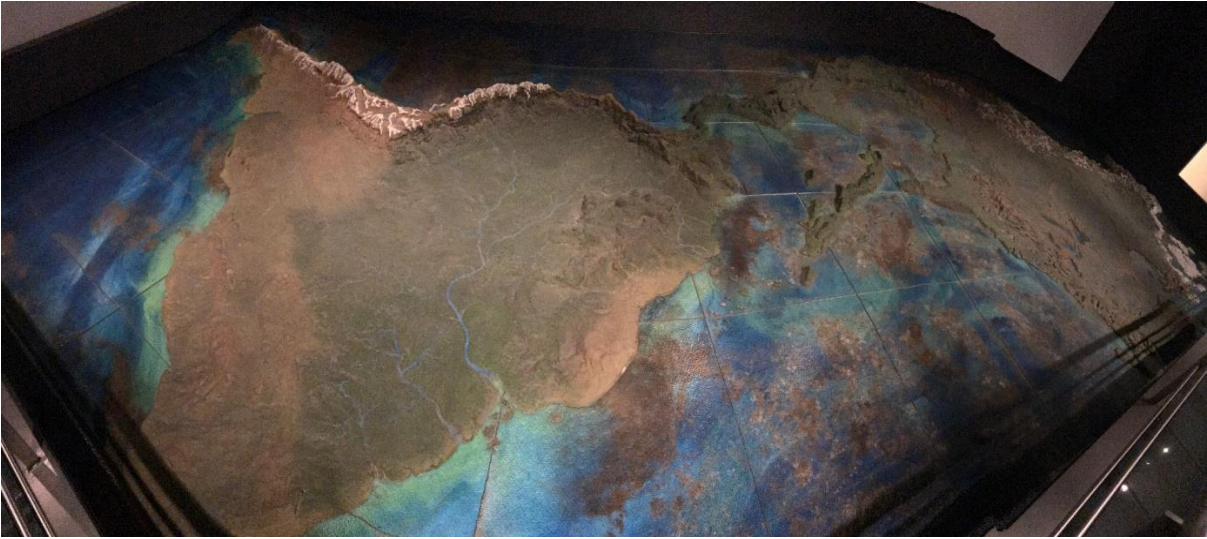


Figure 14. A panoramic photograph of the model of the American in addition to the Caribbean islands in the *La Realidad de América* theme. March 20th, 2019.

Following the model of the continent, the second hall focuses on *El Hombre* (Man), illustrating how the continent has evolved, from population movements to the various languages spoken (Figure 15). Several maps are also paralleled with graphs, paintings, and ethnographic objects creating a more complete illustration of the theme. The maps also highlight the history of the continent from the pre- columbian era to the present day. On both sides of the hall, paintings made during the viceregal period explain how indigenous people and enslaved Africans were treated and viewed in Spanish households. Two cases are dedicated to African heritage and Asian immigration, Figure 18 on page 38. There is a map that also points to the history of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and the different countries involved. The overall aim of this section of the theme is to show the rich cultural and ethnic diversity that exists within the Americas.



Figure 15. A photograph of the map indicating the movements of people across the Bering sea and throughout the continent; displaying population movements of the first indigenous American populations. March 20th, 2019.



Figure 16. A photograph of three oil paintings displayed in the first hall of the *Geografía y Paisaje* section. March 20th, 2019.

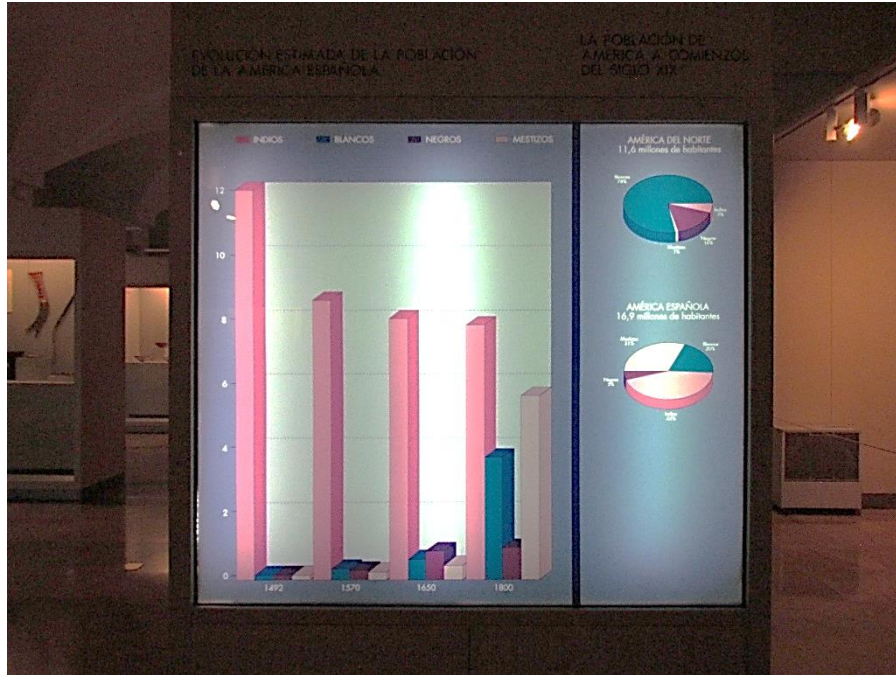


Figure 17. A photograph of a graph and pie charts explaining population demographics over time. March 20th, 2019.



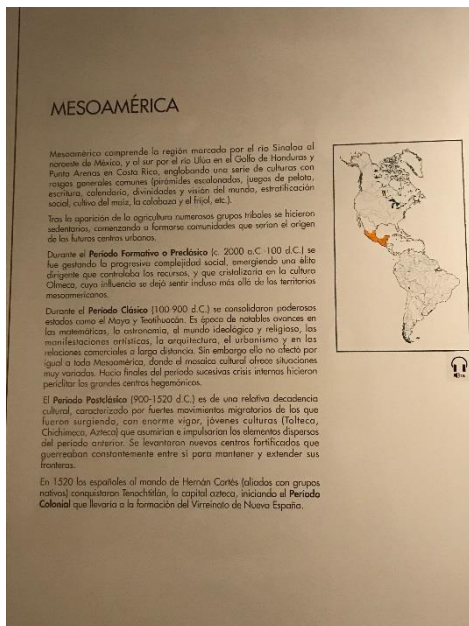
Figure 18. A photograph of the case explaining Asian immigration using ethnographic objects as evidence in the *Geografía y Paisaje* section. March 20th, 2019.

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The last section of the second thematic room focuses on *El Desarrollo Cultural de Polo a Polo* which translates to the cultural development from the South Pole to the North Pole. It is divided into sub-themes, each one corresponding to the cultural makeup of the different regions of the Americas, such as: Meso-America, North America, Intermediary Area, Central America and the Caribbean, Central Andes: Old Peru, Northern Andean Region: Colombia and Ecuador, and Meridian Andes. Another sub-theme also included is about Indigenous Groups in South America. The cases within each sub-theme either relate to the various civilisations that existed in the region or the diverse civilisations that existed within one country, such as Brazil. This section demonstrates both the differences and similarities between different civilisations during the colonial period and raises awareness about the great diversity throughout the Americas.



Figure 19. A photograph of the second portion of the *La Realidad de América* theme, *El Desarrollo Cultural Polo a Polo*. March 20th, 2019.



Figures 20a and 20b. Photographs of the text panel and the corresponding case in *El Desarrollo Cultural Polo a Polo*; the case is about the different indigenous populations in the Gulf of Mexico. March 20th, 2019.

The labels also point out the exploitative nature of the European’s extraction and trade of precious metals such as gold and silver. The curators have created juxtapositions between the information in the labels and the actual objects that were produced as a result of the extraction and trade of the precious metals.

Room 3: La Sociedad

The third theme is divided into two sections, *Sociedades Igualitarias* and *Sociedades Complejas*. The *Sociedades Igualitarias* refer to communities “that are built on family-like relationships, which means that a permanent figure with the role of a leader or chief does not exist.”⁶² Contrary to *Sociedades Complejas* they are not built around a leading ‘chief-like’ figure. There are no such hierarchical structures as exist in *Sociedades Complejas*. This third theme also features a temporary exhibition by Alice Trepp, *The Woman from the Valley of Chota in Dialogue with the Museum*. It consists of wax figures representing different individuals from Ecuador and their stories. It serves to create a dialogue between the past and the present,

⁶² Mario Medina Montes, Tránsito al Estado: de sociedades igualitarias a las sociedades jerarquizadas, Caldas: Colombia, Universidad de Caldas: Fundamentos de Antropología, December 13, 2016: 1.

especially considering that the majority of the information displayed in the permanent exhibition refers to the past.



Figure 21. A photograph of the temporary exhibit in the *La Sociedad* theme. March 20th, 2019.

The first section, *Sociedades Igualitarias*, is divided into three halls. The first hall consists of an introduction to the temporary exhibition with enlarged photographs, text labels, and a video about the difficulties facing indigenous people in Ecuador. Every wax figure has a text label describing each represented person and story. As can be seen in Figure 21 the labels are situated next to the wax models. The museum introduces the exhibition as follows:

“This exhibition offers a brief recapturing of the way of life, particular narratives, micro-histories that bring us closer in our relationship with slavery in the past, to its cultural inheritance in the present, and to the actual reality charged with racism and discrimination.”⁶³

This temporary exhibition provides visitors with a link between the past and the present and creates a sense of continuity throughout the exhibition. A dialogue between people who have suffered from oppression and marginalisation is created throughout this third theme. It provokes

⁶³ Museum label for the temporary exhibit, *The Woman from the Valley of Chota in Dialogue with the Museum*, Madrid, Spain, Museo de América, March 20th, 2019.

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the visitor to think critically about the meaning of integrating such an exhibition next to the permanent one.

The following two halls highlight the similarities of different societies. The key here is to focus on the overall similar concepts such as mourning the dead and celebrating marriage. Cases include ethnographic objects from different places together with photographs taken more recently. The idea is to create an overall coherence, linking the past and the present. While the communities may have existed for a long time, some of their rituals and practices have remained the same while other aspects of their day-to-day lives may have changed alongside the advancements society has made in the last century. Themes such as puberty, ageing, and death are explored. The idea is to illustrate the overarching themes in each culture and to explain how the different indigenous communities explore them. This facilitates an interaction between the visitor and the indigenous people who are represented, as visitors can also relate to the same rituals and practices that are being presented.



Figure 22. Photograph of the entrance into *La Sociedad* from the hall with the introduction to the temporary exhibition. March 20th, 2019.



Figure 23. A photograph of a case about puberty in *La Sociedad*. March 20th, 2019.

Sociedades Igualitarias

This hall focuses on *Las Bandas* (Bands) as being a non-hierarchic form of society. The hall features case displays as well as models of the varying housing structures from different indigenous communities. The cases also display the cultures as being still present, further contributing to the idea of integrating past and present. The hall is composed of case displays and a large model of a house. They display various objects relating to weaving and transformation of primary materials.



Figure 24. A panoramic photograph of the hall *Sociedades Igualitarias: Las Bandas*. March 20th, 2019.

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The third hall focuses on the aspect of ‘tribes’. Similar to the previous halls it is composed of ethnographic objects, text labels, and paintings. However, this hall also includes a canoe, a tipi, and a housing structure used by the Jibaro community in Puerto Rico (Figure 25). A wax model of a person from the temporary exhibition is also featured here. Overarching themes about war, housing structures, and ceramic making are discussed. Here, the cases display ethnographic objects relating to these themes.



Figure 25. A photograph of the *Sociedades Igualitarias: Las Tribus*. March 20th, 2019.

It is clear in this section that the museum has attempted to create a space that contains both archaeological artefacts as well as objects from modern societies, whether it be a model of a longhouse or a wax model of an indigenous woman today.



Figure 26. A photograph of one of the case displays in the *Sociedades Igualitarias: Las Tribus*. March 20th, 2019.

Sociedades Complejas

This section of the societies theme is located on the third floor. Upon entering this section, the visitor is greeted with a text panel that explains the meaning of complex societies, “these societies introduce an element that characterises them specifically, for the first time we witness the hereditary inequality between a community’s members.”⁶⁴



Figure 27. A photograph of the first hall in *Sociedades Complejas: Las Jefaturas*. March 21st, 2019.

⁶⁴ Museum label for *Sociedades Igualitarias*, Permanent Exhibition: *Sociedades*, Madrid, Spain, Museo de América, March 20th, 2019.

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The section is divided into four halls. The first focuses primarily on Chiefships, the concept itself and how it is practiced differently in varying indigenous communities. It presents ethnographic objects from the Tlingit First Nation from the Pacific Northwest Coast and explores the economies of these communities. It also features a housing structure, a longhouse used for Potlatches, from the Pacific Northwest. Unlike most of the halls, this one also includes a television screen. It introduces a different museological tool that is more interactive. The text label explains the creation of financial assets through the commercialisation of agricultural products. However, this also contributed to increasing social inequalities throughout the community.



Figure 28. A photograph of the hall *Sociedades Complejas: Estados*. March 21st, 2019.

The second hall focuses on the concept of ‘Estados’ (statehood). On the left-hand side, it includes cases that are embedded in the walls, as seen throughout the entire permanent exhibition. An island case displays models of different housing structures. On the right hand side, the hall has a mini-platform with a setup of different objects that relate to the colonial period from the 16th century onwards, and paintings depicting household day-to-day life. These

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works also act as a commentary on the mixing of the different social and racial groups that existed and still exist in some countries. The centre of the hall features a large canvas depicting the transfer of the Royal Seal of Carlos IV in Mexico in the 17th century during the Viceroyalty of New Spain (Figure 29).⁶⁵ The two sides of the hall offer a contrast between indigenous housing structures and Spanish housing structures. The end of the hall presents a series of recent photographs taken of the housing sites of the indigenous populations and a painting of Plaza Mayor in Lima, Peru.



Figure 29a. A photograph of the second hall *Sociedades Complejas: Estados*. March 21st, 2019.



Figure 29b. A photograph of Royal Seal of Carlos IV in the second hall *Sociedades Complejas: Estados*. March 21st, 2019.

⁶⁵ Museum label for Royal Seal of Carlos IV in the Sociedades Igualitarias section, Permanent Exhibition: Sociedades, Madrid, Spain, Museo de América, March 20th, 2019.



Figure 30. A photograph of the third hall *Sociedades Complejas: Estados*. March 21st, 2019.

The third hall focuses on agriculture activity in state run societies (Figure 30). In the centre of the hall, the temporary exhibition features a wax model of a woman. She carries a pillow on her head and a basket in her left hand. She is standing amidst various fruits and vegetables on a platform surrounded by four cases displaying ethnographic objects. The rest of the hall is theme based and also displays paintings from the viceregal periods illustrating several societies from Central and South America.

The fourth and last hall in the *Sociedades Complejas* draws attention to the inequalities and to their representations through works such as oil paintings and stone sculpture that existed in such hierarchical societies. The hall itself is long. On the right-hand side, it consists of a long oil painting and three smaller oil paintings that were made during the viceregal periods. It also features a wax model of a young man, Figure 45 on page 72. Figures 32 and 33 illustrate how both indigenous people and enslaved Africans were considered second-class citizens in comparison to the ‘white’ Spaniards. The raised platform in the centre allows the visitor to view the large painting on the opposing side from a higher and further perspective, providing a more global view of a long oil painting (Figure 31). The left-hand side features more ethnographic objects; the visitor can walk up some steps and view the works from a higher perspective.



Figure 31. A photograph of the fourth hall in the *Sociedades Complejas: Estados* section. March 21st, 2019.



Figure 32. Vicente Albán, *Señora Principal con su Negra Esclava*. 1873. Oil on canvas. Museo de America, Madrid, Spain.

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Figure 33. A photograph of the painting by Andres Sanchez Galleque's *Los Tres Mulatos de Esmeralda* (The Three Mulatos from Esmeralda), in the *La Sociedad* thematic hall. March 21st, 2019.



Figure 34a. A photograph of the fourth hall in the *Sociedades Complejas: Estados* section. March 21st, 2019.



Figure 34b. A photograph of the glass case displays, with ethnographic objects, embedded the pyramid structure. March 21st, 2019.

Room 4 : La Religion

The fourth theme is that of *La Religion* (Religion); the subject matter is divided into three halls. Upon entering the first hall, there are four glass display cases with objects representative of different religions. On the one hand there is a sculpture that represents, Chalchiuhtlicue, the Aztec Goddess of Water, from the Aztec culture. While, on the other hand there is a statue representing the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In the centre of the hall there is a pyramid like structure that calls up the architectural style of the Mayan pyramids. The visitor can walk inside it. Within the pyramid's main pillars there are small glass case displays exhibiting ethnographic objects. The four main walls of the first hall contain glass case displays, as can be seen in Figures 35. Several paintings on the wall illustrate the diversity of religions that were and still are present in the Americas.

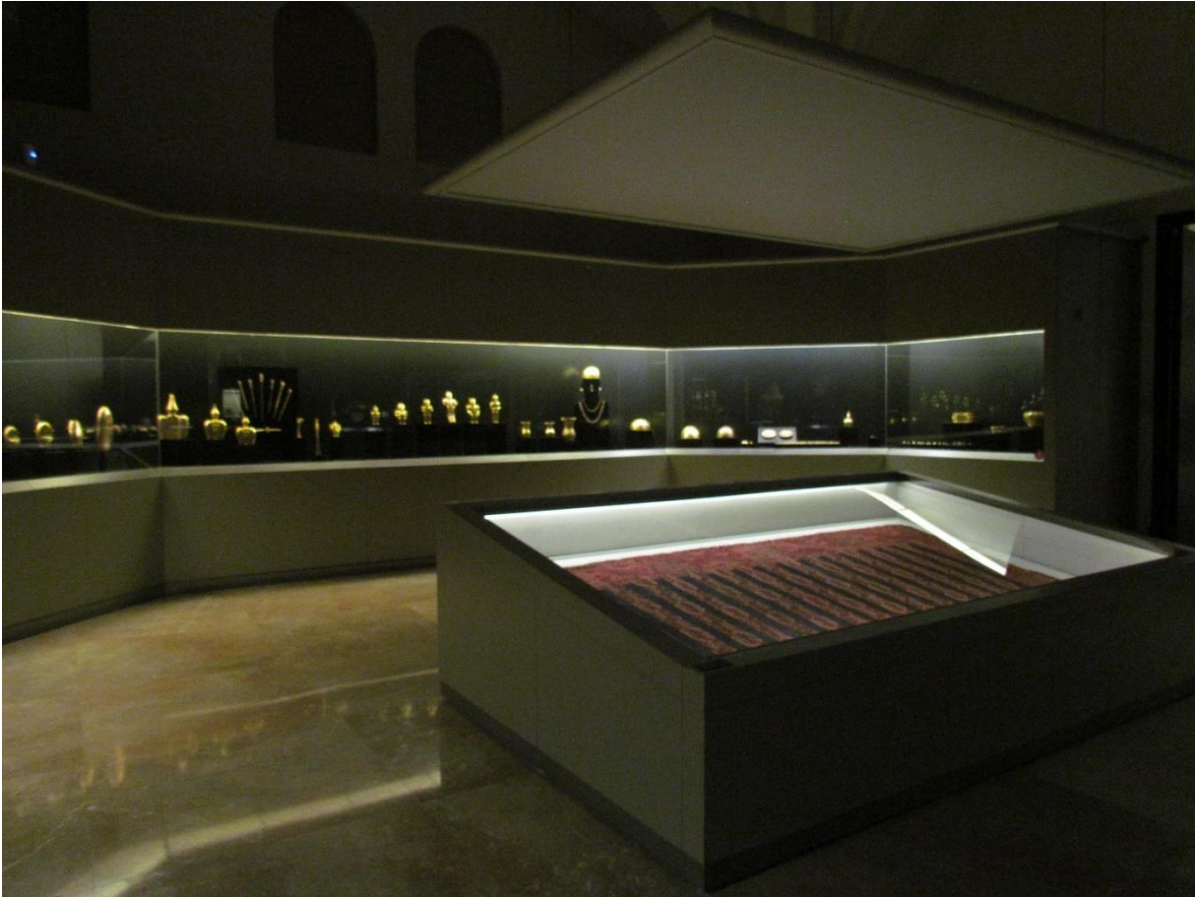


Figure 35. A Photograph of the second hall in *La Religion* theme. March 21st, 2019.

The second hall contains a large display case in the centre and long curved shaped display cases on the walls (Figure 35). The display case in the centre contains a large rectangular weaving whereas the cases embedded in the walls present information and ethnographic objects relating to death and funerary rituals. This hall features delicately crafted objects used in funerary and death rituals, such as the treasure from the Quimbayas; this treasure is from Colombia created between 500-1000 BC, and was donated to the Spanish state in 1893.⁶⁶ The text labels provide a unifying theme around the rituals honouring the dead and their deification throughout various religions.

⁶⁶ Museum label for Tesoros de Quimbaya, Permanent Exhibition: Las Religiones, Madrid, Spain, Museo de América, March 20th, 2019.

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The third hall consists of glass displays organised in parallel to one another (Figure 36). In the beginning of the hall, there are Christian relics on the left-hand side and sacred objects representing deities from indigenous civilisations on the right-hand side. Glass displays also present and explain rituals regarding fertility and hallucinogenics are exhibited and explained.



Figure 36. A photograph of the overall layout of the third hall in the *La Religion* theme. March 21st, 2019.

This hall, like the cultural development hall in the second thematic room, displays information in parallels. The hall is a rectangular shaped room. There are two cases arranged in pairs positioned alongside both the right and left-hand sides, presenting information in parallels. Displays also include paintings originating from the viceregal period.

The text labels comment on the significance each religion has and on their impacts on the different societies throughout the Americas. The aim in this section is to show the diversity in Central and South Americas, in part because of the different religions. It communicates a message of unity by displaying artworks in parallels. Despite the differences there are parallel beliefs and rituals. Text labels discuss the different types of sacrificial rituals, and more importantly bring forth the similarities of those indigenous rituals. On the one hand there are symbolic bowls that were used during sacrifice rituals. On the other hand, there are paintings

depicting Jesus Christ's Crucifixion. Furthermore, the text labels emphasise the component of transformation in all rituals. Works representing purification rituals are also included. However, there is no direct discussion about the conversions of indigenous people to Christianity, either forced or voluntary.

Room 5: Comunicación

The last theme on *Comunicación* (Communication) is organised into a single rectangular shaped hall, divided into several sections. Upon entering the hall the visitor is greeted by a wax model of Blanca Viviana Vásquez Villalba, one of the women featured in the museum's temporary exhibit (Figure 37). The introductory text label explains how instrumental the act of communication between human beings is to all societies in the world. It also talks about the influence of globalisation on modern communication styles. This section also discusses the various types of communication methods, languages, and writing systems. It presents the Western European languages based on the latin and greek alphabets as well as the non-alphabetical indigenous languages.



Figure 37. A photograph of the model of Blanca Viviana Vásquez Villalba in the first hall of the last theme, *Comunicación*. March 21st, 2019.

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As seen in Figures 37 and 38, the walls on both the left and right-hand sides exhibit ethnographic objects alongside text labels and maps of the relevant regions as well as paintings representing the different ways people had and still use to communicate. For instance, one wall displays a framed weaving as well as ethnographic objects including pictographic drawings. This section is displaying how Meso-American societies used pictograms in their writing systems.



Viviana Figure 38. A photograph of a case display and weaving in the entrance of the last theme, *Comunicación*. March 21st, 2019.

Moreover, similarly to the previous thematic room on Religion, this room also uses parallels to convey this unifying concept of communication, language, and writing systems. This thematic section also highlights the diversity in indigenous languages that existed and still exist today. For instance, the Nahuatl, the language of the Mayas is still spoken today. The language is being taught in schools in Mexico and Guatemala. The hall also displays old books from the Early Modern Period and the colonial time in Spain that were used to teach Spanish during the Viceregal periods.

The right-hand side wall contains miniature three-walled rooms (Figure 39). Here both ethnographic objects and oil paintings from the colonial period are displayed. One room recreates a nun's room, Mother Juana Inés de la Cruz, and it includes a wooden cross, a wooden desk, a wooden chest, and two oil paintings, one of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe and the other of the nun herself (Figure 39).



Figure 39. A photograph of the replica of the room of Mother Juana Inés de la Cruz in the theme on *Comunicación*. March 21st, 2019.



Figure 40. A photograph of the oil paintings depicting different families of three in the theme on *Comunicación*. March 21st, 2019.

On the left-hand side wall there is a large oil painting consisting of eight smaller paintings (Figure 40). These paintings each depict a family of three people- mother, father, and child. Each work, however, represents a different family of three. At times the mother is

presumably Spanish while the father is a person of colour, other times the entire family is indigenous, and other times the families are presumably Spanish.



Figure 41. A photograph of the entire manuscript of the Madrid Codex that is on display in the center of the hall. Taken March 21st, 2019.

In the middle of the hall there is a dividing partition that contains a reproduction of one of the four still existing pre-Columbian Maya codices (Figure 41). The codex is a “typical Meso-American screenfold book composed of a 6.82 m long strip of bark paper, folded like an accordion in order to form rectangular pages or leaves [...] painted on both sides.”⁶⁷ The codex is comprised of two parts: the Codex Troano and the Codex Cortesiano; they were brought separately to Europe in the 19th century and it was not until 1880 when Léon de Rosny understood they were both part of the same manuscript.⁶⁸ The Museo Arqueológico Nacional acquired the Codex Troano in 1887 and the Codex Cortesiano in 1888, they were then transferred to the Museo de América upon its establishment in 1941.⁶⁹ The manuscript is arguably the most significant object in the Museo de América’s ethnographic collection. For

⁶⁷ David Buti, Davide Domenici, et al., “Non-invasive investigation of a pre-Hispanic Maya screenfold book: the Madrid Codex,” *Journal of Archaeological Science* 42 (2014): 166, accessed April 29th, 2019, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305440313002975>

⁶⁸ Buti, Domenici, et.al., “ Non-invasive investigation of a pre-Hispanic Maya screenfold book: the Madrid Codex”, (2014): 166

⁶⁹ Ibid.

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reasons of conservation, the original codex is not currently displayed, instead a reproduction is presented to the public.

The central area of the hall also contains information about the communication methods during the viceregal periods. The introductory text panel for this section describes the different iconographic forms of communication during the colonial period and the importance of music in relationship to communication. The right-hand side walls are indented to create smaller three-walled spaces (Figure 42). These three-walled rooms display Christian religious paintings.

In the centre a large case displays a wide range of objects, primarily from the colonial period. Musical instruments such as violins are displayed alongside oil paintings, sculptures, traditional ritual dresses, and ceramic works. The visitor is able to walk around the entire case whilst engaging with the individual objects. The wall directly across this case display, on the left-hand side wall features an oil painting of the Virgin Mary from Guadalupe in Mexico.



Figure 42. A panoramic photograph of one of the indented walls with paintings in the *Comunicación* theme. Taken on March 21st, 2019.



Figure 43. A photograph of the case display in the center of the latter half of the hall on *Comunicación*. March 21st, 2019.

The last part of the hall contains a wall text discussing the variety of languages and dialects that currently exist throughout the American continent, with an emphasis on the Spanish speaking regions. Although the Spanish language acts as a unifying characteristic throughout all of Central and South America with the exception of Brazil, Haiti, Guiana, French Guiana, and Suriname, the dialects within the Spanish language that developed in each region significantly differ from one another. The label discusses the different linguistic variations of the Spanish language throughout Central and South America. For instance in Argentina the term ‘vos’ which is the formal ‘you’ is still being used, while throughout the rest of the Spanish speaking countries, including Spain, the term ‘usted’ is preferred.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Museum label in the *Comunicación* theme in the Permanent Exhibition. Madrid, Spain, Museo de América, March 21st, 2019.

3.3 Interview with Director Sra. Encarnación Hidalgo-Cámara

As part of my research, I interviewed the Museo's director, Ms. Encarnación Hidalgo-Cámara, during my visit to the Museo in March 2019.⁷¹ Ms. Encarnación Hidalgo-Cámara was trained as a conservator, and worked in the Museo de América's conservation department before becoming the museum's director in July 2018. It is worthwhile mentioning that all of the Museo's past directors were previously conservators. The interview lasted about two hours, and was partly recorded. The interview was based on questions I had previously sent Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara as well as questions that arose during our conversation. My questions included: what narrative(s) does the Museo de América aim to communicate with the public? how are the voices of indigenous people and their histories considered in the museum's museological practices? and considering the limited funding the museum receives, how has the museum tried to apply practices pertaining to critical museology?. A summary of the interview is provided below. The first part relates to the establishment and management of the museum, while the second relates to the questions I had suggested.

Part 1

Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara graciously engaged the discussion as an ongoing conversation throughout my research. She emphasised that in order to understand the practices of the Museo de América it is essential to understand how the museum was established and how it is currently managed. We discussed the history of the museum, from the initial idea of having a museum dedicated to the Americas to the actual construction of the building. Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara showed me the collection of books they have about the Museo's first collections. The conversation moved from the formation of the Museo's collection to its actual establishment in 1941. She also explained how the architecture of the building carries symbols from Spain's occupation of the Caribbean, Central, and South America, as well as referring to the Church in Salamanca.

The conversation then shifted to the ways in which national museums in Spain are managed. She explained that the museum is part of the Ministry of Culture, and therefore carries the status of a national museum. Within the Ministry of Culture it falls under the denomination of the sub-direction of state museums. This status determines how the institution receives funding and which objects it is able to acquire. Moreover, she indicated some online resources

⁷¹ A transcript of the whole interview can be found in section 2 of the Appendices.

that would provide more information about the organisation of museums in Spain and their management.

Part 2

Our discussion then moved towards the relationship the Museo has with the concepts of critical museology. My first question was: “What narrative(s) does the Museo de América aim to communicate with the public?”, to which Ms. Hidalgo-Camara responded that the museum wants its audiences to develop their own conclusions. Hence, visitors are encouraged to interpret as they wish the information the Museo provides, including the various narratives. She further emphasised that by stating the fact and explaining the diverse histories that exist, the museum does not aim to make a value judgement about past events. Another question I had in relation to this aspect was about repatriation and how the museum considers the voices of the people they aim to represent. Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara explained that the museum has a general mandate, from conservation practices to the information highlighted in the exhibition halls. It therefore tries to best consider the voices of the people represented and the knowledge they provide with adequate acknowledgement of what has been shared, including decisions about objects and their relevant information.

Another question I had related to the use of the word ‘primitivo’ in the text labels in the exhibition halls. I noted that it appeared a few times and my question related to the potential adverse connotations of that word. Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara explained that it does not carry the same meaning in Spanish as it does in English. Finally, I asked her about the Museo’s curatorial practices and how in her view they could relate to the methodologies of critical museology. Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara responded that while the Museo’s staff do try to stay current with new developments and discussion in the field it is challenging to base a museum on a specific theory or approach, considering that theories are constantly evolving.

This interview enlightened me to the diverse ways museums in different countries are structured in addition to how museum work is being understood. I found the information I gathered from this interview extremely insightful, as it helped me understand the Museo de América as an institution. It also enlightened me about the diverse ways museums in different countries are structured and how museum work is being understood and conducted.

Chapter Four ~ A Discussion of the Museo's Curatorial Practices

Using Shelton's four methodological interdictions outlined in Chapter 1 (numbers 2,5,6, and 7), this chapter will examine the various narratives expressed in the museum's permanent exhibition, including word choice used in the text labels, the layout of the halls, and whether the objects featured in the case displays relate to James Clifford's interpretation of "contact zones". Finally, I will review the institutional setup of the museum and its position as a national museum will be made in conjunction with comparisons to the National Archaeology Museum in Madrid.

Text Labels

The text labels throughout the entire permanent exhibition do not express a specific political or philosophical stance. By creating parallels and juxtapositions between the visually tangible works (ethnographic objects and paintings) and the text panels, the museum allows for its visitors to develop their own narratives and interpretations. Featuring multivocality in exhibitions is a method of deconstruction that museums use, it enables an understanding that there are multiple experiences and perspectives about certain events, such as the Spaniards' arrival in the Americas. Nevertheless, the fact that the museum does not take on a moral or philosophical stance can be interpreted as being either a lack of reflection about the conquest and the repercussions of colonialism, or as an inherent part of museums' roles in societies as neutral spaces that do not have to express a moral, philosophical, or political position.

The permanent exhibition relies on introductory labels to explain the theme of the hall, section labels to provide information about specific case displays or sections within the themes, and object labels to describe the specific ethnographic objects, paintings, or models on display. The first introductory text panel in the first theme, *El Conocimiento de América*, does not claim that Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas, it states that he was an explorer and travelled there.⁷² Here there is reflection on the widespread narratives about Christopher Columbus discovering the Americas. The label shows that the Museo has thought about how to explain Columbus' role in the representation of the Americas in colonial Europe in a more accurate and nuanced way.

⁷² Museo (Introductory) label the *Conocimiento de América* theme in the Permanent Exhibition. Madrid, Spain, Museo de América, March 20th, 2019.

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In the second theme of *La Realidad de América* we can find contrasting narratives. On the one hand some labels express critical thinking about the unbalanced power dynamics described in Chapter 2. On the other hand, some labels use terms that have become questionable for other museums. For example, the word “primitivo” is being used in labels in the second thematic room. It is used to describe the first people who settled in the Americas after having crossed the Bering sea.⁷³ During the interview Ms. Encarnación Hidalgo-Camara mentioned that in Spanish these words only carry a descriptive meaning. While it could be used to describe the early settlements in the Americas, ie. the beginning of humankind on the continent, in today’s society it is questionable to use such terms to describe indigenous people. Other words that could be used instead of ‘primitive’ are indigenous or Native people. Another example is the use of the word ‘negro’ in the artworks in the section on *Sociedades Complejas: Estados* in the third theme. Although in Spanish it strictly means the colour black, our modern culture would expect a commentary label explaining that at the time it identified a colour and not necessarily a culture or a population as a cultural group. The fact that these terms are not explored further is an indication of how the Museo’s practices are not currently engaging with discussions about the representation of indigenous communities and the discrimination and racism they often still face. A commentary label could show that the Museo tries to keep up with current sensitivity regarding ethnicity and race. In contrast, France’s Musée d’Orsay’s current exhibition *Le Modèle Noir* (2019) includes commentary labels discussing how people saw race and discrimination in the past in comparison to today. This exhibit shows that the Musée d’Orsay is trying to be attentive and reflective about the contemporary discussions on the issues of representation of people of colour. In order for museums to better present past events that occurred in specific political and cultural backgrounds, they also need to act as ‘translators’ or intermediaries to help bridge the gap between the past and the present. Tools such as ‘contact zones’, interactive technology, and labels and narratives can help museums in this endeavour.

Layout

The fact that each of the halls in each of the themes is organised according to a specific theme demonstrates that the museum has worked to transport its visitors into different environments surrounding them with various forms of information and learning. The multiple

⁷³ Museum label for the Madrid Codex in *La Comunicación* theme in the Permanent Exhibition. Madrid, Spain, Museo de América, March 21st, 2019.

layouts present in the first thematic section, alone, all engulf and transport the visitor. Shelton's seventh methodology concerns the inclusion of adjacent institutions in addition to thinking of museums as 'contact zones' and as spaces for learning through social engagement.⁷⁴ In her discussion, Mary Louis Pratt argued that her interpretation of "contact" related to an understanding that binaries between different positions of power, such as "colonisers and colonised, or travellers and 'travellee' " are being treated as a 'co-presence' and not as being separate entities.⁷⁵ The 'contact zone' experience can be encountered in the third theme on *La Sociedad* (Society). The inclusion throughout this theme of the wax figures of people of colour who have suffered from oppression and marginalisation in Ecuador, provides an example of contrasting and clashing narratives. This temporary exhibition illustrates how the practice of decolonisation and consultation and collaboration can take place within the museum sphere. It creates a space for another viewpoint on the experiences of people in Central and South America to be present within the museum space. Moreover, text labels provide background about the person consulted to create the exhibition as well as about the stories they shared.

The permanent exhibition displays ethnographic objects in theme-based halls, rooms, and sections.⁷⁶ It does not follow a strict chronological and historical timeline. It is theme-based because the themes are not arranged in an overtly chronological and historical order. Within each theme, there is, however, a chronological order in the sense that the *La Comunicación* hall starts by drawing parallels between past and present communication methods and ends with a discussion of how the Spanish language, today, varies from one country to the next. Here, the rooms are organised by theme and ethnographic objects are displayed according to their similarity. Having a theme organised space allows the visitors to draw comparisons and forge parallels between the cultures and to understand that while the societies may differ in many ways they are also quite similar in many values. The theme-based approach is also seen in how certain halls such as in *La Sociedad* are arranged according to specific regions within the American continent. Within each of the regions overall themes are drawn, allowing for the ethnographic objects to demonstrate both multi-vocality as well as similarity in terms of where they originate from.

In addition to case displays and artworks, the Museo uses technological tools, such as TV screens, audio guides, and digital screens to further its visitor engagement. It is important

⁷⁴ Clifford, "Museums as Contact Zones", 192.

⁷⁵ Pratt, "Introduction", *Imperial Eyes* (1992): 7

⁷⁶ Beat Hächler and [Translated by] Niall Hoskin, "Museums as Spaces of the Present: The Case for Social Scenography." *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies* (2013): 349-369.

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to note that the Museo's use of technology is quite limited, it is only present in the second and third thematic halls. The impact of these tools seems however limited by the fact that most maps and TV screens are only written and presented in Spanish. While the audio guides did offer an option to listen in English and the layout of the museum was available in multiple languages- French, Spanish, and English- the fact that none of the labels were translated suggests that it is assumed most visitors will be Spanish speakers.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the *Sociedades Igualitarias* section in the third thematic hall consists of case displays that focus on overarching themes, such as puberty and death. The case displays contain ethnographic objects as well as photographs taken more recently. These themes are ones in which the vast majority of people, regardless of cultural background are able to connect with. By focusing on such themes, the Museo is able to facilitate a relationship between the visitor and the indigenous people who are represented. These case displays also allow to show the continuity between past indigenous communities and present ones. The case displays allow visitors to connect with the indigenous communities represented. Visitors can see how they are able relate to all these communities and that in fact they share many similarities with these communities, in terms of social rituals, practices, and human transformations. The cases themselves act as contact zones since narratives about past and present traditions are explored. Furthermore, the exhibition halls in the *Sociedades Igualitarias* section also act as contact zones. The information presented both in the case displays and through the temporary exhibition contribute to create immersive spaces where different narratives are explored. Here the representation of the indigenous communities in Central and South America are shown accurately, as the information is accurate. However, the lack of both direct and active voices from various indigenous communities represented can be interpreted as contributing to a stagnant representation. This is to say, the incorporation of more technology and engaging tools, such as videos, would strengthen the Museo's attempt to show continuity between both the past and present indigenous communities in Central and South America. The lack of more video footage and engaging and immersive tools may be a result of the tight financial budget they are endowed with. The temporary exhibition allows for a direct and active voice to be present in the exhibition space. Although the overall environment in this section does not encourage the objectification of the indigenous communities represented, the limited place given to indigenous voices and perspectives does allow an 'us versus them' relationship between the Museo, its visitors, and the indigenous communities to develop.

The traditional case displays in the first section of the *La Sociedad* theme also juxtapose ethnographic objects and/or photographs from the past with more recent photographs. Often

times with anthropological and ethnographic museums, numerous pre-Columbian or pre-Colonial era cultures are depicted as being in the past and no longer existent. The case displays from the *Sociedades* theme onwards attempts to dismantle this by exhibiting photographs, video footage, and wax figures of people today alongside their stories. The inclusion of the temporary exhibition in *La Sociedad* theme as well as the contrast between past and present photographs in the case displays suggests a conscious approach to express a wide range of perspectives and experiences. It does present various angles from which people can try to understand the histories existing in the Americas. Although the topic of the conquest as a war and colonialism are not directly addressed as such, the stories of people who have suffered as a result of them and colonialism are very present. The Museo insists on maintaining a neutral stance.

Institutional Setup

The institutional setup of the Museo, the way it is funded and managed, implicitly guides the kind of information it chooses to put forward and the narratives to present.⁷⁷ Within its budget document, the ministry outlines the objectives it has for different aspects of the museums, such as scientific and technological advancements, the social infrastructure they hold, and the diffusion of publicity for the museums.⁷⁸ Furthermore it also includes the costs for curating exhibitions as well as the resources needed in order to implement them. Overall the ministry sees the museum as being a multicultural site in which the nation's patrimony is explored. As a result of the way the museum was established, from the gathering of its collection to the construction of the building, the museum does not act as a direct actor in telling the stories of the Americas.

Compared to the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (National Archaeological Museum) the Museo de América is presumably endowed with a more modest budget. The overall size of the Archaeology museum as well as its collections are significantly larger. Here it is important to keep in mind that the Museo de América's collection originally stemmed from the ethnographic collection of the Archaeological Museum. Both are managed and setup as national museums that aim to conserve and promote the heritage of the Spanish patrimony. However, there are significant differences between the two museums. For example the introductory labels in the National Archaeology Museum were translated into both English and braille, in addition to

⁷⁷ "Un Poco de Historia", Museo de América, <http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/museodeamerica/el-museo/un-poco-dehistoria2.html>.

⁷⁸ Ministerio de Educación, Cultura, y Deporte, "Presupuesto por programas y memoria de objetivos. Tomo VIII (Sección 18), Presupuestos Generales del Estado (2018): 371-373.

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providing audio sets in multiple languages. The use of technological tools is also significant. Virtual Reality glasses are provided on the ground floor in the Ancient Greek section, specifically near the statues. An interesting similarity, however, lies in the discussion of the Spanish conquest. In neither cases is the conquest presented as a separate event or as an invasion and a war. Part of the Archaeological Museum's permanent exhibition is a section dedicated to the spread of Christianity. This hall contains displays of paintings as well as objects acquired from churches and other religious sites. Among the many case displays, only one focuses on the conquest of the Americas, and it does not mention any information about the many native indigenous populations. The text label draws attention to the loss of French, Dutch, and Spanish lives during the conquest.⁷⁹ The Museo de América's exhibition, while it does a good job at creating parallels between the Native and Catholic religions as well as highlighting different voices and opinions in the exhibition spaces, it also does not discuss the conquest as a war. This can be interpreted as a lack of reflexivity as well as deconstruction. Some scholars and museum professionals argue that in order for decolonisation to fully occur, a reflection on the museum's value systems, history of object acquisition, as well as overall authority is necessary. However, other perspectives dispute this by claiming that people today cannot carry the guilt of the crimes committed in the past and that a constructivist approach is needed in order for museums and, by extension, societies to move forward.

The specific reason for this curatorial choice is up for debate, since it is not clear whether or not this is due to the fact that these are national state run museums and/or to a lack of recognition of the violence in Spain's colonial past. The fact that neither of the museums brings forth this element to the conversation about the history of the Americas is somewhat disturbing. In contrast, it is worth noting that in my personal interactions while living in Mexico (2007-2009) I was taught in history class that this had been experienced as a 'cultural rape'. In this context, in March 2019, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador announced he had asked the Spanish government and Pope Francis to apologise to indigenous Mexican populations for the violent crimes committed during the conquest.⁸⁰ While in 2015 the Vatican had apologised to Bolivia for the crimes committed during the conquest, Pope Francis has yet to respond to the Mexican President. For its part, the Spanish government stated that it could not judge the actions of the Spaniards from 500-years ago on the basis of contemporary

⁷⁹ Refer to Figure a in the Appendix for a photo of the case display.

⁸⁰ "Mexican Call for Conquest Apology Ruffles Feathers in Spain and Mexico," The New York Times, accessed May 12th, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/27/world/americas/mexico-spain-apology.html>

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considerations.⁸¹ The response by the Spanish government is similar to that of Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara's. She also responded that focusing on the war aspect of the conquest would not be constructive and that while the crimes committed were horrible we cannot apply our contemporary conceptions and values to people and events in the past.

This perspective is interesting as museums in Canada, the United States, and Australia, as well as in the Netherlands have adopted a different approach. There is an ongoing discussion about the crimes committed at the time of colonisation as well as the various realities colonialism facilitated. There is a belief that by recognising and communicating the realities of what happened, from different perspectives, only then can meaningful decolonisation, collaboration, and reconciliation occur. For example, Canada has adopted a national reconciliation day in an effort to move forward from the hardships endured and inflicted to Canada's First Nations.

⁸¹ "Mexican Call for Conquest Apology Ruffles Feathers in Spain and Mexico," The New York Times, accessed May 12th, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/27/world/americas/mexico-spain-apology.html>

Chapter Five ~ An Assessment of the Museo's Representation of Indigenous Communities from Central and South America

The Museo de América's permanent exhibition shows how diverse the American continent is in terms of its cultures, landscape, histories, religious practices, traditions, ethnicities, and languages. In doing so, the Museo also tells the story of how indigenous people from the Americas, specifically in Central and South America, have been perceived and represented throughout history. The Museo introduces its visitor to the subject matter with a model of the National Cathedral in Mexico City (Figure 8, page 32). The cathedral served to consolidate Spain's power over the newly conquered region. Considering that religion was a significant reason for Spain's decision to colonise and conquer the New World, it is not surprising that the construction of the cathedral, a structure that refers to the Catholic Church, was used as a way to confirm Spain's power in the region. The cathedral served as both a religious and political emblem of Spanish power. The text label describing the cathedral describes the building's construction process and its significance. However it does not explain that it was built on top of the ruins of the Mexica peoples' Templo Mayor, which can be visited today. The fact that there is no mention about what existed prior to the construction of the ruins can be interpreted as a form of devaluing the experiences and stories from a non-Spanish perspective. This is to say that the Museo's choice to not voice the fact that another monument existed in the same place as the cathedral does today can be understood as a lack of reflexivity. Based on the interview the Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara, the Museo aims to maintain a neutral position, where its visitors can form their own narratives. However, by omitting this detail in the label about Mexico City's cathedral also neglects to acknowledge the value of indigenous peoples' histories and perspectives. It undermines the significance of the place where the cathedral was constructed, it implicitly supports the idea that the Spanish Conquest was a pacific process. The lack of indigenous voices and perspectives in this label misses to acknowledge this land's meaning, apart from being a religious site for Christianity. It also contributes to the lack of accurate representation of indigenous peoples and their histories in museums.

In contrast, the first thematic hall, *El Conocimiento de América*, contains a section panel about the allegory in the visual representations of America's indigenous populations. It explains that the majority of the misconceptions that existed about America's indigenous populations stemmed from the prevailing imagery prior to the conquest as well as the first stories European citizens heard. From these stories, the generalisations about native indigenous populations arose, for instance that they lived nude, adorned themselves with feathers and used bow-and-

arrows as principal weaponry.⁸² While some of this may be accurate, it only applies to a few indigenous populations.⁸³ The fact that this message is already articulated at the beginning of the permanent exhibition indicates that the Museo is keen on communicating the multivocality that exists within native indigenous populations. This is to say that a recognition that different native indigenous populations, just like all other societies, practice different traditions and have different day-to-day customs is essential to breaking the stereotype that all native indigenous populations are the same. From the beginning the Museo emphasises the fact that there is no one way to be a native indigenous person. The permanent exhibit aims to demonstrate this, in relationship to the history of the different cultures and societies in the Americas. The temporary exhibit also aims to convey this, but in relationship to contemporary societies and the present day.

The stark juxtaposition between the lack of information about the indigenous populations in Mexico and the meaning of the Templo Mayor and the reflexivity about the misconceptions about Central and South America's indigenous peoples in the first thematic hall illustrates the Museo's confusing position. On the one hand it aims to be a neutral institution where the historical facts from the different sides are expressed. On the other hand the Museo also neglects to discuss, reflect, and deconstruct some of the aspects of the Spanish conquest as well as the difficulties faced by indigenous people in Central and South America as a result of colonialism. The temporary exhibition, *The Woman from the Valley of Chota in Dialogue with the Museum*, creates a space for reflection and deconstruction in the third (*La Sociedad*), fourth (*La Religion*), and fifth (*La Comunicación*) thematic halls when the permanent exhibition is not able to do so; it creates a space for people whose stories were not normally included or valued in museums. The combination of the permanent and temporary exhibitions allows to contrast the different ways in which native indigenous people from Central and South America were represented in the past and the ways in which they represent themselves and their stories today. As was explained in chapter two, a significant portion of the visual and literary representations of the local indigenous populations in Central and South America portrayed their conversion to Christianity and their allegiance to the Spanish Crown. The Museo de América's permanent exhibition features numerous paintings that depict native indigenous people in different ways, from household servants to Dukes. Artworks such as, Andres Sanchez Galleque's *Los Tres*

⁸² Museum label for Permanent Exhibition: *El Conocimiento de América*, Madrid, Spain, Museo de América, March 20th, 2019.

⁸³ Ibid.

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Mulatos de Esmeralda (The Three Mulatos from Esmeralda), strongly contrast against the wax model of a young teenage boy who happens to be a person of colour (Figures 44 and 45). The oil painting portrays a viewpoint of indigenous people from the perspective of the Spaniards as ‘first class citizen’ according to Spanish social hierarchy. The wax model, on the other hand, symbolises the young man as representing himself as opposed to being represented by someone else.

Galleque’s work features three male figures, notably of native indigenous heritage. All three are dressed and decorated in “wealthy, European styled clothing and jewellery.”⁸⁴ The central figure, Don (Duke) Francisco de Arobe, was the father of the two younger men on his left and right, Don Pedro and Don Domingo respectively. It demonstrates how religious conversion was an essential aspect of Spain’s objectives in colonising and conquering the Americas. The way in which the three figures are represented conveys a message of submission to the new Spanish rule and therefore to the Spanish crown. The fact that this painting was commissioned for King Phillip II of Spain, further emphasises that it served to reaffirm Spain’s continued relevance as a political power both within and outside Europe; “they were a growing power and needed to prove it.”⁸⁵ This work represents the three dukes in a position of submission despite having the titles of duke; this however can also be interpreted as further marginalising them and their culture of origin as opposed to empowering them. In essence this painting tells us that in order to be ‘saved’ and integrated into the newly formed society they must be Christian and honour the reigning monarch. The monarchy becomes, then, the necessary intermediary between the indigenous people and their cultural and political recognition, as well as their spiritual salvation.

⁸⁴ van Trotsenburg, “Representation of Indigenous People in the Spanish Royal Collection During the 16th and 17th Centuries.”

⁸⁵ Ibid.

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Figure 44. A photograph of the painting by Andres Sanchez Galleque's *Los Tres Mulatos de Esmeralda* (The Three Mulatos from Esmeralda) 1599. Oil on canvas. Found in the *La Sociedad* thematic hall. March 21st, 2019.



Figure 45. A detail of the thematic hall on *La Sociedad*, showing the wax model of a young boy. March 21st, 2019.

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In contrast, the wax model of the teenage boy features objects that he, himself, deems significant to him and to his experiences. The fact that he is wearing oversized jeans could relate to either a personal fashion choice or to his socio-economic status. Moreover, the shoes he is wearing appear to be new, they are not too worn out and do not contain any holes or damages to the main structure. He is also carrying a box of objects, perhaps that he is selling, and wearing a rosary bracelet on his left arm and a rosary necklace around his neck. His facial expression conveys struggle, he looks into the distance with a glassy expression. The red hat on his head is worn facing backwards and his hands are folded together. His blue, red, and white t-shirt is hanging off the wooden bench he sits on, so as to convey a sense of exhaustion and heat. The wax model communicates the struggles young boys such as this one face in Chota, Ecuador.

Similarly to Galleque's work, the young boy represents himself as a man of the Christian faith. The influence of Christianity throughout the American continent is hence also expressed in the temporary exhibition. It acts as a supporting evidence as to how impactful and 'great' the Spanish colonial rule was, since both the Dukes in Galleque's painting and the wax model of the boy show adherence to Christianity. The fact that these two works are placed in close proximity to one another can also be interpreted as a form of 'propaganda' showing the everlasting impact the Spaniards had despite the end of the colonial rule 150 to 200 years ago.

The following work, Figure 46, by Vicente Albán (1725 Quito, Ecuador -?) titled, *Señora Principal con su Negra Esclava* (1783) illustrates two women, one of Spanish descent and the other of African descent. This work is a part of six other works that aimed to depict natural life in Ecuador during Spain's scientific excavations in the 18th century. Although the woman serving is of African heritage and not an indigenous woman of Ecuador, the work perfectly depicts the power dynamics between the Spaniards and the enslaved people. The Spanish woman is dressed in fine clothing. She is decorated with jewels, and wears nice shoes. The African woman is wearing some jewellery around her neck, her clothes are notably worn and her skirt and shirt have stains. The facial and bodily features of the Spanish woman are defined clearly, while the African woman's are not. We are able to see her eyes, her lips, and her hair, but the clear definitions seen on the Spanish woman's face and fingers are not present in the African woman. The most significant difference between the two, however, lies in their gaze. The Spanish woman is looking directly towards the viewer, to the face of the canvas, as if the opportunities ahead of her are endless because of her wealth and stature. The African woman looks only at the Spanish woman, almost to show that her opportunities lie with the Spanish woman's fate and wealth. Moreover, the fact that the African woman is standing right

behind the Spanish woman also contributes to represent the unequal power dynamics between these two women, as explicitly illustrated by the artists.



Figure 46. Vicente Albán, *Señora Principal con su Negra Esclava*, (Principal (protagonist) Woman with her Black Slave) 1783. Oil on canvas. Museo de América, Madrid, Spain.

The title of this work, *Señora Principal con su Negra Esclava*, translates to “Principal (protagonist) Woman with her Black Slave”. As discussed in Chapter Four and in the summary of the interview at the end of Chapter 3, the word “negro(a)” is the word for black in Spanish—the word termination changes according to gender. The fact that the African woman is simply described as just being a black slave, not a black woman, in contrast to the Spanish woman being identified as the principal woman, clearly shows the unequal power dynamics between the two women and in a larger context, between the Spaniards and the indigenous communities as well as all other people of colour. The fact that she is enslaved and hence considered a second class citizen with nothing other than the words “negra” and “esclava” describing her, is an indication of the prevalence of racial/ skin colour discrimination in the Spanish colonies.

These artworks are all displayed in the same hall and are perfect representations of the various ways in which indigenous people and people of colour faced and still face discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity. Similarly to Galleque’s work and the wax model of the teenage boy, Albán’s work also references Christianity. The Spanish woman is

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wearing a very large gold necklace with a cross decorated in jewels. It is clearly communicated in all three works that the Spaniards brought ‘civilisation’ and salvation to the colonies. In order for the indigenous people and the African slaves to be ‘saved’ they needed both Christianity and the Spaniards.

As part of a politically neutral institution, the permanent exhibition does not outright state the adverse impacts of colonialism, but rather it shows how different cultures, traditions, and value systems were brought together throughout the colonial process. Similarly the temporary exhibition shows that the American continent is diverse. However, it does not address some of the violent truths that occurred during Spain’s conquest of the Americas. Throughout its collection the Museo does not address the Spanish conquest as such, as a main ‘protagonist’ in the formation of the ‘new’ America.

Critical museology helps analyse the kinds of narratives museums create when discussing various aspects of history that were violent and oppressive to certain groups of people. Acknowledging both the negative impact and the positive aspects is instrumental to understanding the country’s history and its social development. For example, the curating of the collection at the Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City tries to communicate how the Spanish conquest affected Mexico’s native populations and the role it played in the formation of a new Mexican society integrating both the indigenous and new populations.

The Museo addresses the multidimensionality that exists throughout the American continent, by drawing attention to the fact that although peoples experiences differ, that does not mean they do not deserve a space in the museum. It makes an attempt to draw parallels between the past and the present. The first hall in the *La Realidad de América* theme presents the continent in its entirety, including North America (see Chapter 3). It includes displays explaining the earlier population settlements in particular in British Columbia. However, the Museo’s collections predominantly focus on the Spanish Empire’s territories. Hence, the stories of Brazil, Canada, the United States and in particular the confrontations of their native populations with the European colonisers are not touched upon. Nonetheless the many social and ethnic confrontations in those countries have also contributed to our modern vision and understanding of the representation of indigenous populations.

Another limitation stems from the lack of reflexivity regarding the text labels and the language used to represent the different populations. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the lack of commentaries and/or adjustments regarding language such as “primitive” and “negro(a)” show

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a missed opportunity to try to connect past representations and modern cultural environments and values. Similarly there is no reflection about the actual acquisition processes of the indigenous artefacts. These limitations also show the various challenges that a museum, whose mission was established in the 17th century, faces in the 21st century as a contemporary museum.

Conclusion

This thesis has tried to capture the journey of the Museo de América, how it evolved over time and how one could analyse these shifts through the lens of critical museology. This process of revisiting perceptions and representations of indigenous communities in past centuries is not only confined to academic fields such as history and anthropology but is also extended to museums. Here critical museology, as one of the pillars to bring about a stronger historical context of the lives and art related to indigenous people, has become more prominent.

Together with the theories related to museums as ‘contact zones’, it has provided a valid framework to analyse the Museo de América, as an ethnographic museum. The analysis of the Museo allowed us to highlight a few underlying curatorial practices, some of which are consistent with Shelton’s methodological interdictions. First, by examining the labels and layout it is possible to argue that the Museo de América’s permanent exhibition is able to provide a space for parallels between various and complementary narratives regarding the history of the Americas. The last three theme halls create an experience of a ‘contact zone’, as the perspectives of the people featured in the temporary exhibition, *The Woman from the Valley of Chota in Dialogue with the Museum*, contrast with those described and displayed in the permanent exhibition cases (Figure 22). Furthermore, the use of audio guides and screens contribute to some extent to make the exhibition halls interactive and dynamic. The fact that they are only available in Spanish is however indicative of its limited budget.

Second, by creating a permanent exhibition based on themes rather than chronology the Museo tries to also create parallels between different value systems and cultures. Similarly, the halls about communication and languages also convey dynamic elements as they present the various Native languages and the different Spanish linguistic variations existing throughout the continent. Finally, the Museo attempts to reposition the imagery and representation of indigenous people in their historical context.

The analysis, however, has also identified a few limitations to the Museo’s capacity to navigate the challenges of bridging historical and cultural gaps across centuries. The main limitations deal with an apparent absence of a reflection regarding the representation of indigenous people and the narratives around their experiences. On such examples is the language used in some text labels. As mentioned in Chapter 4, there is a contemporary discussion about how museums are able to better acknowledge the contributions of indigenous peoples and cultures, as vocal participants in history as shown in the use of ‘alternative labels’

Conclusion

in the current exhibition *Le Modèle Noir* at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, France.⁸⁶ Such a reflection is missing in the Museo.

The most significant limitation in our view is the lack of an indigenous voice regarding the conquest itself, as the Museo focuses essentially on the subsequent colonial period. While museology should not be a pretext or tool to judge the past with our modern cultural views and perspectives, it seems essential to acknowledge and give the microphone to the unheard protagonists of history. By choosing to hear them and presenting them as active participants, museums can thus play a critical part in providing us, through their curated collections, with the tools to better understand the evolution of our values.

⁸⁶ *Le Modèle Noir de Géricault à Matisse*, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France. March 26-July 21st, 2019.

Appendices

The Appendices are divided into two sections. The first contains a photograph of a case titled, La Conquista del Mundo (The Conquest of the World), found in the National Archeology Museum. It is referenced in the fourth chapter under the subheading institutional setup. The second section consists of the transcript from the interview with the director of the Museo de América, Ms. Encarnación Hidalgo-Cámara.

1. Supplementary Photograph



Figure a. A photograph of the case, La Conquista del Mundo (The Conquest of the World), found in the section about the spread of Christianity. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, Spain. March 22nd, 2019.

2. Transcript Interview with the Museo's Director Sra. Encarnación Hidalgo-Cámara

This interview was carried out as a conversation. The following transcript includes both direct quotes as well as summaries of subjects that were spoken about at length but could be summarised for the purpose of this thesis. I started recording the interview about 10/15 minutes after having met with Ms. Encarnación Hidalgo-Cámara. During the first few minutes we introduced ourselves, I thanked her for taking the time to meet with me and answer my questions. It was carried out in Spanish so the direct quotes are all in Spanish and the summarised portions are in English.

Directora: Te puedes haber leído todos los números de los anales del Museo de América.

Nora: Leí algunos no todos. Pero leí los primeros tres, pienso el número 8 y los recientes. Pero me intereso mucho como el museo cada año publica unas monografías y que también los empleados contribuyan y que se pueden realmente entender mucho más de que pasa detrás del museo. No hay muchos museos que hacen eso. Y pues, bueno, pienso que es algo muy bueno.

Directora: De todas maneras, hay que las unas importantes en tus lecturas, y porque además todo se puede localizar todo en el internet. Yo que le sugeriría además es que en otra ocasión que vengas a Madrid que vengas a la biblioteca del Museo. Porque hay cosas ya desde luego que no están en el internet. El primero que te digo es que busques todas las publicaciones de Paz Cabello Carro.

Nora: Sí, me gustó mucho sus artículos. Eran muy interesantes.

Directora: Pero, además es que la pena es que están agotadas si no están a la venta. Una de ellas, yo te voy a- búscala: ella tiene abierta una cuenta con academia.edu. Y ahí tiene su vida, creo que tiene artículos, trabajos sueltos.

Nora: Ok, genial. Muchísimas gracias.

SUMMARY: During this time Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara and I got up and went to look at some of the publications about the history of the museum and the collections in the library in her office. During this time she asked me questions about the history of the museum, we also discussed the different sources to look at when reading about the history. The museum's collections are

extremely well documented, as the idea for a Museum dedicated to indigenous artefacts that were originally held in the archaeology museum has existed for a long time.

During its closure, the museum underwent internal work and did not have any exhibitions. This was when the first catalogues of the museum's collections were published. The first anales was published in 1993. You need to look at CERES- Colecciones Española en Res.-.

Directora: Entiendes la parte administrativa y jurídica no están internadas porque los críticos museológicos pueden publicar todo lo que quieren -pero solo los críticos cualquier teórico. Pero hay que conocer la institución y la administración en que se encuentra, porque la libertad de una cosa es distinta y el planteamiento es totalmente distinto. Estamos hablando de un Museo público, cien por cien (100%) público. Con cargo a los Presupuestos Generales del Estado y es un museo que tiene rango del Museo Nacional. Entonces necesitas echarle un ojo a la ley española de Patrimonio Histórico y necesitas echarle un ojo al reglamento de museos. Todo esto lo vas a tener la página web del Ministerio de Cultura.

Nora: Si, muchas gracias. (During this time Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara is going on her computer to search for the website of the Ministry of Culture).

Directora: Porque esto no es un museo ni privado ni semiprivado. Este es un museo estatal siguiendo el modelo de los franceses. Entonces no tiene absolutamente nada que ver con un museo anglosajón. Nada en absoluto. Eso es muy importante porque en Europa hay dos modelos que lo sabes de dos conceptos y dos modelos de gestión totalmente distintos. (Still searching for the website on her computer). Vete a la denominación actual de Educación Cultura y Deporte. Según por donde entres te va a cambiar la primera pantalla, pero, en fin, está es la parte del Ministerio General y dentro de ahí necesitas entender el organigrama del Ministerio. Porque dentro así ves el ministro y nosotros dependemos de esta Dirección General, de Bellas Artes, y dentro de la dirección de Bellas Artes, la Subdirección General de Museos Estatales. Esta es la nuestra. (Showed me the webpage of the museum's page on the website.) Y necesitas saber, porque eso se explica, de dónde vienen las colecciones a la actualidad cómo se compra. Se compra a través de esta institución, de este organismo, qué es independiente dentro de la Dirección General de Bellas Artes. La junta de calificación. Este es un órgano colegiado Consultivo pero que tiene capacidad también ejecutiva lo que se refiere a la adquisición de fondos para los museos. Toda la compra de piezas pasa por la Junta de Calificación. El museo no compra por su cuenta, no puede. Se compra siempre por la Junta de Calificación. Si nos vamos concretamente ya a cultura y dentro de cultura nos vamos a museos. Esto tú te lo tienes

que ver con mucha calma tú a qué título de los museos es una página que acaban de crear nueva. Fichas de todos los museos que dependen del ministerio. Hay dos cosas diferentes entre los museos. Una parte son 16 que cien por cien (100%) son estatales en todo; en Economía, en titularidad jurídica, y a la gestión administrativa. Nosotros somos uno de los 16. Luego está el Museo Nacional del Prado que depende del ministerio, pero tiene una ley propia y luego el Museo Nacional de Arte Reina Sofía que también tiene un estatuto peculiar; que no está dentro de las 16.

Nora: ¿Y porque no?

Directora: No sabemos exactamente, (jokingly) no nos querían. Entonces además hay casi 70 museos que antes de la democracia antes de 1975 vamos a irnos al 85 eran cien x cien estatales que estaban cada uno en las capitales de provincias. Y algunos de ellos provinciales. Cuando se crean las comunidades autónomas se llega a un acuerdo de manera que por ejemplo el Museo Nacional Arqueológico de Córdoba todo lo que hasta la fecha del acuerdo pertenecía al Estado sigue perteneciendo al Estado. El edificio es del Estado y el personal que hasta ese momento está trabajando va a ser del Estado, pero a partir de ese momento las colecciones que vayan entrando van a pertenecer a la comida autónomas. Esto es una cuestión de transferida. Los museos de cuestión de transferida son 75/76. Sigue siendo responsabilidad del Estado. El edificio y las colecciones que había en ese momento cuando se firma el acuerdo de transferencia a partir del acuerdo de transferencia la titularidad de lo que entre a partir de este momento va a ser de la comunidad autónoma y lo que se pudiera construir de las comunidades autónomas. Por eso cuando entres aquí vas a ver muchos más de los 16 dependientes de la Subdirección General de los museos estatales. Los de gestión directa somos los 16 nosotros somos uno de ellos y Sudamérica y aquí una pequeña ficha de la historia de la arquitectura. Pero lo que tu vas a necesitar la bibliografía. Mira la bibliografía, ¿vale? Pero primero Paz Cabello Carro, con ella estamos hablando de la arquitectura, Moya es el director, y Moya y Feduchi son los constructores. Esto es el estudio de 43.

Nora: ¿Es importante?

Directora: Si, lo tienes en internet. Antes de ponerte, tendrás que seleccionar, pero tienes que estar familiarizada. Porque si no, no vas a entender. Entonces luego ya, estamos en la página web de Museos, y ya tu allá navegas lo que quieras.

Nora: Ok, excelente.

Directora: El museo la presentación. Tienes muchísimo, ¿la página web del ministerio tienes mucha información tanto de museos como luego te diré que también mirar la de patrimonio vale? ¿Te va a remitir a nuestra página Web vale?

Nora: Si.

Directora: Pero vete a la del Ministerio todo está ahí. Que te familiarices porque no podemos hacer mucho porque tenemos el estado detrás. Parece que lo que perdemos en una parte lo ganamos por otro. Ser museo estatal con categoría de museo nacional, lo que es la categoría más importante en España. Yo te diría que ahora mismo de los 16 el único museo al que no es realmente tenemos más parecido es el Arqueológico Nacional. Con clara diferencia, ósea cada museo es distinto, no es ni mejor ni peor. Pero el más parecido a nosotros es el Arqueológico Nacional. Puesto que necesitas conocer historia de España en el de reconocer no sé qué que manual de historia de España, pero el que te recomiende tu director todo esto son servicios públicos aquí donde salen ofertas las becas para trabajar en las cartas de servicio que es el compromiso. ¿Ahora estamos revisando el cumplimiento de nuestra parte de servicio el año pasado vale? Esta es la publicación completa de la Carta de Servicios de nuestro compromiso con la sociedad. Ya terminadas tienes mucho trabajo y te diría que tienes también dentro de Cultura el patrimonio de la mano con otra Subdirección de protección del patrimonio cultural yo comprendo que no te tiene ni vamos a estar fuera de lugar que te estudies todo esto pero especialmente la todo lo que se refiere a la adquisición de bienes culturales porque por donde nosotros estamos comprando aquí es donde está de alguna manera insertada esa Junta de Calificación de alguna manera te va a venir los modos de adquisición cómo se compra jurídicamente. No compramos lo que nos da la gana si no lo que se puede jurídicamente sobre todo es muy importante en el caso de pre-Hispánico, porque no compramos pre-Hispánico. Hay demasiado expolio demasiado tráfico ilícito de las cosas que no compramos. Tú, metete en todas partes. La página web muestra, lo que se refiere a la colección y lo que se refiere al catálogo, porque eso te decía que hay tipos de catálogos que ya son obsoletos. Lo que nosotros hemos publicado en Internet. es el catálogo en línea, no esto no todo. Se hace una versión digamos un poquito más fácil de entender para el público, pero es un catálogo de colecciones que eso significa que si tú no sabes lo que quieres buscar no lo vas a encontrar.

SUMMARY: During this time Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara explained how to search for different objects in the museum's collection using the museum's webpage and online catalogue. She also indicated that the national state-run museums all have use a program that allows staff members and the public to look through each museum's collection. It is called DOGUS. This has been a project that has existed for the last twenty years under the direction of the ministry through that of the sub-direction of state museums. From this program DOGUS the program CERES- also used for the museum's collection catalog- comes through. The program is not up for sale.

Directora: Mucho más lo que nosotros hacemos todo aquí es lo que hacemos con el Ministerio del Exterior y tenemos a ver esto por sí solo no podría sostenerse económicamente inviable.

Nora: Era muy sorprendida porque el boleto costaba solamente tres euros.

Directora: En todos los museos estatales claro, porque somos un museo público. Te voy a decir que hasta el año noventa/noventa y dos, los museos públicos del estado, todos, eran gratuitos. Tu presentabas tu documento de identidad, pero que pasa si tú no tienes documento de identidad español, tu tenías que pagar. Entonces hubo una denuncia ante la Unión Europea de discriminación de ciudadanos europeos y no- nacionales. Entonces se estableció que tenía que todo el mundo tenía que pagar tanto nacionales como extranjeras. Entonces es lo que se ha hecho es poner un pago que es más simbólico que otra cosa porque con 3 € como comprenderás no es suficiente. Pero por eso todo el mundo entra con 3 € aun así hay precio reducido, lo veras en la página web. Porque somos un museo público.

Nora: Me sorprendió porque en Norteamérica normalmente tenemos que pagar. Solamente el Smithsonian es gratuito. Pero también en Francia, por ejemplo, el Louvre se paga.

Directora: Si el Louvre, como el Prado, tiene una entrada muy alta, algo de 16 euros. En España sería un escándalo de tener que pagar un precio tan alto para poder entrar en un museo nacional y público. Es que no vendría nadie. Apúntate el artículo 44 de la Constitución Española. Se trata de facilitar acceso a la gente. No echarles para/de atrás. El precio del Prado es un escándalo pero es un precio puesto para los turistas. Es la responsabilidad del Estado, por eso están cobrando impuestos.

Nora: ¿Y los impuestos en España son altos o no?

Directora: Bueno, menos altos que en otros sitios, pero son altos. Depende, para algunos más, por otros menos. No es como en los países en Norte de Europa donde los impuestos son muy altos. No llegamos a ese punto, pero posiblemente son mal dimensionados. Bueno, entonces tienes que leer y estudiar todo esto porque es que sino no vas a entender ni saber de lo que estás escribiendo.

Nora: ¡Muchísimas Gracias! También, leí un artículo que María Concepción de Saíz escribió al lado del Sr. Félix Jiménez.

Directora: Si, es reciente.

Nora: También, encontré un artículo de Carlos Reyero que habla sobre las personas indígenas a través de la historia española. Este artículo me ayudó mucho para entender como las personas indígenas han estado representados en España a lo largo de la historia y también hoy.

Directora: Bueno, tienes mucho trabajo. Fundamental cuando leas esta parte histórica saber que el museo nunca ha tenido la capacidad de hacer excavaciones en ningún sitio. Ni siquiera el ministerio tiene campañas de excavación. Las únicas campañas de excavaciones arqueológicas que datan desde años, están en Egipto. Ahí hay unas campañas arqueológicas desde hace décadas que se mantienen y están vinculadas. Pero no solo el arqueológico nacional, pero también hay campas arqueológicas dentro del estado español. El museo nunca ha tenido, no tiene, y nunca tendrá la capacidad de tener/hacer expediciones. ¿Con lo cual, que es lo que tenemos? Lo que nos llega desde el Arqueológico Nacional que a su vez viene desde el Museo de Ciencias Naturales que viene del Gabinete de Carlos III del siglo 18. Eso explica que no tiene para esas colecciones las cosas de reintegración de devoluciones. Pero aquí. Porque una cosa el caso belga, o el caso italiano, el caso inglés, ósea. Cuando habido un periodo colonial más próximo y que se ha traído manera delibada con esa intención de en gran parte lo que sea. Por ejemplo, Bélgica arraso el Congo Belga literalmente arraso. Es que no hay otra definición. Pero en contra lo que la gente pueda pensar o decir, eso no es el caso español porque no fue así. Pues es que todo era territorio español. Jurídicamente y está escrito en las crónicas y la documentación jurídica. Todos eran súbditos españoles, de los que estaban en Méjico, los que estaban en Patagonia y Madrid, jurídicamente no había diferencia entre ellos. Otra cosa la realidad de la vida. Entonces tú lo entiendes perfectamente. Tú has vivido en Argentina. Tu llevaste tus muebles contigo cuando fuiste a Canadá. Son tus muebles. Lo que tienes en

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Argentina te lo has llevado. Bueno se han ido diseminando por aquí por allá esa herencia de cuando tu familia vive. ¿Tú has exfoliado Argentina? Todas las personas que van y vienen a un lado y otro del océano es el ajuar familiar. Esas personas podían tener por su gusto además una colección de ídolos antiguos cae desde hacía tres siglos, los habitantes del pueblecito de no sé dónde saben que hay una guaca y que van sacando más grande y lo mejor escena.

Nora: Pero lo que quiero entender también es que si había objetos que eran traficados en la colección.

Directora: No. ¿Cómo que exactamente?

Nora: Cómo cuando los españoles llegaron a América, y volaron unos objetos sin pagar para ellos? cómo que cómo te ha picado como cuando los españoles vieron si pagaron para los objetos o no? ¿Cómo adquirieron los objetos?

Directora: Cómo lo sabes tú, ponte que estás en un pueblecito en Perú a mediados del siglo 18 la gente se encuentra cosas, que sean indígenas o que sean españoles, todos son súbditos del rey de España y se la llevan a sus casas y se lo regalan y las compran y las venden.

Nora: Entonces no pensaron mucho de las consecuencias.

Directora: Hay que ver los casos; yo no te digo que no haya habido casos... A ver hoy no haríamos las cosas así ni tú ni yo ni nadie, pero es que en ese momento es como cuando yo te digo tú estás viviendo en Argentina hace como paradas te regalan tienes hay coleccionistas, hay anticuarios y con arreglo lo que son las leyes y las costumbres del momento luego tú te vas a vivir a otro país o lo mandas aquí porque eres un regalo a tu familia que está en Barcelona y entonces mandas algo. Siempre ha habido anticuarios y coleccionistas, pero en todo el mundo el de esos eran los primeros eran más natural. Los primeros que querían moverlos eran los propios naturales del país. Porque con eso necesitaban vivir. Pues hoy no lo haríamos, pero ni ellos ni nadie haría ahora eso, pero entonces será un método de vivir legítima y necesitaban vivir. Es como lo de la caza y legítima cuando alguien trae un coto y caza para sobrevivir pues por ahí estamos. [...] No deberías nunca, nadie debería aplicar nuestra mentalidad de ahora al pasado. Para juzgar el pasado debes entenderlo.

SUMMARY: During this time Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara explains that in the 80s and 90s women in high social classes in Colombia would wear the jewels acquired from archaeological excavations. However, this is not something they would do today. She emphasises the importance in not judging the past historical events with present-day mindsets and value systems. Furthermore, she explains that very few objects in the collection were acquired from archaeological excavations. Moreover she also explains that Charles III organised the first archaeological sites according to how the archaeological sites and excavations were organised and managed in Pompeii, he applied this to the sites in Herculano in Palenque.

Directora: Es que para entender cómo llegan las colecciones a España ten en cuenta que después de las independencias de las Repúblicas Americanas es el primer tercio siglo 19, entonces realmente estamos hablando del siglo 15,16, 17, 18 y ya no 18 ya hay muchos problemas con la dependencia. Ósea no llegamos a cuatro siglos de historia compartida y desde entonces ya una expedición científica al Pacífico, una expedición a no sé dónde ya están. Busque todo sobre y de Paz Cabello porque lo que ha estudiado estos factores históricos de las colecciones para entender de dónde vienen y porqué, pero qué le vamos a devolver ahora aquí una pieza arqueológica que llega de algún sitio de Perú tal vez próxima Cajamarca pero a quién se la das. Cuando las cosas están recientes y habido ese deseo de expolio cultural lo que hizo Napoleón en Egipto, lo que hizo Napoleón en España hay que realmente recordarlo. entonces búscate esta publicación. Porque ahí es donde vas porque usted necesita saber la historia de España de dónde vienen esas excavaciones. Aquí cuando a veces vienen americanos pensando que es que tenemos el okey se desilusiona mucho porque piensa que es que aquí tiene que estar todas las riquezas de América. Pero es que nunca estuvieron en España por qué ha pasado en Europa inmediatamente para pagar el dinero que el emperador de día. Con lo cual lo que haya quedado aquí lo poco que en su día hubo entre los incendios y que se distribuye como regalo familiares y dinásticos.

SUMMARY: Here Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara also discussed how essentially all their objects in their collection come from the 18th century, nothing was received recently as a donation. This is not the case for any of the public state run museums in Spain. It is also difficult to repatriate because some of the villages that once existed during the colonial rule no longer do. So to whom are the objects repatriated to? Considering the collection is comprised of objects collected during the colonial rule, the museum must now turn to the market to acquire any more objects. They do so with a lot of vigilance and care.

Nora: Me gustó mucho que recibieron una donación del gobierno mexicano una réplica del calendario azteca

Directora: Eso no te lo puedo asegurar ahora de memoria, y no pienso que el donante sea el gobierno Mexicano. Estoy dudando si el calendario vino con las donaciones que recibimos en el siglo 20 del museo en Berlín. Porque también nosotros nos falta documentación. Como vimos en el artículo, hay bastante que no tenemos las informaciones exactas. Además, nosotros no perdimos absolutamente nada durante la guerra, todo lo que nos salía, regreso. Regreso todo, no se perdió nada. Los objetos los pusieron en cajas de madera, fueron a Brújelas y de regreso travesaron la Francia ocupada. No se rompió nada tampoco. Eso te da una muestra de la profesionalidad de esta gente. [...].

Nora: Si, porque en otros países como en Francia perdieron bastantes cosas.

Directora: Todo lo que salió de España, regreso. Esto también lo puedes encontrar en la página web del Prado.

Nora: También le quería preguntar sobre las narrativas que el museo trata comunicar.

Directora: Eso es necesario que lo veas y averigües tú la conclusión.

Nora: Además le quería preguntar unas cosas. Leí en los Anales y en la literatura sobre la museología crítica; quería saber cómo el museo trata implementar algunas prácticas críticas- por ejemplo, en conservación.

Directora: ¿Cómo cuáles?

Nora: Por ejemplo, en Canadá incluían preguntas para los visitantes en los paneles. Para enfatizar información que no era evidente a través de lo material- información sobre porque una persona dono un objeto, o que significaba a esa familia/comunidad.

Directora: Ah no, nosotros cuando tenemos una donación es al Estado. Entonces el Estado decide a que museo va, y al público no se hace notar. Pero cuando tu donas algo es como si tu vendes algo. Ya no es tuyo. No puedes poner condiciones.

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Nora: Entonces el Estado escoge a que museo va y el museo escoge que información dar al público acerca del objeto. ¿Entonces porque el museo in incluye esa información?

Directora: Es porque jurídicamente no procede. Y eso es una decisión del museo.

Nora: Y si la persona que hizo la donación quiere tener su nombre en el panel al lado del objeto.

Directora: La cosa es que cuando donas has donado. Cuando vendes has vendido. Nosotros en todos nuestros registros de documentación sabemos que ha sido tú. Y todo eso se conserva, claro. Pero esa información jamás se hace público. Podemos hacer, y lo hemos hecho, una página de donantes donde las personas pueden poner sus nombres. Pero solamente si la persona nos da permiso de hacerlos público sus nombres. Es que la perspectiva jurídica es distinta. La ley general europea es garantista y proteccionista de los derechos del individuo.

Nora: Ok. Sí, pero el individuo le da la autoridad de usar su nombre.

Directora: Pero no en la sala del museo. Nunca, no. Eso es una información reservada.

SUMMARY: During this time Ms. Hidalgo-Cámara explained that in the next year the museum is putting together an exhibition paying homage to a well-known figure in Spain. The person passed around 75 years ago and the museum will be using objects the family donated for this exhibition. The museum has agreed to put everything as the Museo de América in the text panels-not to detail who donated it- in order to create a united front as well as to protect the person's family and the object donors. By putting stating who donated what on each of the panels it can act like noise for the visitors. The concept of judicial protection over the donor is taken and practiced very seriously. All the information can be found in the archives. If someone needs to access the archives for research then they are able to access and study them.

Directora: Esta información no es de carácter público. Es un acto jurídico entre la familia y el estado.

Nora: De más en términos de conservación, por ejemplo, si una familia hace una donación y le dicen que este objeto es muy sensible en estas maneras, en las prácticas de conservación se puede ajustar las prácticas para que acomoden las preocupaciones de la familia.

Directora: Es que lo vemos caso a caso. Cada uno es diferente y depende de las preocupaciones del donante y su familia. En general una vez que entra en el museo, el museo manda. Por razones de conservación siempre manda el museo. Nunca puede haber una donación condicional. La donación condicionada no está contemplada en la ley Española. Una donación condicionada no se acepta.

Nora: Ok.

Directora: Otra cosa es que hay un dialogo, un intercambio de opiniones, pero tu eso se hace antes de la donación. Donación condicionada, jamás. El museo manda.

Nora: La cosa es que sé que en Canadá hay museos que aceptan donaciones de poblaciones que aún existen. Pero para este museo, eso no es el caso. Además- si una persona compro algo durante el periodo virreinal de una población, y la población les dio información acerca del objeto- como era utilizada y que significa. ¿Ustedes tienen en cuenta esta información?

Directora: Si claro lo tenemos en cuenta y se considera que es oportuna. El criterio de las cosas y de la perspectiva de conservación siempre va primero. El museo manda. El museo no es caprichoso, lo contrario tiene criterios muy bien definidas. Primero va la conservación del objeto y luego todas las otras consideraciones. Por ejemplo hay una institución que con el tiempo se ha quedado anómala muy interesante en España en Madrid que es la fundación del conde de Valencia de Don Juan de Valencia el nombre es larguísimo de Don Juan esto es un museo privado el fundador era el marido de la condesa de Valencia de Don Juan entonces él era el nombre y al final el nombre es larguísimo y este señor estudio en Oxford y nos estamos hablando de finales del 19 entonces él hace una colección magnífica de lo que entonces se coleccionaba artes decorativas para visitar tienes que hacer petición previa porque no está abierta público solo estudiosos pero si tú haces la petición te van a decir que sí. Entonces este señor dejo, pero por qué es una fundación privada unas normas muy específicas no se podía cambiar nada. no admitía público general solo eran estudiosos por invitación previa y no se podía cambiar nada y además no había vitrinas entonces él pone sus condiciones que se mantienen jurídicamente a lo largo de siglos porque puede hacerlo. una prueba de derechos en un momento dado el estado español en cumplirse lo sé que no sé cuánto esto pasa la mesita de Oxford en ese caso si puede ponerse en condiciones. Nosotros estemos totalmente abiertos a

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escuchar otras personas, pero escucha. Si lo que nos proponen parece que profesionalmente aceptable no hay problema para hacerlo. Pero una cosa es escuchar y atender y otra cosa es que en el Museo manda por el bien de las colecciones.

Nora: Otra pregunta que tengo es que en inglés las palabras como “primitive” ya no se usa. Pero vi que en algunos de los paneles aún se usa en español.

Directora: ¿Cual exactamente?

Nora: En la sala de geografía y paisaje pienso haberlo visto. ¿Quería entender si en español la palabra primitiva tiene otra connotación que en inglés o si es lo mismo?

Directora: ¿En inglés tiene una connotación despectiva?

Nora: Si, ya no se usa.

Directora: Entonces no. Primitivo no es tonto. Solamente significa que es cronológicamente anterior u originario. Arte primitivo es arte originario. Pero no es despectivo nunca. De la misma forma que todo ha cambiado la sensibilidad ha cambiado, pero en principio en español hablar de negros o de moros no era despectivo. Eso ha sido mal vendido digamos, pues un contagio cultural, el de la cultura anglosajona. Es verdad que también se tiende a no decir negro en Norteamérica, pero es que en español no, el negro negro, el blanco blanco, el moro a moro, no eran palabras despectivas.

Nora: Ok, pues en ingles si es. Pero en Español no.

Directora: No lo era, no se el contagio de corrección política adonde nos llevara. Pero hay cosas es que en español no planteaban un mayor problema. Porque también hay tribus como los Inuit que reniegan el término “esquimo”, y si lo reniegan no lo usamos.

Nora: Entonces cuando una comunidad reniega el termino ya no se usa. ¿Pero si no lo reniegan, aun se usaría?

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Directora: Es que lo tenemos que ver caso a caso. Porque nuestra situación es distinta a los países que fueron colonizados. La última colonia que fue las Filipinas acabo en 98.

Nora: Solamente quería verificar con usted porque no quería hacer un error en la translación. Porque sé que en Francés tampoco se usa.

Directora: ¿A no “primitif”? ¿Entonces que dicen?

Nora: Dicen communautés originaires. Mismo en el Musée du Quai Branly ya no lo usan. Antes se llamaba Le Musée des Arts Premiers pero ahora lo cambiaron al Musée du Quai Branly. Entonces por eso en francés ya no se usa mucho, lo cambiaron un poco acaso de que la palabra puede tener una significación despectiva.

Directora: Es que nosotros no somos solamente un museo de antropología, no somos solamente un museo de arqueología, no somos solamente un museo de arte, es un museo de estos tres departamentos. Es que se queda todo más diluido.

Nora: Me gustó mucho como hicieron paralelismos entre las comunidades precolombinas o aún existentes en América Latina, eso me gustó mucho porque da la sensación que en efecto todo se ve y funciona juntos. Y, finalmente, mi última pregunta es, me encantó cómo organizaron la exposición con las salas porque realmente nos da una imagen e información bien interesante y nos da una sensación que todo funciona juntos. Y me encantó como también introdujeron personas reales con vídeos e estatuas de las señoras.

Directora: Ese era el objetivo desde 25 años y seguimos trabajando en esa línea. No hay un cambio conceptual profundo. Esa una exposición temporal que tenemos. Eso fue una decisión mía porque esto venía como una exposición de Arte Contemporáneo. En este museo no somos un Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, ni nuestros fondos ni nuestros objetivos en ningún sitio jamás ha sido hacer arte contemporánea aparte el arte contemporánea está asociada a un mercado del arte muy delicado. en cuanto que tú metes en un museo obra de un artista vivo estás alterando el mecanismo del mercado porque esa persona se va a revalorizar, entonces hay que tener mucho cuidado con la introducción de la exposición. Esas obras tenían que dialogar con nuestras colecciones. Así que sirven para tener un dialogo con nuestra colección se considera la propuesta, pero esto aparte una colección de una exposición de arte contemporáneo

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aquí no. Hay otras instituciones muy apropiadas, el Reina, el Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo Conde Duque del Ayuntamiento de Madrid están. Las galerías de arte contemporáneo están muy expansivas y es invasor. Entonces una institución histórica los que no debo ver, pero es que si lo hay que justificar lo que si eso sirve.

Nora: Pero funciona muy bien con las colecciones que tienen.

Directora: Ahora sí.

Nora: Note que en los paneles el vocabulario usado mostró que estas poblaciones si existen.

Directora: Cada uno puede creer la conclusión que quiere. No es nuestro trabajo de decirles una conclusión o narrativa exacta. Jamás le diremos a nadie que tiene que pensar. Y jamás haremos un discurso pidiendo perdón, pero perdón de que. Es que esto es historia. Lo que aquí tenemos es historia. Y ni defendemos ni atacamos. Tú piensas, y yo jamás me meteré. Pero así procuraré como hecho ahora darte información. La pregunta que tengo es que, yo y mi mamá notamos que la exposición hablo de la conquista y de la presencia española pero no hablo de la conquista como una guerra. ¿Y queríamos saber por qué? Porque muchos museos habrían hecho eso (incluido ese discurso en su exposición permanente)

Directora: Porque eso sería un discurso demasiado fácil. Eso es demasiado simple. Creo que vamos detrás de un objetivo más profundo. Mira la Península Ibérica y necesitas conocer historia, que hacemos ahora le declaramos la guerra Italia por Imperio Romano por toda la Península Ibérica fue territorio romano. ¿Entonces ahora que hacemos vamos a cortar relaciones diplomáticas con Italia por la presencia romana? ¿O con Túnez por la presencia Cartaginesa, o en Grecia por la presencia griega, o con Francia por Napoleón? ¿Qué hacemos?

Nora: Entonces el museo trata tener una conversación sobre las cosas que si funcionaron y las cosas que no y sentarse a hablar. Sacarlo a la luz.

Directora: Eso tú ya, yo no soy tu director de tesis, pero todo eso tiene también que ver mucho con la ética protestante. Lo siento, pero tengo que decir que fue mucho más asesina de la presente anglosajona en América del Norte. Hubo extinción deliberada de poblaciones. Creo que ese dialogo no le interesa a nadie entrar. Me parece absurdo. También hay una cosa fundamental es el mestizaje, el mestizaje en el mundo hispano es muy diferente. Eso jamás se

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hizo provecida. Y bueno si vas leyendo historia de América y demás de los territorios, verás cómo era la sociedad realmente. Por supuesto murió muchísima gente, los primeros territorios cubanos, por ejemplo, principalmente de enfermedades. También hubo enfermedades tropicales que eran fatales para los europeos. Mucho también murieron en los Minos- no hubo diferencia entre los mineros en América y los que estaban en España- son mineros. Hernán Cortés nunca hubiese conquistado Méjico sin los Taxcalas, sin los Totocalas (?) la ayuda de los pueblos Mejicanos que estaban en lucha con los Aztecas. No queremos quedarnos en la superficie cuando podemos hacer algo más interesante. Lo que paso en América, también pasó en Europa. Los que murieron allá también murieron aquí. Los virreinos existían entre el territorio español y en Europa antes de que los españoles se fueron a América. Por ejemplo, el virreinato de Nápoles. Yo te recomiendo leer *Imperiophobia* y *Leyenda Negra* y la autora es María Elvira de la Roca.

Nora: Muchísimas Gracias.

Directora: Porque esto es un debate que se ha reabierto.

Nora: Ahora se ha abierto una discusión en América del Norte y en Australia acerca de las conquistas anglosajonas, entonces quería saber cómo museos en España tratan este sujeto.

Directora: Estos libros no son propaganda son academia. Y una gran porción de que paso era debido de la influencia religiosa, porque mucho se destruyó debido a la religión. Y es verdad que hubo españoles que dijeron que hay que dejarles a quemar. Lo que la gente no sabe es que habían destruido los Códices Aztecas- cuando Moctezuma vino dijo que todo antes de Moctezuma no existe. Entonces Moctezuma ordeno que se quemaran todos los códices anteriores. Esto no lo inventaron los españoles. Tiene que leer los artículos y las sugerencias que le di, pues le ayudara mucho. Usted tiene mucho trabajo.

Nora: Si de verdad sí, pero muchísimas gracias por toda su ayuda y su tiempo. Se lo agradezco mucho.

Directora: De nada, era un placer conocerla.

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Images Not Photographed by Author

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Figure 2. Dióscoro Teófilo Puebla Tolín, *Primer Desembarco de Cristóbal Colón en América* (The First Landing of Christopher Columbus in America), 1962. Oil on canvas. Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain. Accessed June 26th, 2019. https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Desembarco_de_Colon_de_Teofilo_de_la_Puebla.jpg

Figure 3. José Garnelo y Alda, *Primeros homenajes a Colón en el Nuevo Mundo* (First Tribute to Columbus in the New World), 1892. Oil on Canvas. Museo Naval de Madrid, Madrid, Spain. Accessed June 26th, 2019. <http://bibliotecavirtualdefensa.es/BVMDefensa/i18n/consulta/registro.cmd?id=40808>

Figure 32. Vicente Albán, *Señora Principal con su Negra Esclava* (Principal (protagonist) Woman with her Black Slave) 1873. Oil on canvas. Museo de America, Madrid, Spain. Accessed June 26th, 2019. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Retrato_de_una_se%C3%B1ora_principal_con_su_negra_esclava_por_Vicente_Alba%C3%A1n.jpg

Figure 46. Vicente Albán, *Señora Principal con su Negra Esclava* (Principal (protagonist) Woman with her Black Slave) 1873. Oil on canvas. Museo de America, Madrid, Spain. Accessed June 26th, 2019. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Retrato_de_una_se%C3%B1ora_principal_con_su_negra_esclava_por_Vicente_Alba%C3%A1n.jpg

Images Photographed by Author

Figure 4. A photograph of the Museo de América's exterior. March 20th, 2019.

Figure 5. A photograph of the Museo de América front exterior. March 20th, 2019

Figure 6. A screenshot of the architectural layout of the Museo de América. April 16th, 2019.

Figure 7. A photograph of the entrance on the second floor, leading to the first hall in the permanent exhibition. A panel with the different themes and the model from the National Cathedral In Mexico City are present. March 20th, 2019.

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Figure 10. A photograph of the prints exhibited in the three-walled room in the centre of the first hall. March 20th, 2019..

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