

Recent Experiences with the Production of Temporary Exhibitions. Practices, Approaches, and Perspectives on the Collective Work at the Museo del Área Fundacional from Mendoza, Argentina

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Translated by Lucienne Marmasse

ABSTRACT

The present contribution systematizes our working experiences, since 2018, regarding the production and planning of a cycle of temporary exhibitions in the *Museo del Área Fundacional* (MAF, Foundation Area Museum) in Mendoza, Argentina, whose topics had a historical context. From the theoretical-methodological perspective of *research-action-creation*, we developed three temporary exhibitions, marked by certain definitions surrounding the addressed subjects and the museological proposal. In this sense, new questions, contents, and objectives were posed, such as highlighting social sectors which had been absent from the MAF museal narrative, as well as a communication proposal striving to reach a broader public.

KEYWORDS

museological exhibitions, collective work, exhibitions, museum publics, museological experiences, history

INTRODUCTION

The *Museo del Área Fundacional* (MAF) is an institution that depends on the municipality and is located in Pedro del Castillo square (in the Fourth Section of the City of Mendoza, Argentina), which used to be the Plaza Mayor (Main Square) of this city, founded in 1561. It was inaugurated in 1993 following a research process launched by the municipal authority that gave historical, urban, and heritage value to that part of the city.

The MAF is an archeological site museum that contains architectural remains of the buildings that operated consecutively in this location since the early 17th century and up until the 1980s: the former Colonial Council, the town slaughterhouse (after the 1861 earthquake), and later the municipality fruit and vegetables market (Bárcena & Schávelzon, 1991). The 1861 earthquake completely destroyed the city and represented a watershed in its urban configuration. Mendoza was reconstructed around its current location (towards the southwestern sector), while the old city and its inhabitants suffered a process of marginalization, impoverishment, and neglect.

Since 1998, the *Centro de Investigaciones Ruinas de San Francisco* (CIRSf) is charged with studying and rescuing the history of this foundational sector of the city through the work of its team of urban archeologists. This Center and the MAF work together to research, conserve, and disseminate the heritage of the city and its inhabitants. The Museum offers its visitors the opportunity to observe how history is recovered in its different stages, linked to the archaeological remains it houses and protects. The musealized heritage comes from its own collections (purchases and donations) as well as from CIRSf's (archaeological collections obtained through the research process), and also materials on loan from institutions and/or individuals for temporary exhibitions.

The following text is the outcome of a process of exchanges, searches, and concerns voiced by the authors, who are female researchers, archaeologists, and historians, but also colleagues and friends that share tasks in the Foundation Area. In 2018, we formed a collective with the aim of carrying out temporary exhibitions to highlight social sectors which are absent from the museum's current permanent script in particular, and, in general from, the narrative of history museums in Mendoza. We collectively and consensually held three temporary exhibitions with common denominators, created from a previously agreed theoretical-methodological framework and a gender perspective, whose themes were centered around women and/or children in Argentina and in

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Mendoza spanning the last third of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th.

It is worth mentioning that the MAF does not include an area destined to temporary exhibitions, hence they were displayed in the permanent collection called *Paisajes en Pugna*, which houses exhibits that address the immediate and long-term effects of the 1861 earthquake, and the ensuing geographic and socio-cultural division between the Old City and the New City of Mendoza (Marengo & Puebla, 2023).

These temporary exhibitions were set up in an integral way, in dialogue with the historical contents and museographic guidelines of the collection, and coinciding with the timeline therein. After the exhibits were taken down, they became travelling exhibitions composed of museographic materials that adapt to the characteristics of the spaces where they are sent.

A STARTING POINT

Our work is sustained by the contribution of different theoretical and methodological frameworks. We began with the link between research-action, understood as a transformation process of social problems (Lewin, 1992). To this we added the Latin American point of view of Fals Borda (1998) on Research-Participative Action, which proposed to overcome the lexicon of academia and reflect on a *sentipensante* (sensing/thinking) knowledge that serves the interests of exploited groups. At the same time, the research prioritized the collective way in which knowledge is produced (Calderón & López, 2013). Lastly, we examined the work Action Research-Artistic Creation (IACA) carried out by Huertas Barbosa and Vanegas Arias (2018), who propose a research process of creation/training where teachers of different arts hold dialogues of knowledge with the communities they work with. We took the concept of *research spiral* from the latter authors (Huertas & Vanegas, 2018, p. 41), wherein actors and stages in the process interrelate in a dialogic manner. To highlight the museological aspect, we believe the exhibition process constitutes a creative act, “insofar as it seeks to convey that which is absent based on a few, partial, elements of this complexity. Said process is also creative in the sense that it can generate new knowledge and experiences in the receptors exposed to the discourse: in the visitors¹” (Arrieta, 2015, p. 13).

¹ Editorial translation.

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Our work is guided by concerns regarding the interests, worries, and needs of specific sectors of the community,² mainly those who are unable to access the Museum due to various difficulties. Another crucial point is the socialization of our research. The exhibitions created by our collective travel to different educational institutions in the city of Mendoza, where, through popular educational workshops, we strive to establish a dialogue with the community. This is in accordance with Paulo Freire's proposal (1970), the decolonial pedagogies (Walsh, 2007), and the systematization of experiences (Jara, 2012), from a feminist pedagogical perspective (Korol, 2007).

We adhere to Community Feminism (Cabnal, 2010; Guzmán, 2015) while striving to build our feminist genealogies (Ciriza, 2015): our starting point is situated knowledge by problematizing objectivity (Haraway, 2013). This perspective questions the desire and possibility of actually achieving objectivity in science, as well as discussing:

[...] the relationship that is established between the person who knows and what is known, between the researcher and the person researched; criticizes the use of objectivity as a patriarchal means of control, the emotional detachment and the supposition that there is a social world that can be observed externally from peoples' conscience [...]³ (Blazquez *et al.*, 2010, p. 26).

With these ideas, we consider that museums are neither neutral nor apolitical, but rather, on the one hand, they reflect, disseminate, and reinforce gender stereotypes through a sexist construction and use of knowledge (Maceira, 2017), while on the other, they advertise vision where gender roles have been immutable and similar in all cultures throughout history, without abandoning the binary scheme.

A similar process occurs with the theme of childhood: during the past three decades, the field of historiography has extended to children and families, thus enabling new lines of research (Sosenski, 2023, p. 275). However, the sources used and the predominant visions in the narratives remit to the concept of *childhood* as a stage of human life that is naturalized, stereotyped, and depicted from the adult's perspective (Pelegrinelli & Tabakman, 2020).

² The first exhibition we will review was inaugurated to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, within the framework of the feminist struggle for legal abortion in Argentina.

³ Editorial translation.

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We choose to affirm there is not “one childhood”, but rather many, and that being a girl or boy are different experiences which frame vital situations and, hence, develop differently according to each historical, familial, social, cultural, economical, and political context. Childhoods have changed over time and space, and the way we understand and address them has also been modified (Carli, 1999).

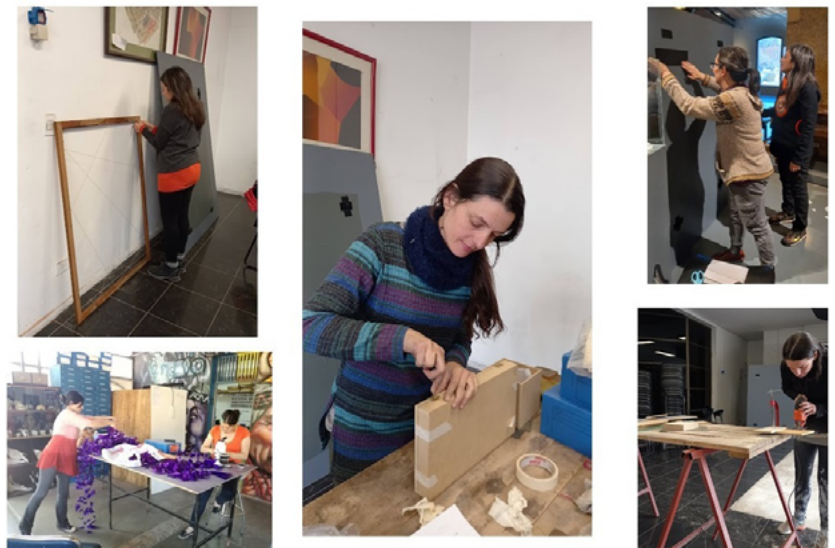
We believe there is an urgent need for the MAF museology to incorporate perspectives which render the stories more complex, establish a critical attitude towards the traditional exhibition discourses, as well as break with androcentric gender roles and adult-centered viewpoints and shun the stereotypes that lead to discriminatory attitudes (Prados, Izquierdo, & López, 2013, p. 113).

From our place of work, we agree with the tenets of critical museology, which uphold that the museum “has a moral responsibility towards all the members of the society it claims to serve. However, this is not only the institution’s responsibility, it includes the people who work there, since they are the ones who serve as vehicles to propagate a certain social imaginary...”⁴ (Navarro, 2011, p. 53).

METHODOLOGY

The stages of the work we developed in the three exhibitions were: 1) collective research, 2) creating the museological script, 3) creating the museographic script, 4) systematizing experiences, and 5) itinerance (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Various stages of the work
(Photographs: María Marengo, 2018-2023; source: authors' collection).



4 Editorial translation.

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1) Collective research

The work group comprises the three authors. Therein lies the collective, all three of us consented to the work process; we took decisions jointly and participated in all the stages in a coordinated manner. We held regular meetings to dialogue and reflect in order to define each exhibition's objectives, problems, and main axes. In that regard, we chose to address themes that are not covered in the MAF permanent script, but are linked to the history of the city and in particular to the place where the Museum is located. Thus, we aimed to complexifying insight and strain the historical account the institution sets forth, by adding new narratives and interpretations (Mieri, 2015, p. 133). This stage also foresaw searching for primary sources, photographs, historical advertisements⁵ in repositories, newspaper archives, and provincial libraries, as well as reading and analyzing bibliographic background.

2) Creating the museological script

The resulting historical research is organized by means of text panels with a maximum of 300 words per panel. This length is justified by one of the premises of thematic interpretation that states that "it is relevant to be brief" for two reasons, one is related to the public's attention span, and the other being that brief texts offer the possibility of greater space for design and images (Mosco, 2018, p. 157).

At the same time, we selected images to illustrate the content or serve as triggers for memories or emotions. We also sought fragments of poems, popular sayings, or songs by Latin American artists as titles for the texts.⁶ We worked with the Museum's Documentation and Registry of Collections department and with the CIRSF to search for materials and objects which could be displayed, though we prioritized the inclusion of elements provided by the team working in the foundation area. The curatorial criterion adopted for the list of works that would form part of the exhibition was, primarily, to prioritize the cultural biography of objects,⁷ working

⁵ Historical advertisements refers to publicity announcements and commercial propaganda of products and services published in the graphic press (magazines and newspapers) of the years covered.

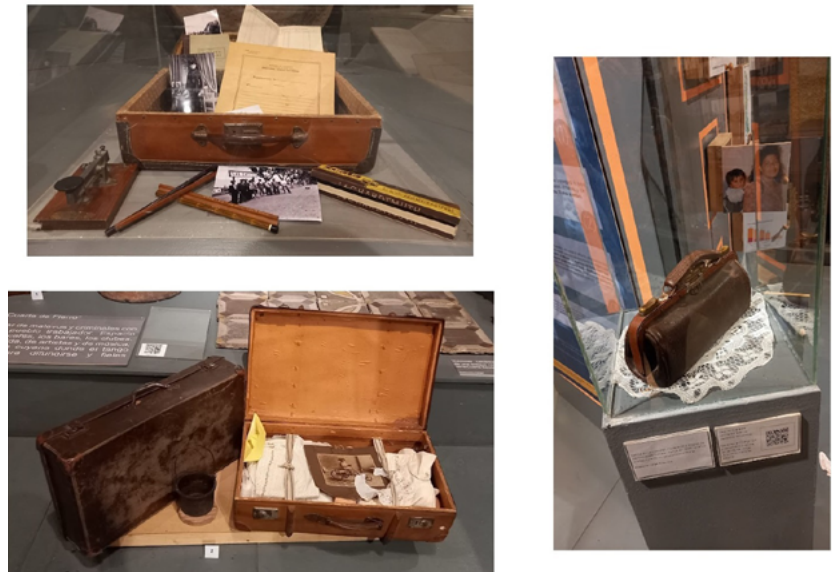
⁶ This resource has been used in all three exhibitions reviewed. For example, we used fragments of songs such as "Con la pelota de trapo..." (by Víctor Jara, Chile) to refer to childhood games; "Pueblos trabajadores, infancias pobres..." (by León Gieco, Argentina) to broach the problem of child labor; and "Sacó papel y tinta, y un recuerdo quizás..." (by Violeta Parra, Chile) to delve into immigration. We also used slogans linked to the feminist movement (and writings by María Elena Walsh and Armando Tejada Gómez (Argentina), among others.

⁷ The biography of objects, or the cultural biography of things—to use Kopytoff's (Kopytoff in Appadurai, 1991) term—leads us to an approach based on the object's

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FIGURE 2.
Musealized objects
and their histories.
Exhibition *Esos locos
bajitos... Infancias
inmigrantes en
Argentina (end
of the 19th-early
20th centuries)*
(Photographs: María
Marengo ,2023;
source: authors'
collection).



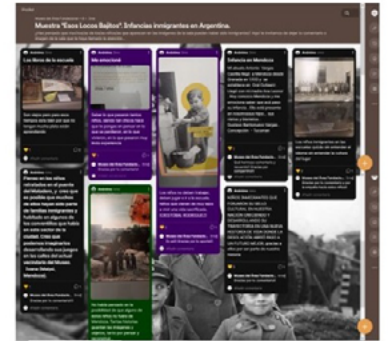
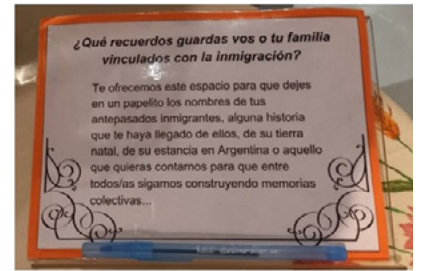
We selected the room and designed the museographic proposal in that space, taking into consideration the order of text panels, museographic supports, the expected route and the interactive activities. It is important to add that we favored an autonomous route, so visitors can explore it at their own pace and get involved, intervene, or stop at the aspects they find most interesting or appealing. Furthermore, we wish to generate emotions, sensations, and affective or empathic links in the visitors, as well as connections with their stories and circumstances, beyond their possible acquisition of conceptual contents. Therefore, the exhibitions have established sectors for public participation (Figure 3). In addition, we created pedagogical material for the reception staff and Museum guides, and we also urge the educational institutions to carry out didactic activities.

vital trajectory. This perspective facilitates recounting the multiple and habitual relations we have with objects, recovering the multiple strata of meaning they are stripped of when they are treated as merchandise or mere known entities (Bodei, 2013).

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FIGURE 3. A few proposals for participation by the visitors. Exhibition *Esos locos bajitos... Infancias inmigrantes en Argentina (end of the 19th-early 20th centuries)* (Photographs: María Marengo, 2023; source: authors' collection).



3) Creating the museographic script

This stage is extremely important to us, since we believe there should be dialogue and mutual construction between the museological and museographic scripts, to avoid an abrupt cut between the end of one stage—the concept—and the beginning of another—setting it up—(Galindo, 2018). For the design and montage of the exhibition, we coordinated with the municipality press area for the graphics, and with the Museum's maintenance team to help set up what had been planned. It is our decision, as a working collective, to be directly involved in this stage:⁸ liaising with other areas; placing each expositive point; establishing the parameters for the font and size of the texts; specifying the colors; reconditioning or creating stands and showcases; setting up the collection and defining an aesthetic that unifies the temporary exhibition and bridges the permanent one. To reinforce this idea, we used the origami⁹ technique to create interventions in showcases, and the museography for each exhibition (Figure 4). This involvement allowed us to reinforce what Juan Manuel Garibay (2013) calls

⁸ Regarding the design of expository panels, we worked jointly with the Mendoza municipality design team for them to be in synchrony with our objectives and communication, aesthetic, and accessibility criteria, keeping in mind the Guidelines on access to museums belonging to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology of Argentina (Llamazares, 2018).

⁹ Origami is a Japanese technique that consists of folding paper to obtain figures of different shapes. We have incorporated this technique in the exhibitions' museography, choosing specific designs and colors for each.

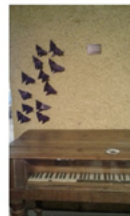
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the “poética museográfica” (poetics of museography) in each exhibition, understanding that:

[...] in an exhibition, we are not only in a theoretical plane, but an experiential one; that is to say, it may propose a consistent theoretical universe which will undoubtedly include essential and highly important elements; however, if it lacks a temporary space framework that activates the conceptual aspect, it will simply not operate as an exhibition, but as theory alone. And in that case... why go to an exhibition? Better stay home and read¹⁰ (Garibay, 2013, p. 4).

FIGURE 4. Aesthetic aspects. Use of color, historical images and decoration with origami (Photographs: María Marengo, 2018-2023; source: authors' collection).



4) Systematization of experiences

This refers to an exchange of points of view on the exhibition, where we analyze possible modifications or corrections, if needed. For this, we consider it vital to have the support of the museum staff, since they are the ones directly linked to the public.

After the dismantling and during the meetings to reflect, systematization, and analysis of the experience, we shared and collected the visitors' interventions and their participation in the proposed activities, in addition to the feelings and personal sensations of the museum team. To complement and add different points of view, we sought feedback from colleagues and peers, as well as staff at MAF and CIRSF. We gathered these testimonials and evidence to develop a report for the Directorate of the Museum, to be used as consultation material for future articles for dissemination and publication.

¹⁰ Editorial translation.

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5) Itinerance

As mentioned above in the methodological proposal, it is highly important to offer the exhibition to different organisms and institutions in the province, mainly educational institutions that train teachers which are geographically distant from the center of Mendoza and have socioeconomic problems related to the themes covered in this paper¹¹ (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5. Itinerance of exhibitions in public institutions of learning in Mendoza province.

A and B) Exhibition *Infancias. Postales de la vida de niños y niñas en tiempos modernos (end of the 19th-early 20th centuries)* in Vera Peñaloza IES, department of San Carlos (2022);

C) Exhibition *Las huellas de la historia en el cuerpo de las mujeres*, in CEBJA 3062, department of Tupungato (2022) (Photographs: 2022; source: authors' collection).



EXPERIENCES

In this section, we develop an analysis of the transversal elements and experiences surrounding the three exhibitions held. The information is summarized in the following table (Figure 6).

Exhibition *Las huellas de la historia en el cuerpo de las mujeres*¹²

This exhibition entailed an intense archival work searching for historical publications, both in virtual archives (gathering advertisements in the national publication *Caras y Caretas*) as well as in the San Martin General Public Library (for magazines from Mendoza). The search axis was prescriptive images and social, aesthetic, and fashion norms for women in the period covered.

As for the museological script, in addition to the brevity of text and accessible language on the panels, we prioritized the use of historical photographs. A special contribution was the use of a book used to register sexual workers at that time, which was replicated to broach the current oppression of female bodies, in local code.

¹¹ For example, located in agricultural areas with child labor problems, precarious working conditions, and gender violence contexts.

¹² The Marks of History on Women's Bodies.

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FIGURE 6. Synthesis of information about the three exhibitions held (Table: María Marengo, Karina Castañar, & Lorena Puebla, 2024).

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Exposición <i>Las huellas de la historia en el cuerpo de las mujeres</i>					
Exhibition period	Objetivos	Panels and themes	Exposed materials	Decoration	Public activities
November 2018 to March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Raise awareness about the cultural, social, political and health oppressions historically exercised by patriarchy on women's bodies -Make visible the mechanisms implemented to control, discipline, make invisible, exclude and determine their role in society -Recognize their forms of resistance 	12 panels Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social roles, constructed stereotypes, moral values and mandates towards women at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century -The repressive and regulatory policies that were imposed on their bodies 	Materials from the MAF collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Origami butterflies in purple, in display cases and pendants -Footprints and red women's shoes indicating the circulation circuit on the floor 	-Installation: You look at yourself? do you like yourself? -Table with supplies to apply makeup with rice powder and mirror -Coat rack with clothes and hats
Exposición <i>Infancias. Postales de la vida de niños y niñas en tiempos modernos (finales del siglo XIX-principios del siglo XX)</i>					
Exhibition period	Objetivos	Panels and themes	Exposed materials	Decoration	Public activities
Between August and December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Make visible the diversity of experiences that exist in relation to childhood -Recognize how childhoods are influenced by their historical, family, social, cultural, economic and political context 	12 panels Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The image of childhood in school textbooks -Games and toys -Children's health -Childhood as an object of advertising -The first children's publications -Gender roles and stereotypes -Rural and urban childhoods -Infant death -Orphan childhoods and child labor -The role of education in the consolidation of the Argentine State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Materials from the MAF collections and loans from workers in the Foundation Area -School books and supplies -Toys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Folded paper garlands, paper flowers that connect paneling and display cases -Hopscotch on the floor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Coat rack with costumes for childhood -Exhibition room blackboard with instructions to leave a message in a notebook

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Exposición <i>Esos locos bajitos... Infancias inmigrantes en Argentina (end of the 19th early 20th centuries)</i>					
Exhibition period	Objetives	Panels and Themes	Exposed materials	Decoration	Public activities
Between July and December 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer visitors a critical review of the period of mass European immigration in Argentina -Complete and make the stories about mass immigration more complex -Put the focus on immigrant childhoods and de-romanticize discourses on the subject -Link and extend the view towards current migrations 	<p>12 panels</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The circumstances of migrant childhoods through written testimonies and photographs -Childhoods and the adventures of their boat trip -Socialization and schooling -Child labor in the countryside and the city -Stories and life stories 	<p>Materials from the MAF collections, loans from workers in the Foundation Area and from individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Scenes with travel suitcases and various materials: clothes, photographs, travel items -Toys -Elements associated with the railway -Sewing items -School supplies and books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Folded paper boats in a variety of pastel tones, distributed in the display cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Invitation to participate in different stations of the route, based on various instructions: -Listen to a "message in the bottle" through a QR code, write a memory and hang it in the designated space -Contribute on a virtual collaborative whiteboard -Sample closing activity

FIGURE 7. Panoramic view of the exhibition *Las huellas de la historia en el cuerpo de las mujeres* (Photographs: María Marengo, 2018; source: authors' collection).



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One of the most challenging aspects, which we approached with particular emphasis, was to incentivize the public to experience situations that appeal to them, that put them in another one's shoes and, thus, live tangible aspects of the history present in our proposal. In this first exhibition we developed an installation with the aim of highlighting and creating discussion on the current oppressions of female bodies (Figure 7).

It comprised a small, enclosed structure or tent with three walls made of mirrors. Within were exhibited national or local publications from the period taken from the printed press, which reproduced prescriptive messages on social norms surrounding beauty ideals, body image, and desirable qualities in women. On the frontal mirror, over the reflected image of the visitor, was a caption: *¿Te mirás? ¿Te gustas?* (*Do you see yourself? Do you like yourself?*) (Figure 8).



FIGURE 8. Detail of the installation *¿Te mirás? ¿Te gustas?* Exhibition *Las huellas de la historia en el cuerpo de las mujeres* (Photographs: María Marengo, 2018; source: authors' collection).

After it was dismantled, the exhibition went around institutions of middle and higher education in different departments of the Mendoza province (Maipu, Tunuyan, Tupungato, San Carlos, Godoy Cruz, Las Heras, Lujan de Cuyo, and the city of Mendoza). This exhibition was the most requested for itinerance. At each opportunity there were workshops, debates, and group activities with students and teachers.

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Exhibition *Infancias. Postales de la vida de niños y niñas en tiempos modernos*¹³ (end of the 19th-early 20th centuries)

Particular attention was paid to outlining a historical and critical view on our representations of childhoods in Argentina and Mendoza between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Said construction was obtained by means of images, photographs, and magazines, as well as historical and archeological materials. The use of textbooks published at the time was another important element in that sense.

As for the museological script, there was great concern about guaranteeing the accessibility to its content both in the cognitive and physical aspects, prioritizing short texts and clearly marked museographic and visual supports. Hence, the height of the display cases and museographic furniture was taken into consideration. We also incorporated QR codes with links to audio about the content of each panel (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9. Aspects related to physical and cognitive accessibility A) Panel with images and QR codes with linked audios; B) and C) Accessible display cases (Photographs: María Marengo, 2019-2023; source: authors' collection).



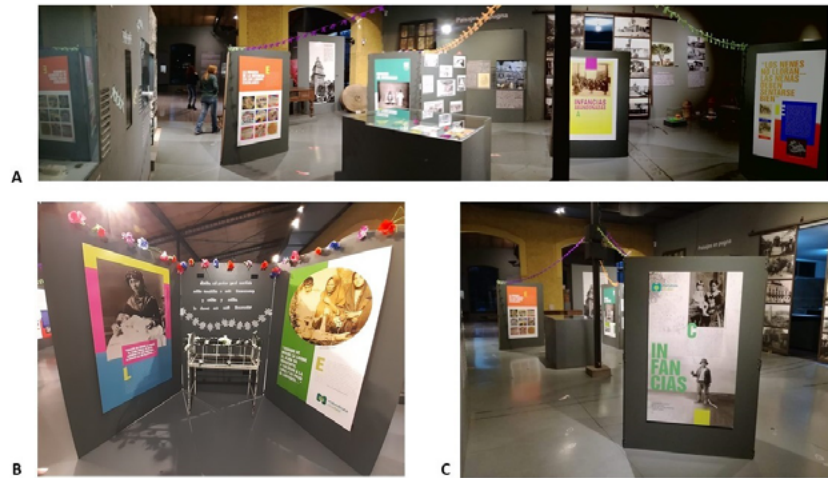
In order to carry out a situated experience, for this exhibition we created a thematic sector called "La muerte de un niño" (Death of a Child). Here, through historical photographs, song lyrics, ambience, and museographic furniture, we referred to certain practices surrounding the death of children in both rural and urban family environments during the period in question (Figure 10).

¹³ Childhoods. Postcards of the life of girls and boys in modern times.

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FIGURE 10. A) Panoramic view of the exhibition *Infancias. Postales de la vida de niños y niñas en tiempos modernos (end of the 19th-early 20th centuries)*; B) Thematic sector “The Death of a Child”; C) View of the initial panel in the exhibition *Infancias. Postales de la vida de niños y niñas en tiempos modernos (end of the 19th-early 20th centuries)* (Photographs: María Marengo, 2019; source: authors’ collection).



This exhibition has also travelled and has been requested by institutions of higher education in General Alvear and Tunuyan (Mendoza, Argentina).

Exhibition *Esos locos bajitos... Infancias inmigrantes en Argentina*¹⁴ (end of the 19th early 20th centuries)

The search for sources for this exhibition focused on photographs, historical publications in digital archives, and provincial libraries. The curatorial axis was to reconstruct, through presence and testimonies, those childhood experiences during migration processes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Figure 11).



FIGURE 11. Panoramic of the exhibition *Esos locos bajitos... Infancias inmigrantes en Argentina (end of the 19th-early 20th centuries)* (Photographs: María Marengo, 2023; source: authors’ collection).

¹⁴ Those Crazy Little Ones... Immigrant childhoods in Argentina.

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In addition to QR codes with links to audio referring to each expository space, this last exhibition also included QR codes with the personal stories of people related to certain objects. In this way, we were able to share an anecdote or experience from family life closely linked to the migration process. For example, a suitcase belonging to a worker of the Buenos Aires-Pacific railroad, containing stationery items and railway instruments, told by one of his granddaughters, who rescued the story of her grandfather and his immigrant wife.

This exhibition multiplied the activities and devices to achieve a greater interaction and participation by the public, through messages written on paper where they responded to instructions and by using a collaborative virtual board. One of the devices that generated the most answers was a frame with photographs which invited the public to leave a written memory or anecdote. Over the course of the exhibition, 378 messages were received, including memories, acknowledgements to the museum, and drawings. Of these, 195 were directly linked to the proposed activity, written by both adults and children, with the names of immigrants, anecdotes, places of origin, and destination when migrating, feelings and appreciation of the entire process (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12. A proposal for participation by the public, exhibition *Esos locos bajitos... Infancias inmigrantes en Argentina (end of the 19th-early 20th centuries)* (Photographs: María Marengo, 2023; source: authors' collection).



This last exhibition has not travelled yet, but we have a calendar with requests from institutions interested in receiving it in the short-term. Furthermore, a closing activity was held with the participation of people and groups from different cultural collectives that belong to contemporary Mendoza. For example, one academy shared Arab dances and their stories; a book with the biography of a Spanish immigrant was presented, as well as a live interview with an Italian immigrant who came to Mendoza as a child and lived in

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FIGURE 13. Scenes from the closing activity *Esos locos bajitos... Infancias inmigrantes en Argentina (end of the 19th-early 20th centuries)* (Photographs: María Marengo, 2023; source: authors' collection).



As a reflection on the work process, conceived as a research spiral, we believe the flexibility and feedback with the public has resulted in a greater proximity to our immediate community, its requests and interest in the topics covered. It is not a finished process, but rather one that can be perfected by sustaining the proposal over time, gazing back on what was done to reflect and advance.

SITUATED REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Our entire practice is marked by an empathic vision of the past and those who are invisible in the regional historical discourse. Every resource and image was chosen through emotions and the feelings they stirred in us and we sought to share, with greater or lesser success, with the people linked to the exhibitions. Therefore, we cannot refer to conclusions or discussions, only reflections that stem from what we do as women and researchers in an open and public cultural space located in an area of Mendoza with marginalization, prostitution, and migrants.

The public's participation gradually increased, not only in quantity, it also acquired greater prominence within the expository space, completing and improving the exhibited contents. We feel that this path brought us closer to the community, although we have still not effectively reached certain secondary sectors near the Museum.

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Therefore, we believe it necessary to generate medium and long-term communication and participation mechanisms with the neighborhood, which will become an institutional cultural policy.

The fact that the exhibitions travelled to educational institutions of different levels and socioeconomic contexts challenged us to plan and develop dynamics in accordance with the infrastructure, available resources, types of public, and the expectations of teachers and students themselves. Looking retrospectively at our projects, we observe improvements and significant advances in that regard, foreseeing certain situations and adapting the museographic guidelines and pedagogical strategies.

We believe the methodology we applied significantly contributes to museological work in the province in that it proposes team, interdisciplinary, self-critical work, situated in a concrete community with specific needs and expectations. The challenge, therefore, is to permeate this work model to all the actors involved in the museal institutions, primarily those who are in contact with the public and those who make decisions, so that all their actions are coherent and comprehensive.

Furthermore, in our case, working in a museum of archaeology and history, the ability to empathetically link with the past and its protagonists, fostering multiple narratives and views, is highly appealing. Likewise, we believe it could be a feasible approach to apply in any institution in the city of Mendoza that seeks greater synergy with its immediate community.

The challenge is great for years to come, since we must also address the reality of the spaces we occupy, often with very limited budgets and staffing levels that require urgent reinforcement. On the one hand, the participation and identification of immediate neighbors and nearby schools and, on the other, accessibility and inclusion, both in the historical representation and in the visual mediums and materials used.

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