



SALALM LXVII
Voicing the Past: Libraries, Archives, and Cultural Institutions in the
Making of Latin America and the Caribbean
Bogotá, May 3-6, 2022
Bogotá, Colombia

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Documentation and materials housed in libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural institutions play a fundamental role in preserving memory. At the same time, these repositories not only safeguard resources that allow us to construct, reconstruct, and interpret the past and the present, but they are also, alongside their collections, products of a series of curatorial processes (selection, inclusion, exclusion) that shape the collective memory of a community. In other words, these institutions are a reflection of what particular individuals consider worthy of value and preservation. This conference is an invitation to investigate and problematize the processes by which librarians, archivists, museum curators and other culture professionals are actors in the construction of a collective memory and history of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The material that comprises the collections of cultural institutions do not get there on their own, but are selected, added, protected, and used by different people in different roles throughout time. Similarly, some materials have never been added to these collections. As Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot convincingly exposed in his book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, library and archival personnel can be involved in a process of silencing certain voices or human experiences with important repercussions in the production of knowledge on Latin America and the Caribbean. That is, our libraries, archives, and cultural institutions while providing access to information also silence by making decisions (not always easy or intentional) about what is added, how it is organized/cataloged, what is preserved, what is made available, what is exhibited, and what is disseminated. These processes of selection, organization, and omission respond to socioeconomic, cultural, political, and ideological structures under which individuals who make those decisions operate. Similarly, it is important to reflect and study the ways in which North-South relations, in global geopolitical paradigms, have affected what is collected, disseminated, and taught about Latin America and the Caribbean. We are interested in covering a large spectrum of past and present processes that affect what is included or left out of cultural institutions with collections and services focused on Latin America and/or the Caribbean, be they inside or outside those regions. The issues to evaluate range from ideological imperatives such as censorship, self-censorship, racism, or political ideologies, to natural destruction like fires, floods, mold, and humidity. Moreover, some sources, from the past or the present, are not collected for ingestion in libraries or archives, but are equally important in the stories of Latin America and the Caribbean, such as slave or indigenous narratives, documentation relating to gender, sports, beauty pageants, and folkloric music, because they were or are considered, at one time or another, of little academic or cultural value. Additionally, official or self-imposed censorship, prevents the acquisition of certain documentation preservation and dissemination.

The invitation to reflect on the ways in which our professions can actively vocalize resources in the Latin American and Caribbean collections has two faces. As we reflect on silencing information in the past, we will also examine the ways in which we can actively seek to “vocalize” or make visible different resources and promote their study. That is, in what ways are we providing a voice to those whose voices have been excluded? How can we work to create inclusive archives in terms of topics, individual, and groups from different backgrounds, time periods, formats, and how to present museum collections that are inclusive and balanced? This exercise is not exclusive to those in working with the public, but it also includes professionals working in



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technical areas such as acquisitions, cataloging and metadata, processes that are more invisible, but equally important to information discoverability. The invitation is also to think broadly, from the bookdealer to preservation and conservation specialists, from information literacy and reference, to digital scholarship, and the role of the museum and cultural and educational institutions in the construction of knowledge about the region. Likewise, we invite broader reflections on the socioeconomic, political, and cultural dynamics that shape cultural institutions as they preserve, create, or suppress memory and their impact in the production of knowledge about Latin America and the Caribbean. Panel and presentation proposal topics may include but are not limited to:

- Hidden collections, that is, collections held but that is kept inaccessible to the public for different reasons.
- Topics rarely collected or difficult to collect (sport, children's literature, beauty pageants, folkloric music, oral histories from indigenous groups, suppressed testimonies due to repression or censorship, distribution problems, physical deterioration, etc.)
- Projects on digital humanities as agents of the subaltern.
- The role of the bookdealers and other materials providers.
- North-South relations in collection development, past, present, future.
- Perspectives regarding instruction as a way of access.
- Bibliographies of special topics.
- Challenges in archiving content from social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram...)
- Interinstitutional collaboration
- Museum exhibits and other museum work.

Interested presenters and panel organizers should contact Antonio Sotomayor, SALALM President (2021-2022), with proposals by Tuesday, **January 18, 2022, at 5pm CST**. Please include your name, institution, contact information, proposed title, and short abstract. Proposals of panels with three or four presenters or lightning-round panels of 6 to 8 presenters would be ideal, but we also welcome individual proposals. Please limit your proposal to 50 words, both for panels and individual papers.

For questions about local arrangements and book/vendor exhibits, please contact the SALALM Secretariat at salalm@tulane.edu.

Registration

Registration for the conference with pre-registration rates begins on Tuesday, January 4 and ends on Friday, March 11, 2022. We strongly recommend that you register in the month of January 2022, if possible.

Antonio Sotomayor
SALALM President (2021-2022)
October 18, 2021