

FORUM OF ECOMUSEUMS AND COMMUNITY MUSEUMS

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**POLITECNICO
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Sociomuseology and community museums

Ana Mercedes Stoffel - Perfil

The concept of the Ecomuseum Collection

René Binette

Participación social en los museos del País Vasco

Iñaki Díaz Balerdi

Ecomuseums and Unesco heritage sites

Raffaella Riva

Getting to the core: can ecomuseums foster cultures of sustainability?

Glenn C. Sutter

FIRST SESSION

**The ecomuseum and community
museums approach to landscape
enhancement: theoretical considerations
and experimentations**

SOCIOMUSEOLOGY AND COMMUNITY MUSEUMS



MUSEO DE LA BATALLA

www.museubatalha.com

The village of Batalha in Portugal, lives the advantages and disadvantages of owning a World Heritage architectural monument. Almost hidden by the shadow of this enormous monastery, need to tell his story and show the life and projects that exist around the extraordinary medieval religious building.

For this reason, the museum's program was carried out with the active participation of the population, promoting their sense of identity and values and dreams for the future.

With a priority sense of inclusion, the museum is divided into six thematic areas dedicated to past, present and future. The past speaks from the beginning of time and the geological setting of the area until the day that the municipality approved the creation of the museum in 2003. The present shows the territory and invites visitors and residents to know and enjoy natural and cultural heritage.

Participatory research projects and engagement programs of the population give a contribute to ensure a better future for all. Among other prizes, the MCCB received the Award for Best Museum Award 2012 and the prize Access Culture in 2014 in Portugal and the EMYA Kennet Hudson in 2013.

The present communication consists of two distinct parts. A first theoretical reflection on the Sociomuseología, its basic principles and values in the line of the principles of the New Museology and Community Museology. Sociomuseology promotes the growth of a shared cultural territoriality, the participation of communities in this process, the discovery of the real factors of group identity, interculturalism as attachment mechanism and the right compromise between maintaining cultural authenticity and promoting tourism, as a response to the challenges of the XXI century museology.

The second part will be devoted to the presentation of a communitarian and inclusive project that was developed between 2003 and 2010 through the design, planning and construction of a museum, the MCCB - Museu da Comunidade Concelhia da Batalha, made according to the principles stated above.

The MCCB was sponsored by the Municipality of Batalha and was carried out by a multidisciplinary team of museum technicians, specialists, academics, politicians and citizens, who ran in the correct order as previously defined procedures. These procedures were structured through a Quality System implemented and a Strategic Plan in two phases:

- Design and construction phase - Definition / Explanation / Enforcement.
- Normal operation phase - Management / Evaluation / Permanent Improvement.

A territorial vision, the integration of existing cultural projects; a shared vocation with the community; and a conceptual framework based on research and study of history, valences and future intentions of the community of Batalha were the guidelines which are specified in four key expressions:

- Permanent evolution in the proposals
- Rigorous in the message
- Friendly in the communication
- Accessible to all

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THE CONCEPT OF THE ECOMUSEUM COLLECTION

Located in the heart of an old industrial and working class neighbourhood in Montréal, Canada, the Écomusée du fier monde takes an original approach to the function of collecting and enjoys a special relationship to collective cultural heritage. In fact, its philosophy of ecomuseology stands out from that of the classical museums, particularly in its relationship to objects. More specifically, the Ecomusée is not mainly interested in collecting objects; instead, it has made the concept of cultural heritage the cornerstone of its philosophy. As Hugues de Varine put it, “(An ecomuseum must)... be based in the entire heritage of this community, on this territory, instead of building and/or managing a collection.”

In other words, the Écomusée du fier monde is not primarily concerned with the collection or acquisition of objects; its aim, rather, is much broader, extending to our cultural heritage in both its material and intangible forms. It keeps its sights set on its three spheres of activity: its territory (geographically speaking) and its thematic and social frameworks. The Écomusée makes contributions to our understanding of these three spheres on a regular basis, although it does not set out to systematically acquire the objects that are associated with them. This type of action, related to the ecomuseum’s participatory character, has led the Écomusée du fier monde to develop the concept of the **ecomuseum collection**.

An ecomuseum collection can be defined succinctly as follows: a set of material or intangible elements that attest to the culture of a community; the ecomuseum identifies the function of these elements without seeking to acquire them. An ecomuseum collection can be defined succinctly as follows: a set of material or intangible elements that attest to the culture of a community; the ecomuseum identifies the function of these elements without seeking to acquire them.

The collection policy of the Écomusée du fier monde is based on three principles:

- The ecomuseum’s responsibility with respect to heritage
- The participation of citizens in this processes
- The transmission of this heritage

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A MUSEUM ANCHORED IN ITS COMMUNITY

www.ecomusee.qc.ca

The Écomusée du fier monde invites you to travel back to the time of the Industrial Revolution! As a history and a community museum, we encourage you to explore the history of labour and reflect on the social issues in the area. The Écomusée is situated in the former Généreux public bath, a magnificent example of 1920's architecture.

The Écomusée du fier monde comprises:

- a neighbourhood and a community,
- exhibitions and publications,
- cultural activities and educational programs,
- a versatile space to host events.

The Écomusée du fier monde is a museum that reflects the pride of an entire community.

PARTECIPACIÓN SOCIAL EN LOS MUSEOS DEL PAIS VASCO

Desde el fin de la dictadura y el comienzo de la transición hacia un régimen democrático en España (mediados de la década de los 70) se sucedieron esfuerzos museísticos inspirados en ecomuseos y otros ejemplos de “nuevas museologías”, de las que, en el País Vasco, se consolidaron al menos cuatro iniciativas que tuvimos ocasión de debatir en el III Encuentro Internacional de Ecomuseos y Museos Comunitarios y en el X Taller Internacional del MINOM (Rio de Janeiro, 2004).

Algo más de una década después nos proponemos revisar ese panorama en la Asamblea General del ICOM, en Milan, 2016, e intentar establecer cuáles han sido las directrices generales, los puntos en común, la diferencias entre los distintos modelos y, en última instancia, discutir si aquellos impulsos ahondaron en mecánicas de participación o se desdibujaron en unas prácticas más ortodoxas, más tradicionales, a la hora de llevar a término las correspondientes activaciones patrimoniales y los proclamados deseos de participación social y democracia cultural.

Para ello, se repasarán brevemente los cambios experimentados por los museos del País Vasco en estos años, reseñando nuevas iniciativas y haciendo hincapié en los cuatro ejemplos mencionados en el Taller de Rio: Museo de Artziniega, Museo de la Minería, Parque Cultural de Zerain y proyecto Lenbur, los cuales han experimentado distintos cambios que, hasta cierto punto, los han alejado de aquellas corrientes que, en los principios, sirvieron de referencia para unos modos de hacer alternativos y al margen de la que podríamos llamar museología tradicional.



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ECOMUSEUMS AND UNESCO HERITAGE SITES



The ecomuseums were introduced in France in the Seventies, as tools for the enhancement of “marginal areas”. Relevant examples are the renaissance of the former industrial site of Le Creusot as well as some experiences developed in mountainous areas, geographically and culturally isolated and characterized by a strong local identity.

This attention for the enhancement of “minor cultural heritage” characterizing the first season of ecomuseums, is today not able to express the potentialities of this institution. Indeed, ecomuseums has progressively increased their identity and authority in juridical and normative terms, as well as through the promotion of best practices for local sustainable development practices, based on the participation of communities within the processes of enhancement of their landscape and cultural heritage.

Therefore, the role of ecomuseums has increased in accordance with the evolution of the concepts of landscape (in particular with the Landscape European convention of 2000, focusing on the value of the landscape with regard to the whole territory) and of the cultural heritage (with Faro Convention of 2005 enhancing the value of the cultural legacy).

These character-defining elements distinguish ecomuseums from all the other cultural or environmental institutions. Indeed, in this case, the focus of interest is primarily referred to the design approach, aimed at identifying a proper balance between conservation, enhancement and development in cultural, environmental and social fields.

In this perspective, it is interesting to analyze the role of ecomuseum approach in the management of “exceptional heritage”, such as Unesco world sites and protected areas, within the logic of growth and development in highly sensitive contexts. The research promoted by the Politecnico di Milano and Universidad de La Habana for the enhancement of San Isidro de los Destiladeros in the Unesco site of Trinidad y el Valle de los Ingenios in Cuba, through the creation of an ecomuseum represents a positive example. The leading role of the Ecomuseo della Judicaria has played within the process of recognition of the Biosphere reserve in the Alpi Ledrensi e Judicaria in Trentino (Italy) is extremely relevant.

A wide range of case studies that highlight the strengths of the ecomuseum approach for the management of cultural landscapes.

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GETTING TO THE CORE: CAN ECOMUSEUMS FOSTER CULTURES OF SUSTAINABILITY

Along with changes in designs, policies, and technologies, adjustments will have to be made to our cultures – the attitudes, values, and behaviours that shape how we live – if we want our global economy to operate within a safe and just space. The importance of cultural adaptation was recognized during the recent UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and continues to be a major theme in the Sustainable Development Goals, but it also continues to be one of the hardest features of sustainability to assess. This talk will examine the connections between ecomuseums and cultural adaptation from two perspectives, using case studies from the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. First, as chair of the Saskatchewan Ecomuseums Initiative, I will elaborate on a recently published toolkit for ecomuseum development that builds on a holistic, culture-centered model of sustainability and recent insights from Taiwan (Liu and Lee, *Sustainability* 7:13249-13269, 2015). In particular, I will reflect on the benefits and challenges of framing discussions around this model in locations where the ecomuseums concept is only starting to take root. These locations include a ranching community associated with a national park, an urban neighborhood with a large First Nations population, a small town in the transition zone between the prairies and the boreal forest, a bedroom community close to the City of Regina, and a popular recreational area recently impacted by poor water quality. Second, I will examine the role that ecomuseums can play in ESD and how that role could be enhanced by the application of a broad assessment framework designed for place-based, transformative learning in a museum setting. A key assumption in this framework is that ESD needs to enhance community health and wellness through educational experiences that foster a culture of sustainability. 290 words

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ROYAL SASKATCHEWAN MUSEUM

www.royalsaskmuseum.ca

Established in 1906, the Royal Saskatchewan Museum (RSM) is a medium-sized museum of natural history and First Nations cultures, with locations in the City of Regina and the town of Eastend. With an annual visitation of more than 150,000, it works to preserve, interpret, and share knowledge in the fields of biology, palaeontology, aboriginal studies, and human ecology. The RSM pursues these goals through a combination of research, educational programming, and exhibits, including a Life Sciences Gallery that looks at recent global impacts due to human activity and the importance of living more sustainably. In 2011, as part of its sustainability research program, the RSM launched a community engagement project called the Saskatchewan Ecomuseums Initiative, in partnership with eight other heritage organizations in the province. Details about this project are available on the Heritage Saskatchewan website at <https://heritagesask.ca/reframing-heritage/community-development> and there is a discussion group about it at www.facebook.com/groups/saskecomuseums/.