Culturales

Genesis of an era: museographic discourse and sociability in the Chilean press, 1845-1847

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ABSTRACT: Lately, there has been a proliferation of studies on Chilean national exhibitions that, however, leave out the analysis of the genesis of this museographic practice as well as its discursive origins. This study aims to give an account of that appearance, of its materialization in the framework of national festivities and of the polemics that it caused. The above with a view to being a contribution to the historiography of Chilean museology. The study is situated in a germinal period in which the concern of the governing elite is to build a nation. The historical-critical method as a background to the analysis of primary sources such as the press, regulations, memoirs, etc. contributes to situate the beginning of an era and to determine the conditions of appearance of the national museographic discourse, as well as to individualize the members of a Collective Emitting Subject.

KEYWORDS: Discourse; Exhibitions, Museography; Press; Chile.

Génesis de una época: el discurso y la sociabilidad museográficos en la prensa chilena, 1845-1847

RESUMEN: Últimamente han proliferado estudios sobre exposiciones nacionales chilenas, pero que han dejado fuera el análisis de la génesis de esa práctica museográfica y el de sus orígenes discursivos. Este estudio se propone dar cuenta de dicha aparición, de su materialización en el marco de las fiestas nacionales y de las polémicas que propició. Lo anterior con miras a aportar a la historiografía de la museología chilena. El estudio se ubica en un periodo germinal en el que la preocupación de la élite gobernante es construir la nación. El método histórico-crítico como fondo del análisis de fuentes primarias tales como prensa, normatividad, memorias, etc. contribuye a situar el inicio de una época y a determinar las condiciones de aparición del discurso museográfico nacional, además de individualizar a los integrantes de un Sujeto Emisor Colectivo (SEC).

PALABRAS CLAVE: Discurso; exposición, museografía; prensa; Chile.

TRANSLATION OF SUMMARY: Danilo Ivar Duarte Pérez / Universidad del Valle

How to quote

Duarte, D. (2024). Genesis of an era: museographic discourse and sociability in the Chilean press, 1845-1847. *Culturales*, 12, e769. https://doi.org/10.22234/recu.20241201.e769

Received May 26, 2023 / Approved October 6, 2023 / Published January 17, 2024





Introduction

What were the conditions that favored the emergency in an objective discourse entitled "exposition"? Who and under what organizational figure, was the exhibitionist discourse inaugurated in the country? What place did the written press take in the genesis of the discourse and expositive practices in Chile? Pedro Palazuelos, José Miguel de la Barra and José Gandarillas, representatives of the enlightened bourgeoisie, shared a distinguishable experience space in three dimensions: in their diplomatic destinations in Europe, in the occupation of several public charges and in the common idea of the elite's tutelary role over the people.

The space of common experience consisted in the appearance of several historical conditions for the emergency of a discursive practice denominated "exposition" and that was driven by a very particular form of partnership, specialized ephemeral sociability. In this limited space of communication, the capital's press operated as a sounding board for the practical enlightened thinking of this trio, even though it also acted as a space open for debate, being considered a privileged place in the formation of public opinion. As a result, this article aims, through the construction of a brief collective biography and the study of the press between 1845-1847, to acknowledge such discursive appearance, of its materialization in the framework of the civic festivities of those years and of the polemics it provoked. All this with the objective of making a significant contribution to the historiography of Chilean museology.

For this, the historical-critical method that was used was supported by primary sources such as the press, normativity, memories, etc. The material was analyzed under the interest of determining the moment at which people begin to talk about exhibitions and the way in which this commentary catalyzes other discourses in favor or against their realization. What justifies the proposed temporality? The year 1845 was considered the start of this study as it marks the origin of practice, which consists in publicly exposing the products of incipient national industry with the purpose of publicizing the progress

¹ In this research, exhibitionary discourse is understood as the rationality expressed materially in the public staging of semiophoric objects, in charge of all those museum institutions responsible for managing the documentary function.

achieved a few years after achieving political independence, and the year 1847, due the fact that such practice ceased to be promoted exclusively by enlighten private agents and the following year, was protected and endorsed by the Chilean government as being considered useful activity for the country.

Although the expositions and museums differ in their temporal character, the first ones shorter than the second ones, both institutions agree in the very same: the "spaces of classification" that contribute the encyclopedic tradition in the XVIII century in the context of attempting to organize the activities and human knowledge with shared educational concerns (Sanjad, 2017, p. 789). However, it should not be forgotten that the historiography of Latin American museums is a story of survival that, in general terms, "emerge as extremely fragile institutions, tied to contingent and changing interests" (Podgorny, 2010, p. 59). Several of them do not survive their "first years of trial" (Achim, 2014) and in the process of opening and closure, permanent relocations and of dispersion as well as the disappearance of their collections, the expositions will be, before the museums themselves, were the actual disciplinary devices that brought together the essential elements of the new nationality (Hernández, 2006, p. 286); they were the ones that at the end, "attempted to produce a in a disciplinary manner, a national citizenship" (Cartagena and León, 2014, p. 61).

Chile wasn't left behind: after the declaration of intent to found the first museum in 1811, it was followed by the initiative of the supreme director Bernardo O'Higgins in 1822, also disregarded and then the creation of a Cabinet of Natural History in Santiago in 1830, called *Museo de Santiago de Historia Nacional de Chile* or *Nacional*, from 1842 onwards. That same year, its director, the Frenchman Claudio Gay, returned to its country with a good amount of what has been collected in Chile for its classification in Paris (Sanhueza, 2016, p. 148; Sanhueza, 2018, p. 174) and even though other directive positions were designated after his departure, they "did not make a great effort to maintain the museum and a large part of the original collection disappeared" (Schell, 2009, p.87). Thus, the cabinet turned into a museum, ceased to operate beyond 1844, only to revitalize again

in 1853, by all means, a difficult existence. All of the above justifies addressing the object of study proposed.

The article is divided into four parts and a final word. A brief theoretical discussion opens the paper revealing the notions of the discourse and sociability, section that has been titled "Discourse and Sociability: A Museographic Binomial". Followed by "The Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher in the Origins of the National Expositions", were we account proper names involved in the organization of these types of events in the country, as well as the participation of a type of formal religious sociability and in its role in what we denominate as specialized ephemeral sociability. After that, the section titled "Legal Formalization of a Museographic Practice" where we go over the normativity that gives legal life to the museographic institution of the national Chilean expositions, although not without controversy.

Hereafter, there is "Genesis of an Era" in which we inform the development of the first public expositions, the participation of the craftsmanship in them, and the facts of the event in the press, which is the moment that we identify as the start of the talk of expositions in Chile.

Discourse and Sociability: A Museographic Binomial

From the mentioned above, there are concepts to be addressed if the goal is to clarify the questions we have posed as a problem. The first is related to the notion of discourse. Understood as one of the constituent factors of the system integrated by stated and non stated elements, or as well as an episteme in the sense that this "is a system specifically discursive" (Foucault, 1985, 1985, p. 128-130), such notion is associated with the debate

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² A recent study of the history of the Natural History Cabinet is: Serra, D (2023). From nature to a showcase display. *Claudio Gay and the Cabinet of Natural History of Santiago*. Editorial Universitaria/Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana. The author halts her study in 1842, moment in which the French naturalist in charge, Claudio Gay, returns to France. Some of the national collaborators kept increasing their collection, however, the last written notice of this space was from 1844. Is possible that it has fallen in disgrace. The institute's director between 1853 and 1897, the Prussian Rudolfo Phillipi, who visited him in 1851, states that he "was surprised by his poverty. [...] Would many objects placed by Gay in the South West Museum have disappeared?". Phillipi, R (1908). *Bulletin of the National Museum*. Volume 1. Imprenta, Litografía y Encuadernación Barcelona, pp. 5-6

surrounding power-knowledge. In fact, whether in first case, where the system occupies a dominant position in the game of power, or in the second, where the episteme refers to a system of knowledge that conditions how the world is understood and interpreted in a certain moment (Oliver, 2010; Allen, 2010), "the discourse is not only something that translates the struggles or the systems of domination, but that through that, and within which one fights, that power that one wants to overtake" (Foucault, 2005, p.15).

In society, the production of discourse is supervised by procedures that regulate its emergency, forms of exclusion where prohibition is one of the most noticeable, since "you cannot speak about anything at any era" (Foucault, 2002, 73); "a person knows when not they don't have the right to say it all, that not everything can be spoken under every circumstance, that anyone, in the end, cannot speak about everything" (Foucault, 2005, p. 15) since "conditions of reality of statements", "conditions of possibility", "limited spaced of communication" exist and tolerate the advent of a statement (Foucault, 2002, p.146-177) in a determined moment in historical time.

Therefore, the discursive facts

[...] occupy time and space, they take account in what has been spoken in an era according to some rules and regularities [...] a set of statements show historically situated discursive moments and consequently, they can lead the comprehension of historical stages that were distinguished from what could be stated and what not" (Loaiza, 2020a, pp. 305-306).

The objects taboo, the ritual of the circumstance and the exclusive or privileged right of the spoken subject are three types of prohibitions that proceed from outside of the discursive production. It is relevant for our study those procedures of internal control of such production, especially those related to the commentary and the author, both complementary.³ The commentary is related to those discourses that are found at the genesis of a set of statements, in the origin of the "new acts of words that resumes, transforms or talk about them, in short, discourses that indefinitely, beyond its

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³ There are three internal discourse control procedures: the commentary, the author and the disciplines.

formulation, they are spoken, remain spoken and are yet to be spoken" (Foucault, 2005, p. 26). Meanwhile the author is understood more as a "principle of discourse grouping" than as an individual that has written or spoken a text (Foucault, 2005, p.29) is connected to the origin of meaning of such discourse.

Both procedures are relevant for this research so far that we are interested, on one hand, to demonstrate that the era of Chilean expositions is tributary to a commentary of a long standing cultural exhibitionary discourse that in the country is reiterated by a "collective emitting subject" (SEC) (González, 2008). The notion of SEC, as well as the author, is important because it not only allows us to individualize the characters/authors behind their comment, but also to determine the congruence between their intellectual profiles and fulfill one of its maxims: the author as a unit and focal point of the discourse, for what is necessary to establish a social position of enunciation they occupy. From these two internal control procedures we intend to give an account to the origin of an era, in other words, inform the moment in which the talk of Chilean expositions started, reaffirming the idea that certain historical moments correspond to certain discursive practices (Loaiza, 2020a, p.306; Loaiza, 2020b, p. 22).

Another notion is sociability. Authors like Maurice Agulhon, Philippe Aries, Norbert Elias and Jürgen Habermas are referents when associative studies are practiced. For some, the term is associated to Agulhon, nevertheless, he warns against putative paternity of the concept pointing to Aries and his studies on mentalities like works that "were much more closer to make up the term 'sociability' than his" (González, 2009, p.23). While the first analyzes the formal bourgeois sociability through the figure of the "circle" and suggests a typology of sociabilities, the second is interested in solving "how from a type of sociability where the public and private get confused, to a sociability in which the private is separated from the public and even absorbs or reduces its extension", accounting for some "signs of privatization" (Aries, 1990, pp. 22-25). For Elias, it is the value based interdependencies in a group that make intelligible a sociability that implies, as a condition of possibility, the internalization and transformation of external constraints into self constraints as a constant for the production of forms of behavior (Elias, 1983, 1990, 1997).

Meanwhile, for Habermas (1997) the loss of influence of the courtly sociability that Elias studied is the reflection of a society that separates from the State and encourages the division of the public and private spheres in the modern sense. For him, "the public" is constituted because matters previously exclusive to the authorities are now an issue of general interest, as the press is one of the channels for publicly challenging the state publicity. This means that private individuals with power debate over the publicity governed by it, aiming to agree with them the general rules for interaction in economical and social spheres, dimensions publicly relevant.

From there, the well known definition of the concept of *bourgeois advertising*; the sphere in which private individuals meet in public. However, these definitions do not assist in understanding a type of *associative practice* that draws from the organization of expositions such as directive commissions or from prizes. If it contributes to it, on the other hand, the research of Zofio (2002) states that "the social spaces emerge or contract as a result of the condition of the authors existence" (p. 137), for him the transhumance of the Spanish court favored the communication and the sociability ties between regional and local artisans from cities visited by the court.

This idea of a momentary association is shared by Pelizaeus (2013) who in his research of urban and courtly sociabilities states that between them a "type of sociability is formed, although ephemeral due to its short period of time" (p. 123). In this sense, Farge (2008) argues that the neighborhood is the "state of proximity of a place or an individual in relation to a thing or place", that the "walking gesture" and nomadism, involve specific ways of sociability whose codes must be understood and cultivated, especially in the case of nomadism, as it requires a "sociability as spontaneous as it is ephemeral" (p. 79-103). The previously stated, will eventually contribute to the determination of what type of associative practices were involved in the emergence of the discursive object "exhibition". We believe that a partial or momentary associative practice aimed at specific purposes is what we could denote as a "specialized ephemeral sociability" created to reach concrete objectives.

In the last twenty years, although with greater intensity in the last decade, a proliferation occurred in the studies regarding national Chilean expositions, which were concentrated, primarily, from 1869 to 1888. The first stands out because the specialized literature considers that year's exhibition as the first organized in the country. On the other hand, the year 1888 is important, starting from that date, due to the downfall of museography practices under new celebration spaces of the industry. Other studies address the previous period: 1845-ca.1872, in an effort to provide background to understand that the Chilean museography tradition has its roots back in 1845, at the heart of the conservative regime.

Thus, there is a *corpus* of moreless 35 researches that address the exhibition phenomenon from the economic history's perspective, from studies of visual culture, science, techniques and technologies, from aesthetics, architecture, heritage, and local history. Recognizing the specificities of each perspective, they agree on a fundamental issue: an ideal of modernization that is staged in the press and in the visual, aesthetic, architectural, and agricultural fields of the exhibitions, as well as in the binomial that confronts the colonial against the republican (Duarte, 2023).⁴

The Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher at the origins of the national exhibitions An enlightened bourgeoisie

At the beginning of 1844, a representative group of the national "enlightened bourgeoisie" (Hidalgo & Sanchez, 2006) was associated with the purpose of founding line drawing and music schools, organizing expositions, awarding prizes for virtue and leading controversial processions of the Holy Week (Barros, 1906), all from the trench that lead the way of a resurrected mode of formal religious sociability: the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher. Characters like Pedro Palazuelos Astaburuaga (1800-1851), José Miguel de la Barra (1799-1851) and José Gandarillas and Gandarillas (1810-1853) are part of this bourgeoisie to the extent that they belonged to a ruling elite that, imbued by the illustrated spirit, believed

⁴ Referencing 35 researches implies consuming a number of words that we prefer to use in the argumentation of the article. Duarte's (2023) study is available for consultation to examine the investigations and their references in detail.

that it would solve the issues of the nascent republic through the use of reason and the beginning of the progress, vision of the world built through their trips travels and the occupation of several political charges, besides their inclination for knowledge in natural science and their confidence that cities offered the people a civilized life (Hidalgo & Sanchez, 2006).

Palazuelos Astaburuaga, lived in Europe when being the secretary of bishop Jose Ignacio Cienfuegos (1762-1845) during his mission in Rome (1824), in charge of the businesses in the Netherlands and the general consulate in France (1829-1832). With what he saw in the old continent and back in the country, he sought to organize an experience that would bring the people closer to the ideas that shared some members of the elite in terms of improving the living conditions of the least favored groups. Jose Miguel de Barra shared a space of experience similar to Palazuelos Astaburuaga. At the age of 19 years old, he participated in the last battle for independence, and from 1822 to 1823 was appointed as secretary of the Vice Admiral of Peru and of the Peruvian legation in the Provinces of la Plata.

In 1824 he held the position of secretary of the first Chilean legation in London under Mariano Egaña and between 1829-1835 he was consul general of Chile in London and Paris, with which he then became one of the first diplomats in Europe. On his return in 1835, he assumed several positions such as mayor of the province of Santiago (1843-1849) and dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities (1843-1851). As dean he paid attention to public education by creating a system of excellence for preceptors and as mayor it was said that he was a "progressive official who wanted to apply to Santiago the advances that he himself had observed in the important cities of Europe" (Hidalgo and Sánchez, 2006). In addition, during his multiple trips to the Old World, he learned about the economic benefits linked to trade associations, promoting along with others, what has been recognized as the first guild entity in Chile: the Society of Agriculture and Colonization (1838).

José Gandarillas is usually recognized more for his artistic and social work rather than for his political work, although, for the era, it is difficult to separate intellectual, political, social, artistic, even confessional interests. A fervent Catholic, painter, draftsman, art collector, architect and member of the Faculty of Physical and Mathematical Sciences of the University of Chile since 1851, his thought is found and agrees, fundamentally, with those of Palazuelos and De la Barra from early on, in 1843. On the basis of the utilitarian rationality of Bentham (1748-1832) which based on calculation, pursues the well being and happiness of the majority of the members of society, Gandarillas sought to protect the "association's spirit" that was beginning to stand out in Chile among artisans and to promote the different branches of the industry in which they participated (Gandarillas, 1843a, p. 46).

It was a common thought at the time the idea from which intelligence, patriotism and the will of enlightened citizens and public men were organized to cooperate for the benefit of the people. The freedom obtained by this with the independence meant nothing without the improvement of his material interests that would allow him to shake off the "yoke of misery"; it was work that sustained and increased these interests and allowed man to improve his physical and intellectual nature, that is, to become civilized (*El Progreso*, April 16, 17, 21, 24, 28 and May 4, 1847). What was sought was the promotion of material improvement to achieve the social improvement of the people, for which "an entirely new policy was needed, based on the calculations of individual and public convenience" (*El Progreso*, June 21, 1847).

Based on a conceptual triad that tied up religion, the writing of order (Loaiza, 2017) in other words, a *Regulation for the prosperity of the arts in Chile* and banking, the newly founded *Caja de Ahorros* (1842). Gandarillas not only hoped to give the impetus and protection that artisans and their industries required, but also intended to increase the population and improve their customs.

This triumvirate, with Palazuelos Astaburuaga in charge, proposed to resurrect the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher that had been in recess for twenty-one years. Originally, this association sought to promote some devotional and charitable practices and to organize the Good Friday procession, one of the most popular religious festivals in the capital (Vergara, 1885; *La Revista Católica*, 1847, pp. 587-592). The idea was to resort

to the guild brotherhoods and give them a new impetus by incorporating religious practices, registering with the *Caja de Ahorros de los Pobres*, offering line drawing classes and organizing art and industry exhibitions.

Specifically, it was planned to found in the capital a "lonja de las artes", which is, a place where a record of the artisans of Santiago would be preserved and all kinds of objects such as machines, instruments, works of architecture, industrial newspapers, newspapers and collections of drawings would be exhibited, but also from that same space, expressions that would contribute to the celebration of the national holidays in September were projected and according to some, Palazuelos became the first citizen that incorporated moral and instructive amusements into these festivities (Figueroa, 1897, pp. 439-440); he was the pioneer in imagining and incorporating into such festivities "entertainments worthy of it, which would be the expression of the culture and civilization that we achieved and that would bring some benefit to the community" (Torres, 1860, pp. 103-104). With that purpose, some students were to be in charge of publicly praising the patriots who had stood out for their charity and philanthropy, and as he had seen in France, prizes for morality and virtue were to be awarded, especially to the teachers of first letters who were most exalted in their work (Barros, 1906, p. 52; pp. 402-403).

We say that the thinking of Gandarillas coincides with his brothers when we see remarkable coincidences between the *Regulation for prosperity*... and the concerns of Palazuelos which indicated that they shared his enlightened desire. Take the case of the awards for the arts that, according to Gandarillas, would be awarded every six months to the artisans who stood out the most in their work and the recognition of their good conduct, which could be equated with the morality of Palazuelos; or the register of artisans of the aforementioned *Lonja de las Artes*, but in terms of such regulation refers to "keeping a book or registration of all artisans whatever their class or profession is" (Gandarillas, 1843b, p. 58).

According to Grez (2007), the era of the guild brotherhoods was over, for what Palazuelos resorted to the Holy Sepulcher, of secular existence, but without any guild basis, whose reinstatement was not without controversy that is explained by the relations

between the Church and the State, and from 1843 they were experiencing growing tension when the civil authority, supported by a new spirit of adherence to non Christian visions, confronted its ecclesiastical counterpart, undermining the confidence in the influence of a Catholic worldview. It should be noted, in any case, that the secularization of the institutions did not imply a rejection of the Catholic religion or much less an effort of social secularization, which in fact, the liberal politicians, for the most part, continued to be devoted Catholics. In fact, for the defense and preservation of order "a Church that in the name of God imposed respect for the law, that made demands of morality equivalent to civic virtue, and that reinforced the adherence to public order of the ruling class was functional" (Stuven, 2008, p. 485).

Within the theoretical terms that we have been mentioning, Palazuelos, De la Barra and Gandarillas, make up an author, a collective emitting subject (SEC) that, in the national context and coherently with their enlightened mentality, replicate, and transmute into a sounding board of an old economical cultural museographic commentary deeply frozen in national historical time. In fact, Vicuña Mackenna dates the origin of "our first expositions" as of May 2, 1556 (Vicuña, 1884, pp. 420-421).

Pirenne (1975) establishes a direct link between nineteenth century exhibitions and trade fairs in Europe that date back at least to the eleventh century. The fairs of Champagne that he analyzes have its counterpart throughout the old continent and regardless of where they took place, they were organized according to a well-defined structure (Serena, 2018, p. 63, p. 337). This expository commentary is the one that is still projected up to the current *globalized time* (Subercaseaux, 2002). It is a matter of seeing how, at national level, the group of exhibition statements have the same validity as it did 177 years ago (Santiago International Fair, 2023).

In this sense, both past and present comments are nothing more than echoes that imitate and repeat what someone else has said or that has been said elsewhere. In the terms of Foucault (2005) they return to "say for the first time what had already been said" (p. 29). At this point we believe we have answered the question about who inaugurated the

group of exhibitionary statements in the country or, rather, who was the SEC responsible for restating something that had already been communicated.

Based on the intellectual and ideological profile of the SEC, we answer another question: related to the conditions of possibility of emergence of museographic commentary. It was said that not everyone can talk about anything at a certain time, well, the members of the SEC were able to say something not only because of the social prestige they had, but more importantly, due to their space of experience abroad and their symbolic capital, they were the legitimate replicators of civilizational comments that conceived of the expositions as the materialization of economic achievements such as political, sociocultural and scientific. Museum exhibitions were – and are? – expressions of economic facts, which is why it is often said that "the essence of capitalist production must be able to be grasped in the concrete historical forms in which the economy finds its cultural expression" (Tiedemann, 2005, pp. 24-25).

Against this background, the ruling class agreed on the need to train all layers of the population in republican virtue, to add rational knowledge to the action and duty of the State in the realization of such tasks. After all, this was the sign of times of a first economic globalization: the manifestation of a modern political culture linked to the will of incorporating Chile into the global economic system and the scientific and technical revolution. External conditions of possibility together with internal determinants enabled the appearance of the discursive object "exposition" with clear civilizational functions: the self regeneration of the population.

A type of ephemeral sociability: the awards commission

The plans of the brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher for the civic festivities in 1845 consisted in celebrating the queen virtue of the theological virtues and Christianity: the charity,⁵ in praising deceased nationals and foreigners who had distinguished themselves by promoting the material and moral improvement of the people, in "exhibiting the best products of our nascent arts; and to distribute a number of prizes to

⁵ There are three theological virtues: charity, faith, and hope.

the persons who appear most meritorious, subject to the corresponding qualification." In short, what the Council of the brotherhood sought with the implementation of this and other activities was "to give expression to the memory of our political emancipation, the moral and material improvement of man and society that it is called to achieve." (*El Araucano*, September 19, 1845).

Let's briefly observe this note in the light of the place that the press occupied in the genesis of discursive practice. An approximation confirms that it acted as a disseminating medium of the set of museographic statements made by the brotherhood. This note, and others that will be later presented, is interpreted as the first replica of public opinion to the set of statements issued by the SEC established in the brotherhood. From here, we will see how the press transforms into a fundamental actor in the dissemination and criticism of these statements, constituting the privileged space for debate around the national museographic project.

For the 1845 event, the government appointed a commission responsible for examining and awarding dissertations in praise of patriots noted for their philanthropy and charity, and the works of industry that were presented. This commission is another example of an enlightened bourgeoisie. It was composed, besides Pedro Palazuelos and José Gandarillas, by Pedro Palazuelos and José Gandarillas, Pedro García de la Huerta Saravia, Ignacio Reyes Saravia and Domingo Arlegui. Garcia de la Huerta (1788-1861), who participated early in the battles for the Independence, he was a successful farmer and as a politician, he was appointed as deputy on multiple occasions between 1827 and 1852, a period during which he was member of various parliamentary commissions.

Reyes Saravia (1812-1873) studied Humanities and Mathematics in the National Institute, and dedicated himself to a mercantil career and to politics, activities that didn't stop him from assuming the position of treasurer of the Charitable Establishments of Santiago (1832) or occupying, at different times, the position of president of the Charity Board. Arlequi (? - 1846) on his side, founded along with José Miguel de la Barra, Pedro

Palazuelos and others,⁶ the Chilean Society of Agriculture and Colonization (1838). Within such society, Arlegui was part of the Commission of Arts and Crafts linked to agriculture (1843) predecessor of the School of Arts and Crafts (1849). As a farmer, and inspired by other European agronomists, he was more interested in the crop rotation rather than the fallow lands, which were considered burdensome and inefficient.

If our interest lies in determining the types of intervening sociabilities in the genesis of Chilean expositions, we must stop at this commission as a form of association and observe what was stated above, that is, from the notion of a specialized ephemeral sociability. In fact, commissions from the first exposition operated during a brief period, enough to call together these events and evaluate the products for the distribution of prizes. From this point of view, they emerge as a momentary sociability created according to a specialized purpose: The material and spiritual advancement of society that appeals to the resource of the public exhibition of objects and the pronouncement of praise of famous people as mediating elements to achieve this objective.

The fact that this type of association was ephemeral doesn't mean that its members stopped interacting. On the contrary, as evidenced by the case of the Chilean Society of Agriculture and Colonization, its members shared other sociable spaces outside the national museographic project, in other spheres such as benevolence and charity organizations, in parliament, within families, etc., all this coincides with the maximum according to which social spaces are reduced or expanded as a response of the circumstances in the actor's lives. In rational terms, these sociable forms were organized according to the objectives, calculations and results.

In short, it can be said that the museographic commission is a historical and organizational invention that is understood as *scenography*, "brings to the stage a group of people destined to represent a kind of public drama, the drama of reflection on public problems" (Bourdieu, 2014, p. 42), even if it is like in our case, it is for a short period of time. This notion synthesizes what we have been discussing since Habermas: that private

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⁶ Those others were Andrés Bello, Manuel de Salas, José Santiago Aldunate, José Gabriel Palma, Manuel Carvallo, Juan Manuel Cobo, Buenaventura Marín and Rafael Larraín Moxó.

persons in the capacity of public meet to discuss and solve the problems that arise with the passage of collective life.

How did the event planned by the board of directors of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher and seconded by the Supreme Government operate? How was their reception of the press in the capital? We will deal with these matters below.

Legal formalization of a museographic practice

The praises and the exhibition practice were subsumed in civic festivities. Without detaching itself from this framework, its officialization started through the presidential decree of January 16, 1846, signed by Manuel Bulnes and seconded by Antonio Varas (1817-1886), Minister of Justice, Worship and Public Instruction (1845-1846). Here the intervention of the brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher is undeniable, since said regulations subscribed to the "themes presented in the name of the Brotherhood [...], on which the works of composition and national industry that are presented to the contest that is formed to obtain the prizes of September 17 of this year must be made" ((Boletín de Leyes Órdenes y Decretos del Gobierno. Book XIV [BLODG], 1846, p. 341).

Illustrated Mastodonic Circular

Days before the publication of the decree of January 1846, the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher resorted to a special type of writing in order to socialize its objectives: the circular. Through it, the brotherhood formalized its purposes which, although moderately known to the press, were only recently coming to the public's attention and given full publicity. The circular, dated January 12 and signed by the junior brother, Pedro Palazuelos, sought, based on Article 2 of its Constitutions, "the moral and material improvement of the people" (Constitutions of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher, 1846, p. 1). To encourage work and industries among the least favored classes, a room would be installed in the building that the congregation had, where prototypes of machinery and tools would be displayed in order for artisans would study within their different areas, in addition, the same space would keep a record of the workshops, their

specialties and the names of the artisans employed in them. Since the brotherhood did not have sufficient resources to manage the project independently, the circular in question requested the recipients for a contribution in construction materials or cash (Palazuelos, *Diario de Santiago*, February 25, 1846).

The circular, which we believe was originally published in *El Mastodonte Americano*, a newspaper written by Palazuelos Astaburuaga between approximately 1843 and 1847, (Briseño, 1862, p. 216, p. 417; *El Progreso*, June 10 and 22, 1847; *El Progreso*, July 30, 1847), was eagerly criticized by the opposition press that ironically acknowledge the "pious and philanthropic feelings" of the junior brother, despite the fact that these outbursts of fraternity towards the artisans flourished only in moments of electoral hardships. This press denounced the General Registry of Workshops as an instrument that Palazuelos would use to imprison artisans on election day if did not supported to his "madness and absurdities" and the project of the market project as a center of conspiracies against the people, as a ploy to spy on the artisans (*Diario de Santiago*, February 25, 1846). It is interesting to note that in the section "Artisan Correspondence" of *El Artesano Opositor*, a self-proclaimed "revealed spy" repented of his actions and denounced his accomplices in the task of stalking artisans in exchange for the substantial sum of 6,000 pesos (*El Artesano Opositor*, March 4, 1846).

For Pedro Godoy, one of the journalists of the *Diario de Santiago*, the financial strategy for the maintenance of the establishment, which is, cash or donations in goods, was absurd. The military journalist (Herrera, 1947) questioned this regard: "Where does Dr. Palazuelos imagine that our poor artisans locked up all year in the barracks, and subject to the strict military code, would have enough to provide for their amusements", and he answered: the Junior Brother should settle with goods rather than with money, clothes rather than with cash, "garments rather than money, but that is nothing for a poor artisan to part his trousers or shirts only to properly respond to the invitations of the congregation".

Instead, the brotherhood's leadership had to take different path if its goal was to promote the arts: to obtain scholarships for artisans in the "public education institutes,

from which the daughters of Mr. Fedriani, the young Santa Cruz, and many others have been expelled for no other reason than being the children of actors or artisans"; allocate the resources used to spy on the people in the establishment of "a true market or already in some other institution for that unfortunate class"; in short, to obtain from the government some privileges "to relieve the heavy burdens that weigh down the working class" (*Diario de Santiago*, February 25, 1846).

The presidential decree

The presidential decree of January 16, 1846 gave the green light to a competition in which "works of composition and national industry" would be rewarded in the areas of eloquence, fine arts (poetry, music and painting), industries and arts, and education. For the oratory category, those who best addressed two subjects would be rewarded: the first by answering questions such as "What must Christian charity do to completely reign in the institutions and customs of our society? What role should ministers of religion and governments play in the solution of this great problem?" And the second, creating a praise of charity "considered 1°, in its social relations and trends; 2°, in the unique character of the men who have demonstrated this virtue, including in their number the public figures who have served their Homeland well" (BLODG, 1846, pp. 341-342).

In the category of fine arts, awards would be given for a religious hymn dedicated to Divine Providence that could be easily sung by the people, and a work that could be performed by a military music band in poetry and music; while in painting the same would be applied, with the best model of ornaments for the amphitheater where the national holidays would be celebrated and with "the painting or drawing on a larger scale of a remarkable and exemplary event in the civil history of the Republic over the last twenty years" (BLODG, 1846, p. 342).

The theme and temporality of the painting and drawing were not without controversy, and in fact, the main editor of the *Diario de Santiago*, Colonel Pedro Godoy Palacios (1801-1883), asked two questions in the editorial of February 11, 1846: "Why should the indicated event be civilian and not military?" "Why should this civil event be

limited to those that occurred only twenty years ago?" (*Diario de Santiago*, February 11, 1846). To him, there was no justification for excluding those who had risked their lives for Chile, and it was inexcusable, on the other hand, to choose men "who in a tumult perhaps faced no greater danger than to hear some shamelessness from their opponents" (*Diario de Santiago*, February 11, 1846). The past twenty years of republican life, he said, had been the most sterile in terms of memorable events; if that period had been extended from 1810 onwards, numerous notable events would have emerged to be transmitted to posterity by an artist.

Without leaving behind the reference to painting and drawing, Berríos *et al.* (2009) highlights the contemporary and civilian nature of the event represented in them, expressions that nowadays would be called historical painting and whose purpose was to present examples of virtue and patriotism to the artisan class; to offer exemplary narratives (Jiménez-Blanco, 2014, p. 66). These actions, he points out, were part of "a pedagogical statute that can articulate all the initiatives of the Brotherhood and, from a projection, show us the nature of the *pedagogical project* of the Conservative Republic" (Berríos *et al.* 2009, p. 67).

In the field of arts and industry, three awards would be awarded: one to the mechanical arts object that gave account achieved in the field to which it belonged, another for manufactured arts in which it would have been used for the first time or for better purpose as a national input, and one for an establishment of mulberry trees cultivating and silkworm were being farmed. In education, an award would go to the girls' school that presented the most perfect display of work completed in the previous school year and to another that adopted the best system or plan for improving the moral and material condition of women (BLODG, 1846, p. 342).

In terms we have been discussing, what can be said about this sort of legal commentary in the origin of a discursive practice where "exposition" serves as a privileged term? Firstly, it reaffirms the idea that legal texts serve as the genesis of new acts of speech that renew, modify, or even discuss them. In this case, President Bulnes' decree repeats what was said nearly 300 years ago by the Santiago council on May 2, 1556, when during

the Corpus Christi festivities, he ordered the city artisans to "display their trades and inventions, as is customary in the kingdoms of Spain and the Indies" (Vicuña, 1884, p. 421), under penalty of a fine. Something similar occurs with the mastodonic circular, as a letter, notice or "order that a superior authority addresses to a large part or all of their subordinates" (*Diccionario de la Lengua Castellana*, 1884, p. 246), was part of the arsenal utopian thought and projective imagination of the Enlightenment that, together with regulations, it constituted a form that aimed to "regulate social relations and paved the path of progress across all areas of society," thus forming a "communicative format" in its own right (Berríos et al., 2009, pp. 19-20).

From our perspective, decree and circular are constitutional acts that give legal life into Chilean national exhibitions as museographic institutions, although not without controversy. We note that this legal commentary, crystallized in both forms, encouraged critical arguments around timing and strategies adopted for securing funds for the institution's setup and maintenance. Whether the replies were for support or opposition, we are interested in noting here that this was truly a foundational speech act, inaugurating an era where the term "exposition" began to be spoken of and, consequently used, and whose condition of possibility lay in the push of three members of the national enlightened bourgeoisie.

Genesis of an Era

Praise and comments

As a preamble to establishing of a "Lonja de las Artes" in the capital, the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher's board planned, in the context of the 1845 civic festivities, to glorify charity, exhibit products of a nascent industry, and praise deceased figures known for inspiring the material and moral improvement of the people. To determine which figures and industry products would be recognized, the aforementioned commission was appointed.

At noon on September 17, 1845, three young men known in literary circles delivered a eulogy dedicated to the first archbishop of Santiago, Manuel Vicuña Larraín (1778–1843),

the priest Francisco Balmaceda (1772–1842), and the intellectual Manuel de Salas (1754–1841), they were Francisco Astaburuaga Cienfuegos, Juan Bello, and Silvestre Ochagavía. Astaburuaga Cienfuegos (1817–1892) graduated in law in 1832 and, in 1846, was appointed secretary to the Chilean legation in Washington, launching a long public career. Juan Bello (1825–1860), son of Andrés Bello, became a lawyer in 1850, won a literary contest in 1842, collaborated with various newspapers and journals, and was a member of the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities (1853), and translated works by Dumas and Michelet. Silvestre Ochagavía (1820–1883) started his public career in 1846 when he was appointed senior official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, graduated in law in 1847, and held various public roles, including Minister of Justice, Worship, and Education, Finance Minister, and government representative in Europe, between others.

In their praises, these young men shared a common maxim: "Light and bread for men!" (Ochagavía, 1845, p. 237). For Astaburuaga and Bello, who honored Vicuña and Balmaceda respectively, this light was divine radiance embodied in Christian charity, focused on salvation society and the material and moral improvement of fellow believers, on the other hand, for Ochagavía, in direct allusion to the wise De Salas, this light represented understanding, knowledge, and beneficence, inaugurating an era of relief and enlightenment: the moral regeneration of the people (Bello, 1845a, 1845b; Astaburuaga, 1845; Ochagavía, 1845). The praisers of the first republican museographic event informed that their honorees coincided in the postulate of charity.

To the scientific De Salas, education contributed to the moral and material progress of the people, although his approach to solve social issues was traditional, in that he insisted on the creation of hospices and charitable institutions (Grez, 1995, p. 12). It was a general thought that charitable societies represented "the greatest and most transcendental benefit to our people" because they prepared their customs and through their actions they could start the "desire and pleasure of imitation" in cold hearts (*El Progreso*, September 24, 1847). A scientific thought intertwined with "traditional" Catholic values regarding the solution of the social question should not be surprising since a good part of the 1830s-1840s witnessed the encounter between old and new mentalities

(Stuven, 2000, p. 68); it was a period of incompatibilities and contradictions, as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento said "Our era is unfortunately a time of struggle, of transition and of skepticism. Ideas, interests, tendencies, everything is in conflict" (Sarmiento, 1885, p. 144).

Science and the faith-charity pairing created two ideals of a cooperative society seeking to achieve the well being and happiness of its members (Gandarillas, 1843a, p. 46). In this logic, in his praise in honor of public welfare in 1846, one of the co-founders of the Literary Society of 1842, Santiago Lindsay (1825-1876), passionately declared that the democracy enjoyed was the result of Providence, which inspired the native oligarchy to renounce titles and tell the "ignorant, weak, and oppressed people, 'Be free, rise to my level; I want to be your equal, I was once your lord'" (Lindsay, 1846a). Lindsay concluded that this democratic character of institutions was "an important and possibly constitutive fact of our nationality" (Lindsay, 1846a).

The following year, in 1847, the writer Salustio Cobo Gutiérrez (ca. 1815–1867), inspired by the Spanish theologian Jaime Balmes (1810–1848), whose philosophical commitment aimed to aid and assist man to achieve perfection and happiness (Forment, 1998), stated that in association, "in the gathering of individual forces," there was "the secret of social strength" (Cobo, 1847a, but even more crucial was the role that religious communities played in industry, "a channel through which the interests of material life, our social advancement" (Cobo, 1847b). In that same event, Ricardo Claro Cruz (1827–1890) affirmed that the "cloister, ultimately, was the 'great workshop of new men,' the place where 'the reign of charity would begin on Earth'" (Claro, 1847).

It is important to highlight here the way in which religious commentary emerges. Foucault points out that this type of internal regulation of discourse, along with the legal one, are paradigmatic when it comes to observing the word by word reappearance of what is commented on. For the case we analyzed, it is enough to point out that the Catholic vision of the world, crystallized in religious commentary, had been consolidated as one of the central elements of consensus within Chilean political culture in the mid-1840s, therefore, its presence should not be surprising at a time when honors were paid to the homeland and to Christian virtues.

It should not be forgotten that the secularization of the State did not imply a rejection of the Catholic religion, in fact, as previously mentioned, the Church was functional to the state insofar as, in its name, the law could be enforced, the principles of morality demanded by it were comparable to those of civic virtue and as a whole could make the people adhere to the principle of public order proclaimed by the ruling elite. Moreover, the controversies of which Stuven (2000) speaks have their own limits, that is, they do not contravene the consensual patriotic ideals of valuing the institutional order, the Catholic vision of the world and the improvement of the republican system. Rather, the controversies that emerged in the light of the criticism of the Church can be explained by the fact that the protagonists of this story were not necessarily irreligious but were anti-clerical.

Echoes in the press

The 1845 event drew "enthusiastic shouts from a large audience!" (*El Tiempo*, September 20, 1845); this had been "very numerous, expressing with the enthusiastic shouts the interest taken in this spectacle" (*El Progreso*, September 19, 1845) and despite the commotion, the portraits of De Salas, Balmaceda, and Vicuña seemed to have an imposing influence on spectators; "silenced the crowd; no shouts were heard, and the people stood moved and respectful in the presence of their images" (*La Revista Católica*, September 27, 1845, p. 220). Friends of the three young speakers pointed out the consequences that a show like that could leave "in the spirits, and especially in the spirits of the young people": the Creole creative genius as a whole "put in harmony by an inspired man formed something grand and solemn"; that was not an everyday event and as such that moment of shared enthusiasm had to be treasured in the memory (*El Tiempo*, September 20, 1845).

The press applauded "as much as anyone else the newly established institution" (*El Progreso*, September 23, 1846); it celebrated the occurrence of "a new act among us" (*El Tiempo*, September 20, 1845); it praised the fact that the national holidays, characterized by the drunkenness and dishonesty of the masses, had acquired "a religious and moral tone, calling the public's attention to matters of profit" (*La Revista Católica*, September 27,

1845, p. 220). Criticism of the September festivities emerged from the activities carried out after the 19th in the *Paseo de la Cañada*, at some distance from the urban center, which were part of the official celebrations.

The Catholic press was strongly opposed to popular activities such as baiting stick, foot and horse races and other games of skill that, together with ambulant taverns and other commerce established for the occasion, was another expression of the "Dionysian festival" (Salazar, 2007, p. 224) and as "immoral and tumultuous festivals" and asked the municipal authority to suppress the walks to said plain because he considered them "highly harmful" to society. Not so, however, the new museographic act that was inaugurated. This same Catholic press asked "Who would dare to reproach this function, in which by means of the rewards of glory, an attempt is made to give a new impetus to eloquence and to all the useful arts?" (*La Revisa Católica*, October 10, 1846, p. 466).

The press in general advocated that industry and the arts should be protected, since, if what was done annually with fireworks and horse races were invested in them, "it would be possible to give the arts a great impulse and movement, while at the same time greatly improving the moral and material condition of those who profess them" (*La Revista Católica*, September 27, 1845, pp. 220-221). Although it is true that the celebration of September 17, 1845 had been a germinal effort, it was expected that it would have a projection in the following years, since "the way in which Mr. Palazuelos's idea [had] been received shows that there are very few who look with indifference at this public cult that is about paying tribute to talent and all social virtues" (*El Tiempo*, September 23, 1845).

Although the criticism was also felt for the lack of solemnity in the presentation of the awards, so it was proposed that it be "the President of the Republic in person [who] should put in the hands of the winners the reward of their progress" (*El Progreso*, September 23, 1846) and not the intendant. Some opposition newspapers were reluctant to inscribe in their pages any news of the celebrations, since rather than remembering the national glories, what these celebrations did was to cover up the intentions of a tyrannical government. In his words, these national holidays were nothing more than "new liberticidal"

plans disguised, as always, under the cloak of the public good" (*Diario de Santiago*, September 25, 1845).

As can be seen, the event had good press coverage, to the point that it operated as a sounding board for the proposal emanating from within the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre in terms of amplifying and putting into the voice of public opinion a new discursive object called "exhibition". From this point of view, we identify the genesis of an epoch since we particularize a time and a space with their own enunciative regularities that enabled the appearance of a space of communication in which we began to talk about a thing.

In this case, the statement "exposition" accounts for a historically situated discursive moment that helps to understand the transition between two historical times, namely: the foundational and the integration (Subercaseaux, 2002), distinguishing this transition by what could be enunciated. From the above, the maxim according to which certain discursive practices belong to certain historical moments is confirmed. From this point of view, the leadership of the brotherhood was successful if it was a matter of putting back on everyone's lips a museographic comment of ancient date. In summary, it can be said that the controversies raised in the press, whether in favor or against the realization of the first Chilean national exhibition, implied, ultimately, the inauguration of an era in which the event began to be talked about.

The participation of crafts

How was the reception of the event among the members of the artisans? While it is true that they were called upon to participate, it is also true that the 1845 prizes were assigned directly by the appointed commission. In fact, on September 18 of that year, after the midday mass in the Cathedral, the first three republican gold medals were awarded to the arts and industry: to the musician José Zapiola Cortés (1802-1885), to the painter Francisco Sánchez (?-?) – a disciple of the first director of the Academy of Painting, Alejandro Cicarelli (1808-1879) – and to the deputy of the early 1820s, Francisco Silva (?- 1868) for his work in silk, a nascent industry (Barros, 1906, p. 52; La Revista Católica, September 17, 1845, pp.

220-221). Although the awards and speeches had been awarded in advance by "public opinion", the press said, it was hoped that the September activities would be formalized in a solemn programme for the coming anniversaries.

The following year the painter Francisco Javier Mandiola (1820-1900) was awarded, "a Mr. Jofre who has presented a piano that has nothing to envy to the best that comes from Europe, and another young cabinetmaker who exhibited a carving whose finesse and delicacy causes astonishment" (*El Progreso*, September 23, 1846). By 1847, Mandiola again won a gold medal for his copies of *Virgenes* (Pereira, 1992, p. 80), although direct sources are elusive to report more works exhibited.

From the above, it can be seen that highly specialized artisans participated in the event by sending a sample of their work. We will argue the above. If we conceive that the manufacture of a piano, as a precision instrument, is the maximum expression of applied science, we have that Jofré's skill and technical knowledge in the manufacture of the instrument earned him the public recognition of his trade. There is also no doubt about how advanced the field of cabinet making was, represented by a young and specialized anonymous craftsman. In fact, Sergio Grez (2007) points out that one of the few sectors in which significant progress was made was furniture manufacturing.

The degree of material progress and evolution in the craft was noted in the press whose editorials commented on the rapid progress made during the last twenty years; it was recognized that in the country there were "superior artisans of cabinetmaking, foreign and national, well capable of offering us the most polished works of their art" (*El Progreso*, September 4, 1847) and that "the factories of Santiago abundantly supplied all the demands of this market, and at the same time also supplied the needs of many of our provinces" (*La Revista Católica*, September 2, 1847, pp. 661-662).

It was not the individuals and artisans who were the only ones summoned to support the initiative of the brotherhood. For the establishment of the *Lonja de las Artes*, the brotherhood sought the support of the Society of Agriculture and Beneficence. The brotherhood submitted the project to the Board of Directors of the society who approved it and appointed a special commission from among its members so that, together with the

delegates of the brotherhood, they could project a building, present their plans and the financial strategy to crystallize the initiative. The real estate project, about 5 meters wide by another 17 meters deep, would be financed through a loan of 1,500 pesos requested from the government, payable in two years, whose guarantors would be the members of society, from then on Parliament would be resorted to for everything that had to do with the maintenance of the establishment. This commission concluded its report by pointing out that the Council of society should "insist on the completion of a thought so easy and necessary for the advancement of national industry" (Lindsay, 1846b). The construction of the building for the *Lonja de las Artes* never began work and remained nothing more than an attempt that never saw the light of day.

Final Words

The emergence of a discursive object called "exhibition" had as a condition of possibility, the attendance of representatives of the national enlightened bourgeoisie who shared the interest in the material and spiritual improvement of the people. Aware of this need, they resorted to a form of formal religious sociability that had fallen into disrepair in order to organize what can be considered the first national exhibition from the platform offered by the direction of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre. According to the terms we have been discussing, Palazuelos, De la Barra and Gandarillas, integrated an enlightened collective emitting subject that, based on their space of experience abroad and their symbolic capital, are the legitimate replicators of an ancient economic-cultural museographic commentary deeply anchored in the national historical time that for the first time is said again despite having been said three centuries ago.

With this, this triumvirate inaugurated a new discursive era. In this context, the capital's press operated as a sounding board that amplified and disseminated the use of the phrase "exhibition". This is how we can report the exact moment when we began to talk about exhibitions in Chile, reaffirming the idea according to which certain historical moments correspond to certain discursive practices. On the basis of a formal religious sociability, another of ephemeral characteristics was maintained that operated for a brief

period of time, the necessary time to designate the awards and recognitions in the first exhibition of 1845. It is unknown if this ephemeral sociability operated in the next couple of years. What we do know, however, is the participation of some members of the artisans. While it is true that during the event in 1845 the prizes and recognitions were designated directly by the awards commission, the following year highly qualified artisans participated whose works obtained first-rate recognitions.

What areas of research could be projected from this study? In the first place, the organization of exhibitions enables the study of their commissions as a form of sociability and the prosopographic method emerges as the privileged resource to approach these scenography. On the other hand, it could be of interest to investigate the perceptions that the different layers of the population had of these events, which in itself implies methodological difficulties inherent to this ambition. Likewise, if we agree that a nation is an imagined community, it is worth asking, in that sense, what are the materialities that are exhibited in these events and from which nations are invented? Each Latin American nation adopted, adjusted, and implemented an imported museographic practice.

However, despite the differences, cross border comparative studies could be useful for exploring the relationship between agents in motion that interact, and that, in doing so, shape the identities of the institutions they represent or the social spaces they come from. With the notion of interacting agents as a background, it could be understood that these events were not the exclusive resort of a character or a representative group rather that this notion would allow us to conceive of the organization of Latin American exhibitions as a collective task of a transnational scientific and intellectual eagerness. These are just a few areas from which future research could be projected.

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