

## **Is everything still instagramable? The museum to be reinvented**

While the instagramable artworks on exhibitions accumulate dust in the closed galleries, the museums seem doomed to continue in an uncritical race for the dissemination of online content, maintaining their virtual presence with more or less innocuous shares of previous publications of their visitors, detached artwork posts without any contextualization, tours guided towards the void, or suggestions of activities outlined by those who never conceived pedagogical proposals in this format. Who is this virtualized museum for?

The silencing of mediation and pedagogy in this urgency to share online content is overwhelming. The transition to the virtual field in this moment of crisis cannot be just the rush of contents into another format, the distorted replica of what was already happening in the museum's physical space. The absence of mediation in the process of taking care of the contents translates into an effective reduction of their potency. As mediation devices, what place do museum educational services have in a transposed to virtual world?

Educators and mediators are needed more than ever, in the establishment of context for artworks and activities in the instant and excessive field of the virtual. Called to guide tours, design and implement programs for schools and groups of all ages, these professionals have always been the visible face of museums, and are at the center of their work, producing critical thinking and pedagogical innovation in bridge with the community. In an era of suspension of the physical experience of co-presence, the virtual field may also constitute a possibility of extending that experience already started with the community. But it should also open spaces for the necessary redefinition of the museum's role in the post-pandemic. In this sense, the role of educators and mediators becomes central, calling on their experience of creating meaning and engaging with the public to offer more to communities than visits to dehumanized virtual galleries.

After decades invested in their constant reinvention to remain relevant, the museums that announced education and diversification of their audiences as priorities, but dismissed the professionals of their educational services in the first hour of this crisis, seem to reveal that their main function would be to collect objects to create value, with little interest in society in general, and even less in the community in which they operate. Museums that insist on this path risk becoming mere artifact repositories, distanced from the production of knowledge and critical thinking. The museum is now required to make more profound changes, which also include the ability to reinvent its relationship with the community.

We will have to find new ways of communicating keeping the physical distance, thinking from an empowering perspective and generating capacity for agency and emancipation for the public. It is necessary to think of this moment of crisis also from the territory of the construction of the political, of the process of making each one an agent of power, assuming the defense and the need for the common good, of the community. This process is based on the promotion of citizenship through the exercise of critical capacity in the reading of a world of increasing complexity, which suffered a shock from this pandemic that may have displaced it from its axis. Arteducation and cultural mediation, raising social and political issues that are inscribed in this territory, and which also develop from displacement and diversion, open a multiplying depth of meanings of the views on the world, assuming itself as a place of ethos, community creation and awareness production.

The very fabric of reality has been profoundly transformed, and we will all have to figure out how to navigate the post-COVID landscape. The lessons we can learn from this pandemic so far are withdrawal, distrust, the disappearance of our feeling of invulnerability, at the same time that we see testimonies of embracing improvisation, allowing leisure, valuing the community, sharing. What to do with all this?

At the moment when it is announced that the reopening of the museums is being prepared, there is an urgent need to look critically at what was done during the closure, and to prepare what comes next.

How, then, to rethink the museum and its relationship with society, within a broader framework of redefining the role of culture, recognized as fundamental by the entire community during this pandemic? A return to the merely informative paradigm is not intended, and the museum paradigm as an experience may no longer have a place. As a space for simultaneously viewing and visibility, by registering and sharing selfies with instagramable artworks, the museum will be deeply affected by the fundamental changes in our lifestyle, which will certainly extend beyond the pandemic. It will be difficult to imagine a return to the globalized and widespread practice of pre-pandemic travel, which will have a significant impact on museums so far focused on attracting masses of tourists. It is time to refocus the museum on local and national audiences, in the community in which it operates.

In the new normal that we have just started to sketch, we expect a museum that enhances the ethical experience of citizenship, that takes care of its belonging to the community it serves, from the place of its inscription.

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