

## Foreword. A historical year for museums and museology

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# Foreword

## A historical year for museums and museology

This year of 2022 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the renowned Round Table of Santiago de Chile and its Declaration, a document that has influenced museum theory, practice and policies to redefine inequalities and rethink hierarchies in the cultural sector worldwide. This is also a year of great transformation for museums and museology, once again facing societal changes and revising their political and social roles. For those investigating the museum phenomenon in its continuous evolution, this is a year that will leave some legacies for future studies and reflections.

While museums around the globe are still reinventing their practices and communication strategies after the pandemic of Covid-19 and a long period of social isolation when they kept visitors at a distance, new challenges arise in terms of sustainability, inclusion and social engagement. The past few years have also put museums in the centre of several claims for social justice and reparation, placing cultural heritage, once and for all, in a contentious arena of political disputes. More than ever before, the mere presentation of collections ignoring their political implication and the sensitive issues they inflict on the audiences has proven to be insufficient. Museums are now asked to listen to activists and vulnerable groups in order to repair past injustices and to reframe certain narratives by taking position. In the midst of this complex scenario, in a moment of great need for a consensual base line to conceive museums in the present, ICOM has approved a new definition of the museum that proclaims a more active role towards societies and presents new core values for these institutions moving forward.

The present issue of *ICOFOM Study Series* was envisioned as an invitation for celebrating the Round Table and its legacies, while fostering critical debates for the transformation of museums when they enter a new era. With this purpose, the issue presents a majority of articles from Latin American authors – as it was expected – but also considering other perspectives and the potential dialogues between museums in different parts of the world, notably those located in the so-called global South.

Along the years, this international journal has presented relevant reflections for the new developments in museum theory and practice, following the main trends and presenting topical questions while facing contemporary issues for museums and cultural heritage. We would like to think that once again

*ICOFOM Study Series* is reflecting its time and focusing on perceptions of the present that drive us into the future.

This issue was put together thanks to the efforts of the members of our Editorial board, namely the editorial secretaries, Anna Leshchenko, Marion Bertin and Elizabeth Weiser. I'm also thankful to the peer-reviewers and the proof-readers that have been responsible for improving the quality of the published articles; among professional proof-readers for this issue, we counted with the work of Hilary Feldman, Victor Obregón, and the voluntary work of Marie-Alix Molinié and Melissa Aguilar. I am also thankful to Leonardo Mellado, the Chair of ICOM Chile, for his partnership and collaboration as guest editor for this issue.

Long live the legacy of Santiago de Chile and the important year of 1972!

Bruno Brulon Soares

Editor, *ICOFOM Study Series*