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MUSEOLOGICAL INTERFACE: CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION, IDENTITY AND IMAGE IN THE ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE OF HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

This research proposes an analysis and reflection on the communication of museums, in order to understand how the museum space can ensure a continuous and sustained communication of its identity, social memory, heritage and cultural policies. This study contributes to the affirmation of museums as potentializers with regard specifically to the "new cultural heritage" and the "New Museology", in the case of technological solutions resulting from a certain set of ideological and deontological options, epistemological, theoretical and methodological, opposing themselves to "traditional cultural heritage" and "traditional Museology". The importance of corporate identity in the success of museological activity promotes a rapprochement between museology and communication and indicates the models that best respond to the different needs resulting from documentary language and collection management, since the tool created in the area of Museology uses and intercepts knowledge and concepts that help in the continuous improvement of museum spaces. It is crucial that institutions can contribute to the protection and promotion of heritage, allowing their collections to have a longer life and consequently well-evaluated management, better experience and relevant experiences for the public, implying innovative museological practices that can reflect the role of museums as promoters of diversity and cultural creativity.

Keywords: Museum Innovation, Documentary Language, Cultural Heritage, Identity, Art Collection

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, museums serve as not only places for observing and enjoying the space and the works on display but can also use as research centres within the museum itself, where people learn and exchange ideas about the broader field of museology. These institutions are constantly evolving, taking into account direct or virtual contact with the public, the physical organisation of spaces, events and collections within an avant-garde concept. "Virtual museology focuses on institutions that share a common objective: the management and representation of the visual arts, knowledge and thought" Matos (1998). In the contemporary era, museums possess the means of communication and accessibility to various audiences, whilst maintaining their specific identity as a "museum", ensuring the institutionalised functions of the collection as if it were an archive, whether in the field of research or as a collection proper. The concept of the 'diffuse museum' has gained prominence from a multipolar perspective, offering benefits in terms of communication between museums, and is being realised through various communication tools and platforms.

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Museums take on particular significance regarding the coherence, communication and visual expression of their identity; Bonsiepe (1995), as an interface in design, "considers corporate design as an element that brings together the different representations of museum activity, the "role" of museums in contemporary society, with models and practices in museum management, sustainability and the creation of new museums". Today, these institutions authenticate and preserve records of the past through new forms of documentation, with a view to their inclusion in museum collections. "The transformation and evolution of museums will, over time, be faster, keeping pace with the development of new forms of organisation, new technologies, new identity needs and new ways of communicating" Semedo and Lopes (2005).

With regard to the museum's role in safeguarding heritage, it is also necessary to integrate social and educational functions in order to develop and broaden the challenges facing the organisation, the scope of its activities, and the flexibility of its teaching and learning methods.

Among other aspects, the work carried out by UNESCO in the protection of ICH, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), and the recognition of ICH by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) play a crucial role for museums in this regard UNESCO (2005).

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND INITIAL QUESTIONS

From a theoretical perspective, this research is based on the hypothesis that public cultural policies for museums are grounded in the notion of these organisations' collective memory, achieved through the protection of museum heritage and its role in shaping identity.

Based on this, the theoretical framework aims to demonstrate the functioning of the museological concept and the networks of connections it establishes with cultural heritage, addressing the following questions:

- Given the ongoing nature of museum activity, what are the requirements for ensuring coherent communication of its identity?
- What is the function of museology?
- How does museum communication relate to the public?
- What underpins cultural diversity and creativity in museums?
- Currently, interactivity in museums considere crucial in various respects. What is the basis of museology and what are the benefits for visitors?
- What is the intrinsic relationship between the museum, the collection, the surrounding space, and the building's structure?

We can observe that, from a functional perspective, museums serve for not only the observation and enjoyment of the space and the works on display, but can also used as research centers within the museum space, where one learns and confronts ideas about the collection and the entire museological panorama.

STATE OF THE ART

THE CONCEPT OF THE MUSEUM

Over time, the concept of the word 'museum' has been progressively altered and adapted with the aim of evolving within the artistic, heritage and cultural fields. According to the charter International Council of Museums (2022), "a museum is defined as a cultural institution (public or private) open to the public on a permanent basis, operating on a non-profit basis, whose tangible and intangible heritage provides diverse experiences in the fields of education and knowledge sharing." Similarly, a museum is an archive containing unique and valuable items due to their originality, belonging to individuals or institutions whose purpose centres on creation or the underlying social context.

Currently, the concept of a "museum" is increasingly seen as encompassing the wider environment in which it is situated, with materials ranging from Palaeolithic rock art to the present day. "The meaning of the word 'heritage' distinguishes different types of museums: cultural, artistic, archaeological and architectural heritage, according to the specific contents of each."

Given this diverse range of "museums", "boundaries" have drawn in the definition of a museum across various categories. According to ICOM (International Council of Museums), "it is a non-profit cultural institution serving society, whose function is to safeguard collections, conserve the holdings and exhibit tangible and intangible heritage, providing diverse experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and the sharing of knowledge". "Museums are defined as institutions whose characteristics are set out in this law as references, cultural and environmental representations" (Law 47/2004). "A Visitable Collection is defined as a collective set of cultural assets, whether public or private, publicly displayed in institutions designated for that purpose, as established by current law for museums" (Law 47/2004). In these cases, visitable collections and museums present different contexts, with greater typological diversity and new realities, considering the "museum" to be a "living organism". Sousa (2024)

METHODOLOGY

This research examines the museological context in terms of design and strategic utility as an intermediary function-serving heritage, whilst also outlining possible classifications and typologies relevant to contemporary museology.

The relevance of this study lies in its decoding of museums as places of memory, of collective and individual identities within cultural institutions, linked to their functionality and communication policies, as well as to the interaction between museum events and the public. Methodologically, surveys, readings and analyses of museum and heritage contexts were carried out, drawing on articles, theses, national and international legislation, and electronic repositories, addressing the terms/concepts Museum/Musealisation, Heritage/Heritagisation and the implications related to their preservation, formal and informal aspects of different departments (research, restoration, inventory, etc.).

In addition to all the above requirements, there is also the implementation of an anonymous incident reporting system, addressing their causes and reducing their frequency; Use of external R&D provision; participation in R&D collaboration with universities or other institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE ROLE OF THE MUSEUM

The function of a museum is determined by an organizational structure that ensures the preservation of cultural assets through research, with the aim of democratizing and developing culture in society through various forms—testimonies of ideas, representations in real or virtual form—from cultural, environmental, and landscape perspectives (Law No. 47/2004) of August 19, 2004. Over the centuries, museums have taken on functions that extend beyond the physical space and the museum's collection of artifacts in order to "manage the material manifestation of production, expressed in the arts, in knowledge, and in thought" Matos (1998) in the cultural, social, and economic spheres.

Regardless of the diversity of each museum space, they share a cultural function of investigating humanity and its environment, with the aim of ensuring the memory and conservation of heritage. "In the current era, museological globalization can be compared to hypermarket culture" Matos (1998). Museums are responsible for fostering community participation, thereby contributing to the development and advancement of functions that serve society. However, each museum fulfills its role within the local context and environment in which it operates, not only for the future of communities but also for its own future, including the maintenance of multiple projects related to the generational evolution of heritage.

COMMUNICATION AS A MUSEUM FUNCTION

From a museological perspective, large tourist centres—regarded as hubs for promoting tourism and culture through activities and exhibitions of collections—and smaller local museums are reserved for intellectuals who cater to the ideals of various types of audiences. Specific communication replaced by a generalist language, accompanied by guided tours of the spaces and the use of new technological media as a means of engaging the public. "Taking into account the cultural demands of audiences implies adapting to the new needs arising from technological developments, in which the exhibition space plays a structuring role in museology" Blanco (1999). "Traditionally, ethnographic museums portray and represent the profile of certain social groups" Durand (2007). In the current era, these museums designate as cultural spaces for traditions, critical and recreational exhibitions, contributing to the enrichment of local identity through the acquisition of knowledge for the benefit of the community Gonçalves (2007). For the researcher Fernando J. Moreira, the museum's mission should have several objectives: popularity, the promotion of local identity, and the stimulation of social relations Primo (2007).

Ethnographic museology is not represente solely by the objects on display, but rather by their symbolism and the knowledge gained about the role they play in society across different social contexts, serving as an anthropological and ethnological reference.

CLASSIFICATION AND MUSEUM TYPOLOGIES

The various museum typologies reflecte in the collections, which allow for further differentiation.

The enigmatic 'mosaic' that constitutes the totality of museums, whose characterisation hinges on geographical location, length of existence and governing bodies. With regard to the classification by collection types established by UNESCO, the OAC (Observatory of Cultural Activities), and the "Museums" database, it is possible to obtain data on a predominant differentiation of the themes/exhibits and their art collections in museums dedicated to the fine arts. This sector includes museums of Archaeology and History, with a particular focus on the themes on display.

Whilst the typology of collections is an important reference point for museums, administrative practices, geographical aspects and the legal status of governing bodies are also significant. With regard to governing bodies, ICOM proposes three types of museums: national and public museums, which be subdivided according to the political-administrative structure into central, regional and local

government museums; and private museums with private legal status, namely associations, foundations, private companies and private individuals.

In this context, the classification of public museums base on geographical criteria (local, regional or national); however, there is some overlap with private museums, as both public and private museums may coexist in all regions.

MUSEUMS: IDENTITY, CONSERVATION AND IMAGE

The concept of a museum operates on an urban and regional scale, where the quantity of artistic and historical artefacts forms the basis of its identity Tostões (2000). The identity of museums is more complex than that of any other organisation, not only because of the construction of their image and the identities they represent, but also due to the sacralisation of the works on display within the museum space. The term 'contamination' differs from 'museum organisation', that is, the creation of distinct images of the collection and the organisation. Consequently, distinct situations can identified: museums and collections with fixed, barely differentiated images, "contaminating" one another where the work of the museum and the artist become intertwined, reducing the degree of "contamination" in temporary exhibitions by established artists. Vítor de Sousa notes "museums are full of collections of ethnographic artefacts from the cultures of Western civilisation". For the author, most museums specialising in anthropology, ethnology and ethnography worldwide have become globalised.

Taylor (2003) notes, "the use of different languages and platforms during the colonial era helped to strengthen the artivist dynamic, leading not only to awareness and street art, but also to civil disobedience—a subversion of the rule of law—as a form of action". The neologism "artivism" highlights an artistic break with convention, as a challenge to the ruling classes and a demand for the social and political rights of marginalised artistic groups, by occupying a space to amplify, raise awareness of and problematise their causes and social demands, in which artivists bring about new scenarios and possibilities for enjoyment, participation and artistic creation. "Artivism" derives from social and political interventions, "as a cause of social demand and simultaneously as an artistic break, particularly in artistic creation" Raposo (2015). Heinich (2021) describes how "the social world that these researcher-activists have strived to build in various ways is proving difficult to achieve, even though it is a growing movement, which is nonetheless interesting". "The Brutish Museums and the restitution of the Benin Bronzes" (Nigeria), having been stolen, resulted from violent movements, with a return to colonial violence. This is the key idea of the book by Dan Hicks, an academic at the University of Oxford (Great Britain) and curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum, entitled The Brutish Museums. In Europe, any of the museums display looted artefacts resulting from the curatorial practices of an empire, yet make no mention of the stolen objects; for Dan Hicks, returning the object would be a consequence of colonialism.

THE MUSEUM IN AN ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

From an economic perspective, museums should not viewed as isolated spaces whose profitability derives solely from services provided within the museum premises. The revenue generated by museum services is, in most cases, not particularly significant; however, as it generate through the museum's influence, it can also play a decisive role in the economy of a city or region. The economic dimension of museums in large-scale projects is geared towards mass tourism, such as the 'Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao', whilst in smaller projects they may only attract a niche tourist audience, yet contribute to revitalising economically stagnant regions, as seen in the case of the Mértola Museum, the Pendilhe Rural Museum and the Belmonte Museums, amongst others. Given that traditional museums have a more generalist exhibition format, they have come to incorporate science centres, which focus on utilising resources derived from new technologies, with the aim of attracting visitors. The museum space offers an interactive experience through the handling of objects, touch and hands-on interaction, which enables visitors to understand how, processes work.

In the 'minds-on' phase, there is an intellectual engagement whereby the individual is able to relate the museum experience to their everyday life; in the 'hearts-on' phase, there is an emotional stimulus that can foster a sense of identification.

According to Pavão and Leitão (2007), there are two possible forms of interaction: between visitors (social-on) and interaction facilitated by guides in these spaces (explainers-on).

Currently, museum professionals and managers share theoretical and practical knowledge from a multidisciplinary perspective within the practical scope of activities related to collection management, questioning the ultimate purpose of their existence. However, success is only possible when the museum project is integrated, requiring the involvement and participation of the whole community to ensure the existence of infrastructure and complementary activities that take the visitor beyond the museum.

MUSEUM CONCEPTAND MUSEU INNOVATION

The concept of the 'museum' has evolved over the last two centuries through social and identity shifts. This phenomenon has been particularly evident in the democratisation of culture, where museums play a decisive role as "museums for all", alongside a reshaping of society. Ethically, the crisis facing museums in contemporary societies is influenced by competition from the entertainment industries and the laws of the market and marketing, whilst remaining a central institution of culture" Brigola (2008).

The adaptation of museums stems from this change, promoting local identities in the face of a globalised world, transforming into theme parks that combine knowledge with entertainment for the general public. "One of the models for new museum concepts, which aims to combine information with entertainment, is found in theme parks and historical parks, such as Disneyland in California or Epcot Centre in Orlando, Florida, which is aimed at adults, thus giving rise to the term 'Disneyfication'" Blanco (1999). "The museum has become a Disneyland, where objects are no longer admired for their authenticity, but merely as contributions to an imagined recreation of their reality" Mac Lean (1997), the result of an emerging need for museums to rise to the challenge: to engage the public in a virtual world.

These transformations have led to changes in the founding concepts of the 'museum' as a public service, 'namely the shift in image towards instant gratification, with entertainment, education and specialisation being replaced by speed, immediacy and manipulation; the preservation of objects giving way to their consumption; hierarchy giving way to individual promotion; and, finally, architecture being placed at the service of spectacle' Wood (2008). The definition of museum innovation can be implemented through a specific museum service, a new museum marketing method, or even a museum organisational method. Examples of museum marketing innovations include the introduction of a new direct sales system or a personalised information system, or the adoption of a new museum marketing concept, which involves a substantial change to the design of an existing museum product as a marketing innovation, but is not considered a museum product innovation. In order to continue activities relating to museum product and process innovation, as well as their respective expansion, the following conventions are normally adopted OECD and Eurostat (1997): museum marketing and/or organisational innovations;

All innovation activities, excluding R&D, that are specifically related to museological innovations in marketing and organisation, and are not related to museological innovations in services or processes, are included in the organisational categories for museological innovations in marketing; R&D embraces and promotes creative work with the aim of acquiring knowledge.

The acquisition of external knowledge may also include IT services and other scientific and technical services for museum service and process innovation activities; computer software, programme descriptions and support materials for software systems and applications used in the service and process innovation activities carried out by the museum. The acquisition, development or extension of databases to be used for more than one year in the museum's service and process innovation activities. The following classification may be used OECD and Eurostat (1997): Own funding; Funding from other museums; Funding from financial institutions; Government funding; Funding from supranational or international organisations; other sources. Questions regarding R&D expenditure on innovation can be formulated in two ways OECD and Eurostat (1997): Innovations in museum services exclude OECD and Eurostat (1997) minor changes or improvements, routine updates, regular seasonal changes, and technical maintenance; on the other hand, the following are included in innovations in museum services OECD and Eurostat (1997) in equipment and internet software (e.g. free provision of information about the museum);

The introduction of smart cards and plastic cards for various functions, a museum 'production' or 'distribution' process innovation. Innovations in museum processes exclude OECD and Eurostat (1997) unprofitable changes, an increase in service capacity through the addition of various systems very similar to those already in use. Examples of innovations in museum processes OECD and Eurostat (1997) include: the installation of new technologies, automated equipment for packaging collections, scanners/laptops for recording collections/inventories, the introduction of electronic payment systems; the introduction of an automated voice response system, the introduction of an electronic ticketing system and new computer networks. Innovations in museum marketing exclude OECD and Eurostat (1997): Changes to the 'presentation' or 'packaging' of the collection, the positioning of the artwork, or its promotion, based on methods previously used by the museum; Seasonal, regular or routine changes to museum marketing tools; The use of existing marketing methods to reach a new target audience. Examples of museum marketing innovations OECD and Eurostat (1997): Marketing innovations may refer to the introduction of a new method enabling the public to view the characteristics of the collection or the artwork on the museum's website, and the introduction of a fundamentally new "brand symbol" with a view to positioning the museum and its collection. Examples of organisational innovations in museums OECD and Eurostat (1997): those relating to any organisational method within the museum or in its external relations;

The establishment of a new museological database and other knowledge accessible to all; The introduction, for the first time, of museum quality systems; The introduction of training programmes to create functional teams comprising staff from different sectors or areas of responsibility within the museum; Implementation of decentralised work responsibilities for museum staff; establishment of interactive teams within the exhibition space, enabling a greater amount of information to be provided to different types of visitors.

However, it is absolutely essential to maintain the electronic system (smartphones and computers) on an ongoing basis, making it possible to compare virtual elements with reality, given that the rapid evolution of the latest generation of technologies is one of the main obstacles for museums struggling due to a lack of resources.

Furthermore, new technologies have contributed to institutional communication with the public within the new context of institutions' cyberspace, as a means of establishing a relationship with interactive audiences, acting a cultural gatekeepers through digital media, between institutions and their audiences García Canclini (2003), offering opportunities to acquire knowledge of cultural activities.

INTERACTIVE MUSEUM

With the advent of the virtual museum, anyone wishing to visit the museum no longer needs to travel there, as it can programmed; they can therefore select the type of works on display or obtain other general information. There are also digital museums comprising collections of digital works, allowing visitors to copy and duplicate the content of files. Technological advancements are helping to create new exhibition formats within the traditional museum space, through interactive multimedia applications, enabling the design and staging of exhibitions, as well as allowing for the differentiation of visitor age groups during the same visit, in addition to other aspects that complement the exhibition. Given the rapid accessibility to museums via digital media, the web facilitates the ability for museums to connect with one another in a detailed examination of the definition of museums worldwide through the "Google Art Project". There is also the possibility of taking a virtual tour of the interiors of monuments designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites via "Google Earth", the potential of which will become apparent in the short to medium term. Interactivity in museums allows for a closer relationship between exhibitions and applications.

SUSTAINABILITY AND INCENTIVES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW MUSEUMS

The shift in museology towards heritage, driven by 'new museology' throughout the 1970s, led to an increase in smaller-scale museums at the local level. With regard to the issue of sustainability, this is a matter of an economic nature concerning the organisation and financial management of these institutions; given the growing interaction with the public, new information technologies and new museographic techniques necessitate greater investment and a consequent increase in the running costs of these institutions.

The maintenance and preservation of these spaces depend on acquisitions made by municipalities, usually promoted by local authorities or other representative organisations. These museum spaces are generally multi-centred, running the risk of an inability to conserve and manage the collection in the long term, because of the political power that makes them vulnerable to shifts in local power. The museum, as a heritage element of the region, often takes the form of a visitor site with a guided tour, a village museum, or any other archaeological facility, etc., with key features in terms of economic development (such as the Côa Museum). Its main shortcomings relate to long-term maintenance costs, the scattered nature of settlements, fluctuations in tourist numbers, and management and conservation practices – situations that could lead to long-term sustainability issues, which should been anticipated at the time of its creation and periodically reassessed. For a museum to function fully in terms of sustainability, several components are necessary: "technical sustainability, relating to human, technical and logistical resources"; "financial sustainability, relating to the budgetary capacity to provide financial support and the services provided" Real (2011). The types of technical sustainability referred to range from the creation of the museum, support and maintenance of the building, and specialist technicians—whether in the areas of infrastructure, interiors or exteriors—to financial sustainability, which is not always guaranteed, given the reduction in budgets allocated by the relevant authorities, which jeopardises the project's long-term continuation. Most museums end up being forgotten after their opening, due to low tourist numbers—considered to be seasonal—with demand tending to decline gradually, ultimately leading to their closure in the long term, until a new opportunity for restructuring arises, which is why tourists choose other destinations, due to the complexity of these museum spaces. The factors related to this situation stem from increasing interaction with the public, new information and communication technologies, and the evolution of museographic techniques, which require greater investment and a consequent rise in operating costs. To ensure that museums function effectively, a number of alternatives to traditional models have emerged, including the creation of networked museum structures, business partnerships, and organisational and academic associations working towards social and heritage development.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that, within the field of museology, there are museum spaces that need to promote, preserve and research heritage values; on the other hand, there are certain weaknesses in various existing museum projects, with low visitor numbers, which makes their sustainability difficult.

As a reflection of the society in which we live, museums provide spaces where historical records preserve alongside new exhibits, presented through an open, accessible concept, whilst acting as catalysts for local, regional and national identities by identifying the most influential factors in museum communication.

In this context, it considere that heritage preservation has taken on new roles, enabling the expansion of challenges posed to museum practice in the educational and social spheres. It is worth noting the concept of the 'museum', which has been in a state of constant flux over the last two centuries and is, in some way, linked to the society it represents, with change, adaptation and keeping pace with social transformations forming its essence and identity. "The change and evolution of museums will, throughout this century, be faster, keeping pace with the intense rhythm of development of new forms of organisation, new technologies and new identity needs." Semedo and Lopes (2005). Finally, it is also worth noting the new trends in the museum sector, namely the use of information technology tools made available to visitors in these spaces, which are becoming increasingly innovative in terms of both

structure and technology, and whose interactive features enable effective communication with the various types of visitors they attract.

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