

Quebec Declaration – Basic Principles of a New Museology 1984

Introduction

A movement of new museology has its first and international public expression in 1972 at the "Round table of Santiago (Chile)" organized by ICOM. This movement claims the social function of the museum and its interventions' global character.

Proposal

1. Consideration of universal order

In a contemporary world which attempts to integrate all means of development, Museology should strive to broaden its traditional attributions and functions of identification, preservation and education to encompass wider practices than these objectives so as to better include in its action those related to the human and physical environment.

In order to achieve this goal and incorporate the populations in its action, museology is increasingly using its interdisciplinarity, contemporary methods of communication common to cultural intervention as a whole, and also the means of modern management which integrate their users.

At the same time that it preserves the material fruit of past civilizations, and that it protects those that bear witness to present day aspirations and technologies, the new museology – ecomuseology, community museology as well as all other forms of active museology – is first and foremost concerned with the development of populations, reflecting the modern principles that have driven its evolution while simultaneously associating them to projects for the future.

This new movement has unquestionably put itself at the service of creative imagination, constructive realism and the humanitarian principles upheld by the international community. It has to some extent become one of the possible forms of bringing peoples closer together, for their own and their mutual knowledge, for their cyclic development and their desire for the fraternal creation of a world that respects its intrinsic wealth.

In this sense, this movement, which aims at manifesting itself globally, has concerns of scientific, cultural, social and economic order.

Among other means, this movement uses all the resources of museology (collection, conservation, scientific research, restitution, diffusion, creation), which it transforms into tools suitable to each specific social context and projects.

2. Making a stand

Considering that over fifteen years of experiments in new museology – ecomuseology, community museology and all forms of active museology – throughout the world have been a critical factor in the development of the communities that have adopted this way of managing their future;

Considering the need, unanimously felt by the participants in the various reflection panels and by the consulted contributors, to accentuate the means to render this movement more widely recognized;

Considering the will to create the organizational basis of a common reflection and of experiments lived in various continents;

Considering the interest in providing itself with a framework aimed at fostering the workings of these new museologies and consequently at articulating principles and means of action;

Considering that the theory on Ecomuseums and community museums (neighbourhood museums, local museums...) was born of experiments conducted in various environments for over 15 years.

The following is adopted:

That the international museum community be invited to acknowledge this movement, to adopt and accept all forms of active museology in museum typology;

That everything be done to ensure that public powers acknowledge and foster local initiatives which implement these principles;

That in this spirit and with a view to allowing the development of the effectiveness of these museologies, the following permanent structures be created in close cooperation:

An international committee "Ecomuseums/Community Museums", within the scope of ICOM (International Council of Museums);

An international federation of the new museology, which may be associated to ICOM and to ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites), with provisional headquarters in Canada;

That a provisional work group be formed whose first initiatives will be: organizing the proposed structures, setting objectives, applying a three-year plan of meetings and international cooperation

Quebec, 12 October 1984.

Adopted by the I International Atelier Ecomuseums/New Museology