

# PROGRAM, ABSTRACTS + BIOS

Language(s) in Museum(s):  
Resources + Visions for Museology

July 26 - 29 Puebla, Mexico

COLING



The Americas  
Research Network

muvi

MUSEO  
URBANO  
INTERACTIVO



Tuesday, July 26  
Martes 26 de julio

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)

DAY 1: RESOURCES FOR LANGUAGES IN MUSEUMS  
DÍA 1: RECURSOS PARA LENGUAS EN MUSEOS

MODERATOR | MODERA: ANTHONY SHELTON

|       |   |  |   |
|-------|---|--|---|
| 9:00  | Welcome   Bienvenida  | Stanisław Kordasiewicz,<br>Victorino Morales, Cynthia<br>Radding | COLING, MUI, ARENET                           |
| 9:30  | Un Toolkit? A digital Resource?   | Greta de León  | ARENET  |
| 10:00 | Architectures of learning: The exhibition space as instrument of<br>social and linguistic inclusion | Diana Ramírez Jasso  | Tecnológico de Monterrey                      |
| 11:30 | Do Objects Speak?   | Anthony Shelton  | University of British Columbia   ARENET       |
| 12:30 | Group Discussion   Discusión  |  |   |
| 13:30 | MUI tour   recorrido MUI  | Victorino Morales  | Museo Urbano Interactivo                      |
| 15:00 | Why and How (Not) to Display Languages in Museums   | Tomasz Wicherkiewicz   | Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań          |
| 16:30 | Challenges of a Multilingual Museum in an Overwhelmingly<br>Monolingual Country                     | Motoi Suzuki + Ritsuko<br>Kikusawa                               | Minpaku National Museum of Ethnology<br>Osaka |

# Wednesday, July 27

## Miércoles 27 de julio

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)

### DAY 2: COMMUNITIES, CULTURES, AND MUSEUMS

### DÍA 2: COMUNIDADES, CULTURAS Y MUSEOS

MODERATOR | MODERA: TOMASZ WICHERKIEWICZ

|       |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|
| 9:00  | Producing multilingual documentation for a Smithsonian collection of 600 objects                        | Emilienne Ireland                       | Smithsonian Institution   ARENET                |
| 10:00 | Limitaciones museísticas en la exposición de los Códices Mixtecos                                       | Omar Aguilar Sánchez                    | Universidad Autónoma Comunal de Oaxaca   ARENET |
| 11:30 | Words Matter: Towards a Self-Critical Language in Museums   | Erica Lehrer                            | Concordia University                            |
| 12:30 | But we didn't have colonies! - Museums' decolonisation in the Polish context                            | Magdalena Guziejko                      | University of Warsaw                            |
| 15:00 | Pacific Languages in New Zealand Museums: Experiments in Policy, Exhibitions, Collections and Education | Conal McCarthy                          | Victoria University of Wellington               |
| 16:30 | Group Discussion   Discusión  |   |   |
| 18:00 | Voces en diálogo: los libros en lenguas originarias de la Biblioteca Palafoxiana                        | Fabián Valdivia Pérez + Cynthia Radding | IMACP   UNC-ARENET                              |

Thursday, July 28  
Jueves 28 de julio

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)

DAY 3: INDIGENOUS AND MINORITIZED LANGUAGES IN MUSEUM METHODOLOGIES  
DÍA 3: LENGUAS INDÍGENAS Y MINORIZADAS EN METODOLOGÍAS MUSEÍSTICAS

MODERATOR | MODERA: GENNER LLANES-ORTIZ

|       |   |   |                                      |
|-------|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| 9:00  | The role of languages in the philosophy, design and running of '!Khwa ttu San Heritage and Education Centre' in South Africa. | Chris Low   | !Khwa ttu San Heritage Centre        |
| 10:00 | Untold Microcosms: Museums through the Lens of Personal Reverie and Political Reality   | Laura Osorio Sunnucks, Magdalena Araus Sieber + María Mercedes Martínez Milantchi | SDCELAR British Museum               |
| 11:30 | De lengua me como un taco. De la museología participativa a la acción   | Montserrat Navarro  | Museo Nacional de Culturas Populares |
| 12:30 | Bëngbe Benachëng: Decolonizing research and curatorship   | Jully Acuña Suárez + Marcelo M. Miranda + Colectivo Ayëntš                        | Leiden University, Colectivo Ayëntš  |
| 13:30 | Museos, Mediaciones y Multivocalidad: ¿cómo hacer que el museo hable idiomas originarios?                                     | Genner Llanes-Ortiz   | Bishop's University                  |





**Fabian Valdivia**

Director of Municipal Institute of Arts  
and Cultura in Puebla (IMACP)

**Cynthia Radding**

Gussenhoven Distinguished Professor  
in History and Latin American Studies  
at the University of North Carolina,  
Chapel Hill. Chair of the Board of  
Directors of ARENET

**VOICES IN DIALOGUE:  
THE BOOKS IN ORIGINAL LANGUAGES  
OF THE PALAFOXIANA LIBRARY**

Wednesday, July 27 | 18:00hrs.

Biblioteca Palafoxiana

Av 5 Ote 5, Centro histórico de Puebla, 72000 Puebla, Pue.

**Friday, July 29**  
**Viernes 29 de julio**

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)

# Ñiñu'u

PIELES SAGRADAS | SACRED SKIN

UN DOCUMENTAL DE | A DOCUMENTARY BY  
**OMAR AGUILAR SÁNCHEZ**

Directed by | Dirección:  
**Nicolás Rojas Sánchez**

PREMIER MUNDIAL | WORLD PREMIER  
VIERNES 29 JULIO - FRIDAY, JULY 29

5:30PM

MUSEO REGIONAL DE CHOLULA + YOUTUBE LIVE

# Diana Ramírez

Dean of the School of Architecture, Art  
and Design at Tecnológico de  
Monterrey, Central-Southern Region.

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## ARCHITECTURES OF LEARNING: THE EXHIBITION SPACE AS INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC INCLUSION

### **Abstract:**

The emergence of pedagogical thinking in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries mobilized new understandings of space and objects as tools for reinventing cognitive processes. In this context, the most interesting ideas can be found in C.H. Wolke's work, where objects, walls, people, and ideas converge in a ludic sphere in which children and women joined men in the radical work of opening their minds up to the world. This talk will touch on the most important gestures found in Wolke's attempts to materialize the Enlightenment's pursuit of more inclusive worlds of knowledge, reminding us of the long history of this aspiration in the development of museums.



# Diana Ramírez

Dean of the School of Architecture, Art  
and Design at Tecnológico de  
Monterrey, Central-Southern Region.

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## ARCHITECTURES OF LEARNING: THE EXHIBITION SPACE AS INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC INCLUSION

### Summary Bio:

Diana Ramirez-Jasso is Dean of the School of Architecture, Art and Design at Tecnológico de Monterrey, Central-Southern Region. She has taught a variety of courses on research methodologies and on the history and theory of design, including the lecture course Contemporary Architecture: Theories, Practices, Debates. Her research interests span the history and theory of interiors, buildings, gardens, and landscapes, particularly as they intersect with discourses stemming from literature, philosophy, pedagogy, and art. Diana's recent work has focused on the perceived relationships between designed spaces and the shaping of human subjectivity through a study of the historical encounters between the architecture, gardens, education, and the history of childhood.

Diana received the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the History and Theory of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Planning from Harvard University in 2012. She also holds a Master of Arts in Architecture and Urban Planning from Harvard University (2006), a Master of Science in the History, Theory, and Criticism of Architecture and Art from MIT (2002), and a professional degree in architecture (with honors) from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente in Mexico (1997). She has received numerous recognitions and awards, including research fellowships from the Harvard Graduate Society and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies at Harvard, a Merit Citation for the Carter Manny Award from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, a Special Merit Recognition Award and a Thesis Prize from MIT, and a Fulbright fellowship. Before joining Tec de Monterrey, Diana taught in the architecture departments at the ITESO in Mexico, Boston Architectural College, MIT, and Harvard.



# Anthony A. Shelton

—  
Director of ARENET's World Museum and Heritage program and professor of art history, visual art and theory at the University of British Columbia Vancouver

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## DO OBJECTS SPEAK?

### Abstract:

I will first present a brief introduction to a few of the recent developments and implications of multilingual projects in Canadian and Mexican museums to raise a number of theoretical questions that may warrant later discussion. However, the main body of my talk will focus on objects and the implications for museums of some Indigenous views that fundamentally question Western objectivizing discourses that treat them as passive, external and inert. I will look at museum classifications of “ethnographic objects” and how these obstruct our appreciation of their agency and power, as well as examine some Indigenous concepts of how objects still do communicate with members of the families and communities that care for them. Museums, it will be argued fundamentally mute certain types of objects that in a community setting would otherwise be part of complex social relationships, extending present kinship relations into deep time and providing bridges between the living and their ancestors. Finally, I will suggest some of the ramifications of such views for museum exhibitions, collections care and museum/community relations.

### Summary Bio:

Professor of art history, visual art and theory at the University of British Columbia Vancouver and director of world museum and heritage programs for the Americas Research Network, has held curatorial positions at the British Museum, the Horniman Museum and the Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery and Museums, Brighton. Between 2004-2021, he was director of the UBC Museum of Anthropology. He has published eight books and has written over 200 articles, book chapters and reviews on Latin American and Portuguese visual cultures, critical museology and the history of collecting.

# Victorino Morales Dávila

Director of Museo Urbano Interactivo  
del Tecnológico de Monterrey

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## TRANSGRESS FROM THE CODE

### Summary Bio:

Originally from the Zoque people in Chiapas. He is a doctor in social sciences from Tecnológico de Monterrey. He is Director of the MUI, of the Tecnológico de Monterrey's museum, and professor of international relations at the School of Government and Social Sciences in campus Puebla. He is a member of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS), a professional museum fellow at the Americas Research Network, and academic adviser at Joy Joy México Foundation. He has been active as an academic at the upper secondary and higher levels in the area of social sciences and international relations at Tecnológico de Monterrey and Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas. Also, in organized civil society projects in the state of Chiapas with mayan native communities. In the last 5 years he has focused on the development of projects that trigger processes of social innovation, citizenship and collaboration in urban and rural contexts. His experience in these areas has directed him towards cultural management for the development of artistic and scientific crossroads initiatives.

# Tomasz Wicherkiewicz

Department of Language Policy & Minority Studies  
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań,  
Poland

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## WHY AND HOW (NOT) TO DISPLAY LANGUAGES IN MUSEUMS

### Abstract:

Frequently, museums constitute instances of language planning, both in an overt and covert form.

Many museums of archaeology, history, culture, and literature contain sections of exhibitions about language(s). Many nation states strive to display (histories) of their national languages as a part of state orchestrated language policies.

The presentation focuses on (several types of) local regional museums that face the mission, assignment, and challenge of presenting their languages (often minoritized, localized, endangered) as a vital part of the identity of communities.

### Summary Bio:

Polish linguist who specializes in sociolinguistics, language policy and planning, as well as minority studies, with special interest in endangered, minority and minoritized, lesser-spoken, underresourced, and underresearched languages and their communities, in language revitalization and documentation, and in minority language rights protection and research. His research also includes typologies and sociolinguistics (including historical sociolinguistics) of writing systems and their elements. He authored and led the project Poland's Linguistic Heritage - Documentation Database for Endangered Languages – [www.inne-jezyki.amu.edu.pl](http://www.inne-jezyki.amu.edu.pl). Is a university professor and the head of the Department of Language Policy & Minority Studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. He studied in the Netherlands and Germany and worked with minority communities and academia, mainly in Europe and Asia. In 2018-2019, he stayed as a visiting professor at the University of Hokkaido in Sapporo, Japan, in 2019-2020 and in 2022 as a fellow researcher in the Smithsonian Institution program Recovering Voices in Washington, DC; in 2022 he was also a visiting researcher at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, NC and the University of Texas in Austin, the latter three as part of the COLING project (Minority Languages, Major Opportunities. Collaborative Research, Community Engagement, and Innovative Educational Tools).



# Motoi Suzuki

Professor at the National Museum of  
Ethnology, Japan (Minpaku) and The  
Graduate University for Advanced  
Studies

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## CHALLENGES OF A MULTILINGUAL MUSEUM IN AN OVERWHELMINGLY MONOLINGUAL COUNTRY

### Abstract:

This presentation considers how MINPAKU (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan) is promoting multilingualism. First, we will introduce the language exhibition of the museum, referring to the purposes, and major developments since its opening in 1977. Second, we will consider the problem of translation between different languages. Using the concept of Arte Popular of Latin American countries as an example, we will discuss how to translate it into Japanese, which is the language of a majority of visitors.

### Summary Bio:

Professor at the National Museum of Ethnology, Japan (Minpaku) and The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, specializing in development anthropology and museology. Suzuki studied Spanish and Yucatec Maya at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán as a 12th Japan-Mexico exchange student in 1982. Initially interested in development, he conducted fieldwork on poverty issues in a Yucatec Mayan community, Mexico; evaluation of a Japanese government-supported rural development project in Chiapas, Mexico; and the effects of fair trade procurement in cacao cooperatives in Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Since 2014, he has been conducting comparative research on museum exhibits of indigenous peoples in Latin American countries, visiting more than 100 museums in the world. He is currently in charge of curating a special exhibition, "Arte Popular: the Creative and Critical Power of Latin Americans" scheduled to run from March to May 2023 at Minpaku.

# Ritsuko Kikusawa

Professor at the National Museum of  
Ethnology, Japan (Minpaku) and The  
Graduate University for Advanced  
Studies

Lingua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



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### Summary Bio:

Professor at the National Museum of Ethnology, Japan (Minpaku) and The Graduate University for Advanced Studies. Trained as a linguist, Kikusawa specializes in descriptive linguistics, linguistic typology and historical linguistics focusing on Austronesian languages. She has been leading a wide range of scientific projects related to language and languages collaborating internationally, which include those developing a Fijian language GIS, establishing Science for Universal Communication, and Linguistic Museology. Part of research results of such and other various research projects will be disseminated at a special exhibition "Homō loquēns 'talking human' Wonders of Language and Languages," to be held from September 1 through November 23, 2022, at Minpaku.

# Emilienne Ireland

Research Associate in Anthropology at  
the Smithsonian Institution National  
Museum of Natural History

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## PRODUCING MULTILINGUAL DOCUMENTATION FOR A SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION OF 600 OBJECTS

### Abstract:

In 2016, members of the Wauja Indigenous community visited the Smithsonian Institution to describe, in their language, some 600 objects made by their ancestors. In the museum repository, they were amazed at the diverse collections, but appalled at how little was known about most of the objects. Since then, I have collaborated with the Wauja to provide a richer form of object documentation that will better satisfy the source community, researchers, and the worldwide public.

### Summary Bio:

Emi is a Research Associate in Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History, and Director of the Wauja Language Project for Arenet. Since 1981, she has done ethnographic and linguistic research with the Wauja people of the Upper Xingu region of Brazil. She currently works with the grandchildren of her former Wauja teachers to produce Wauja- language documentation of their culture and history that is being used in museum collections, in Wauja village schools, and as primary source material by Wauja university students and filmmakers. These video recordings of eloquent Wauja storytellers and historians are transcribed into Wauja text by Wauja youth, then collaboratively translated into Portuguese and English.

Trained in cultural anthropology at Columbia and Yale, Emi has made and documented ethnographic collections for the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, the National Museum of the American Indian, the American Museum of Natural History (New York), and the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro.



# Omar Aguilar Sánchez

—  
Founding professor Universidad  
Autónoma Comunal de Oaxaca +  
Director Codicesmixtecos.com project,  
ARENET

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## MUSEUM LIMITATIONS IN THE EXHIBITION OF THE MIXTEC CODEX

### Abstract:

The Mixtec codices are living memory, they tell us about the past and present of the Ñuu Savi people, who were dispossessed of their sacred books since the Colony and now these are deposited in international and national museums. The purpose of this paper is to expose the museum limitations in the presentation of the codices, their content and meanings, as well as the outline of a museum project that avoids these limitations and brings the codices closer to the Mixtecs themselves.

### Summary Bio:

Omar Aguilar Sánchez is tee savi (Mixtec) and has a Ph.D. from the University of Leiden. He is an archaeologist from the National School of Anthropology and History. His undergraduate and doctoral research has received the Alfonso Caso Award at the INAH Awards in 2016 and 2021. In 2019 he won the National Youth Award in the category of “Academic Achievement”. He is a specialist in the historical-cultural heritage of the Ñuu Savi, mainly the Mixtec Codices and the link of these pictorial manuscripts with the living heritage and the Mixtec language from a decolonial perspective. He has been a speaker at national and international conferences and has published various articles. He devised and was co-creator of the app “Códices Mixtecos”. He is co-founder of the “Nchivi Ñuu Savi Collective”. Participant in the COLING project, based in Poland, and fellow of “The Americas Research Network (ARENET)”. He is a founding member and research professor at the Autonomous Communal University of Oaxaca. In 2022 he entered the National System of Researchers (SNI).



# Erica Lehrer

—  
Director of the Curating and Public  
Scholarship Lab  
at Concordia University

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## WORDS MATTER: TOWARDS A SELF-CRITICAL LANGUAGE IN MUSEUMS

### Abstract:

Museums across the globe – due to a range of recent social and political pressures – have been forced to question their own authority. While outsider activists have done impactful creative interventions to reveal museums’ complicity in white supremacy and elitist regimes of authoritative, “universalist” knowledge production, insider curators have themselves also begun to take critical approaches to their institutions’ languages of display (as well as associated systems of interpretation and classification). Employing new modes of address that implicate their audiences differently in the museological project, these experiments highlight institutional contingency and vulnerability and encourage/empower visitors to bring their own expertise to bear on these once mono-vocal institutions. My presentation suggests a variety of powerful functions of language in museums, and offers examples from my own and others' work that illustrate problems and suggestions for curating (caring for) language to serve more self-reflexive, critically-questioning, and multivocal ends. (Note: I use the term “language” here not to denote various communities' distinct spoken languages, but to point to museums' broader linguistic interface mediating between objects and people who engage with them).



# Erica Lehrer

—  
Director of the Curating and Public  
Scholarship Lab  
at Concordia University

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## WORDS MATTER: TOWARDS A SELF-CRITICAL LANGUAGE IN MUSEUMS

### Summary Bio:

Erica Lehrer is a sociocultural anthropologist and curator. She is Professor in the departments of History and Sociology-Anthropology at Concordia University, Montreal, and the Founding Director of its Curating and Public Scholarship Lab (CaPSL). Her publications include *Curatorial Dreams: Critics Imagine Exhibitions* (2016); *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland* (2015); *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places* (2013); and *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places* (2011), and numerous articles. Her most recent exhibition was “Terribly Close: Polish Vernacular Artists Face the Holocaust” (2018-19) with Roma Sendyka, Wojciech Wilczyk, and Magdalena Zych at the Kraków Ethnographic Museum. She is the Principal Investigator for *Thinking Through the Museum: A Partnership Approach to Curating Difficult Knowledge in Public* (2021-2028).



# Magdalena Guziejko

PhD candidate Doctoral School of  
Humanities at the University of  
Warsaw

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE COLONIES” - MUSEUMS' DECOLONISATION IN POLISH CONTEXT

### Abstract:

In recent years, the ‘decolonization’ has become a buzzword in the museum and heritage sector. Calls are made to reshape cultural institutions, to reorganize knowledge production and recognize its diverse forms, to share power and authority, to account for multiple perspectives, and to confront historical injustices in museum cultures, practices, structures, narratives, and collections.

Recently National Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw has opened its storages to academic researchers in an attempt to face its collection's colonial or ethically questionable past and debate about its future form.

First reaction was to apply methods and ideas copied from Western institutions that confront similar issues. After all, so much has been already said about their efforts or lack of thereof. But if we speak about Latin American artifacts, shouldn't we turn to the Latin American evaluation of the pieces and to local ideas of decolonization? What does it mean “to decolonize” a Latin American ethnographic collection in an Eastern European museum according to Western and Latin American concepts?

The Latin American collection in the National Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw raises questions about what should be exhibited and how. What should be done with human remains, with archaeological pieces taken from excavations or objects of cult? All of the above not only tell us a story about changing ethical approach to the museum artifacts, but also reflect complicated entanglements Poland has with colonialism, that sometimes are not visible at first glance.

# Magdalena Guziejko

PhD candidate Doctoral School of  
Humanities at the University of  
Warsaw

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE COLONIES" - MUSEUMS' DECOLONISATION IN POLISH CONTEXT

### Summary Bio:

Graduate of the Institute of Iberian and Ibero-American Studies at the University of Warsaw, in 2011-2018 curator at the Department of Ethnography of Non-European Countries of the National Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw specialized in its American and partly in the Asian collection. Curator of exhibitions such as "Tales from the Saami Land" and "Treasures of Peru. Royal tomb in Castillo de Huarmey".

Since 2019, PhD student at the Doctoral School of Humanities at the University of Warsaw, where she conducts research on Mexican crafts and museum decolonization issues.

# Conal McCarthy

Director  
Victoria University of Wellington,  
Museum and heritage studies  
programme, Wellington, New Zealand

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## PACIFIC LANGUAGES IN NEW ZEALAND MUSEUMS: EXPERIMENTS IN POLICY, EXHIBITIONS, COLLECTIONS AND EDUCATION.

### Abstract:

In Aotearoa New Zealand indigenous Pacific languages are increasingly used in public. Te reo Māori is an official language which has been revitalised and promoted for several decades, and Pacific Island languages such as Samoan and Tongan are being encouraged. These paper gives the background context to this movement, and surveys the work in museums and galleries to support the retention and use of indigenous languages. Brief comparisons are made with indigenous languages in museums in Australia and Canada where comparable indigenous museologies are emerging which emphasise how indigenous words, language and voices convey tribal world views and ways of being.

### Summary Bio:

Conal is an interdisciplinary humanities scholar who explores the intersection of history, theory and practice in public culture. His disciplinary home is museum and heritage studies, but he had also drawn on and contributed to related fields such as sociology, anthropology, history and art history. His academic research interests include museum history, visitor research, Māori art and contemporary heritage issues. He has published widely on the historical and contemporary Māori engagement with museums, and this work is now being extended into a transnational comparative framework exploring the ways in which indigenous peoples are engaging with heritage, public history, museums and galleries. A series of recent and forthcoming publications come from ARC and Marsden research projects focusing on the history of museums, ethnology and government in Aotearoa New Zealand. In his role as the director of New Zealand's leading Museum and Heritage Studies programme, is closely connected with current museum practice and intimately involved with training and professional development initiatives across the sector.



**Laura Osorio Sunnucks +  
Magdalena Araus Sieber +  
María Mercedes Martínez Milantchi**

**Santo Domingo Centre of Excellence  
for Latin American Research at the  
British Museum**

*Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)*



## UNTOLD MICROCOSMS: MUSEUMS THROUGH THE LENS OF PERSONAL REVERIE AND POLITICAL REALITY

### **Abstract:**

The decades old writing culture debate in anthropology has put sustained - if not wholly transformative - critique on the ways cultural encounters have been narrated through a disciplinary and hegemonic apparatus. Part of this critique has involved using creative practices, including writing, to disturb ethnographic fieldwork. Meanwhile, fiction and reverie have largely remained absent from museum texts; even when these texts are written by intervening descendant, activist, or creative collaborators, many museums continue to favour description and scientific interpretation.

This paper presents the initial stages and proposed future developments of a project launched by the Santo Domingo Centre at the British Museum (SDCELAR) and the International Hay Festival, for which ten fiction authors and journalists were invited to write short pieces inspired by items in the BM's collection. These works will be published in two volumes, one in Spanish the other in English, in September, while SDCELAR prepares to launch a second iteration of the project. We will propose that literature can usefully dismantle the realities that science and scholarship have built around museum collections, and we will discuss the potential political and intellectual impact of our praxis.

# Laura Osorio Sunnucks + Magdalena Araus Sieber + María Mercedes Martínez Milantchi

Santo Domingo Centre of Excellence  
for Latin American Research at the  
British Museum

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## Summary Bios:

**Laura Osorio Sunnucks** is Head of the Santo Domingo Centre of Excellence for Latin American Research at the British Museum. Previously she was Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow for Latin America at the Museum of Anthropology (MOA), University of British Columbia, where she created a field collection and curated the exhibition “Arts of Resistance; Politics and the Past in Latin America.” She has also worked on the Indigenous and Minority Fellowship Programme at UNESCO Paris and in Anglophone education at the Louvre Museum. She holds a PhD in Mesoamerican heritage from Leiden University. This ongoing work with Maya specialists in Yucatan champions the inclusion of local practices and theories in the interpretation of archaeological sites and historical materials in the region.

**Magdalena Araus Sieber** is Digital Curator for the Santo Domingo Centre of Excellence for Latin American Research at the British Museum. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from Universidad Católica de Chile, an Education degree from Universidad Gabriel Mistral and a Digital Humanities Masters, with focus on museums and technologies, from University College London. Her professional background combines editorial management in digital journalism and exhibitions renovation at the National Museums Department in Chile. She is interested in technologies and digital platforms that enhance learning experiences and engage non-specialised audiences in museums.

**María Mercedes Martínez Milantchi** is Project Coordinator for the Santo Domingo Centre of Excellence for Latin American Research at the British Museum. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Yale University and an Erasmus Mundus masters in ARCHaeological MATerial Sciences (University of Evora, Sapienza University & Aristotle University) with a focus on pre-Columbian Caribbean archaeology. Previously, she has experience working and researching at the Smithsonian’s Office of International Relations & Museum Conservation Institute, the Yale Art Gallery, and the Peabody Museum of Natural History. Her current research focuses on the archaeology and materialities of European/Indigenous encounter.



# Montserrat Navarro Herrera

—  
Director of Educational Services and  
Cultural Animation National Museum  
of Popular Cultures

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## "WITH TONGUE I EAT A TACO. FROM PARTICIPATORY MUSEOLOGY TO ACTION"

### **Abstract:**

The talk aims to reflect on the problems in the incorporation of indigenous languages and their languages in museum projects with an emphasis on museum education. In addition, we will review a curatorial case from the National Museum of Popular Cultures, which was presented during 2021 and part of 2022, in the main exhibition hall.

### **Summary Bio:**

Feminist, pedagogue from UNAM, museum educator, educational curator, graduated in philosophy for children, belongs to the Lunas Violetas collective and the Raquel Padilla Ramos Museum Observatory. With almost 20 years of experience, she has worked in museums of the INAH, INBAL, Ministry of Culture of Mexico City and private museums, some of them are the National Museum of San Carlos, National Museum of World Cultures, National Coordination of Museums and Exhibitions - INAH, Casa de la Bola Museum, José Luis Cuevas Museum, National Architecture Museum.

She has developed different educational projects for people with disabilities and people in a vulnerable state. Since 2014, she has taught the public service module: interpretation of cultural heritage and mediation at the ENAH. She is currently head of Cultural Animation and Educational Services at the National Museum of Popular Cultures.



# Jully Acuña Suárez + Marcelo M. Miranda +Colectivo Ayëntš

PhD candidates at the Faculty of  
Archaeology, Leiden University

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## BĚNGBE BENACHĚNG: DECOLONIZING RESEARCH AND CURATORSHIP

### **Abstract:**

Our research project addresses coloniality in academia, museums and cultural policy in Colombia and how this affects the rights, culture and language of the Kamëntšá people.

This presentation is centred on our process of decolonizing curatorship through Kamëntšá language, spirituality and knowledge to deconstruct colonial and racist assumptions about Indigenous Peoples. It has been developed in collaboration with Colectivo Ayentš to empower the community and strengthen the use of the Kamëntšá language in knowledge transmission.

# Jully Acuña Suárez + Marcelo M. Miranda +Colectivo Ayëntš

PhD candidates at the Faculty of  
Archaeology, Leiden University

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## Summary Bios:

**Jully Acuña Suárez** is an artist and PhD candidate at the Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University. She uses art as a research method in cultural heritage and develops collaborative artistic and curatorial practices. Her research seeks to understand how art is a form of knowledge and how it was used as a colonizing method. Her artistic practice is developed from a decolonial perspective, addressing issues such as social justice, the environment, and identity.

**Marcelo M. Miranda** is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University. His research addresses how cultural policies, museums and archaeology affect the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Likewise, his research and action seek to decolonize the understanding of cultural heritage, develop collaborative curatorial practices, promote anti-racist approaches in education, and establish a decolonial ethic in academic practice.

Both are researchers affiliated with the Santo Domingo Center of Excellence for Latin American Research (SDCELAR) of the British Museum and Gerda Henkel Foundation fellows.

**Colectivo Ayentš** is a Kamëntšá group focused on the decolonization of knowledge, language and ancestral territory by recovering the Kamëntšá elders' spirituality, memory and feeling, as well as on the empowerment of new generations through community care, responsibility and reciprocity.

# Genner Llanes Ortiz

Canada Research Chair in Digital  
Indigeneities at Bishop's University

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



## MUSEUMS, MEDIATIONS AND MULTIVOCALITY: HOW CAN MUSEUMS SPEAK INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES?

### Abstract:

In different parts of the world, digital technologies have revolutionized the way museums and their audiences interact. Museums have incorporated multiple media that enrich their collections and the experience of their visitors, through changes that show greater attention to the diversity of audiences. However, in contexts with significant numbers of Indigenous language speakers, many of these innovations remain marginal. In this presentation I will discuss (and provide examples about) the ways in which technological mediations could be of help not only for a greater inclusion of Indigenous language speakers in museums, but also for strengthening the multivocality of the exhibitions.

### Summary Bio:

DPhil in Social Anthropology from the University of Sussex. Canada Research Chair in Digital Indigeneities at Bishop's University (Sherbrooke, Quebec), located in the ancestral and unceded territory of the Abenaki people. His research examines the creative ways in which Indigenous Peoples employ digital media and technologies to reclaim and mobilize their languages and knowledge. He has investigated how Indigenous artistic forms (music, cinema, performance) contribute to language revitalization, anti-racism and decolonization efforts. He has worked collaboratively with Indigenous organizations in Mexico, Ecuador, Belize and Guatemala, and has been a researcher at Royal Holloway University of London, CIESAS Mexico, and Leiden University in the Netherlands.





# Chris Low

Director of !Khwa ttu San Heritage  
Centre

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)

## THE ROLE OF LANGUAGES IN THE PHILOSOPHY, DESIGN AND RUNNING OF !KHWATTU SAN HERITAGE AND EDUCATION CENTRE' IN SOUTH AFRICA.

### **Abstract:**

!Khwa ttu is a museum and education centre that is a joint San (or Bushmen) and Swiss NGO initiative set up to support San from all over Southern Africa. The San are the First People of Southern Africa whose origins in the region stretch back over 300,000 years ago. In this presentation I will review the challenges of representing linguistically diverse San populations in meaningful ways in contexts where San languages are not recognized as official national languages and are only recently being recognized in education contexts.

### **Summary Bio:**

Chris Low has worked with San and Khoekhoe peoples of Southern Africa for 22 years. After a DPhil on health and healing of the 'Khoisan' his work has broadened out to include human environment relations and education. In 2013 he was asked to set up a new heritage centre with the San that would be the only heritage centre dedicated to southern Africa's first people, where they can tell their story in ways of their choosing. Since the opening of !Khwa ttu San Heritage Centre in 2018, Chris Low has worked as the centre's Museum Director.



Thank you!

Lengua(s) en Museo(s) - Language(s) in Museum(s)



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