EDITORIAL

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Isabel Cruz Lousada ⃝iD **- Editora-Chefe**[a]
[a] Assistant Researcher, NOVA FCSH; isabel.lousada@fcsh.unl.pt
Gabriele Salciute Civiliene ⃝iD **- Editora-Convidada**[b]
[b] Senior Lecturer in Digital Humanities (Department of Digital Humanities), King´s College;
gabriele.salciute-civiliene@kcl.ac.uk
Kristen Schuster ⃝iD **- Editora-Convidada**[c]
[c] Lecturer in Digital Curation (Department of Digital Humanities), King´s College;
kristen.schuster@kcl.ac.uk

PREAMBLE-EDITORIAL

What's in a name? That which we call a rose

By any other word would smell as sweet.

(Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet)

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,

But in ourselves

(Shakespeare, Julius Caesar)

Lisbon, March 8th

With this special issue, we open the year 2023 as far as the publication of our **Herança – History, Heritage and Culture Journal** is concerned.

We are also in the month of March, generally associated with the celebration of International Women's Day – March 8th - because of the multiplication of initiatives that address this day that last until the end of the month. It is remarkable, therefore, even for the proliferation of demonstrations that evoke causes that are simultaneously linked to Women and Human Rights, especially the issues of inequality and violence/s that need to be stopped.

These are difficult times, but we know that they will always be more difficult for the most vulnerable, among whom women are invariably found in greater numbers, and even more so when there are wage, ethnic and other asymmetries, accentuating the multiplicity of discriminations. The data evidenced by the statistics speak loudly but the forms of urgent combat against these indicators are late or insufficient. Reason enough, we would say, to try with more persistence to alert, to raise awareness, and to join efforts, so that it becomes increasingly clear that the path of violence, intolerance, and dehumanization is not the one that suits us and, even less, the one we want.

Given the nature of this issue, we dare to suggest a consultation of the page that reveals a series of brave women who fought for the defense of a just cause symbolically denouncing and claiming:

[Celebrating Women in Restitution | Christie's (christies.com)](christies.com)

There are several interpretations of the way to proceed in order to confront and eradicate stereotypes, and bad practices, however, in the space we are allowed here, we advance on the positive side and suggest the reading of the article [Why do we still define female artists as wives, friends, and muses? | Katy Hessel | The Guardian](...) and we give visibility to the fact that for the first time, we bring to light an issue coordinated by two women, editors of a special issue, which is so for several reasons.

Strictly speaking because it is, in fact, the first. Although we can foresee many others on the way...

Special, for seeking to broaden the path of internationalization, as part of our strategic vision, being the first issue entirely bilingual, of which we are proud.

Special, also, because it results from a call around a topic chosen for the purpose by the invited editors, whom we are very grateful to have accepted the challenge - Gabriele Salciute Civiliene e Kristen Schuster, from the Department of Digital Humanities at King's College, London, together with the Herança and Ponteditora team – .e., reaching a conciliatory path between scientific areas that articulate in the domain of interdisciplinarity with HSS and STEM under the title: "Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Digital Experiment in Museology and Museum Design".

It is assumed, from the start, the desideratum of fighting gender stereotype which on February 11th we marked with the motto: "Science has no Gender" with which we identify ourselves. The President of EPWS - European Platform for Women in Science - pointed out the following gesture, which we invite you to follow as an example that it is possible to get the message across [Booking.com condivide cinque interessanti musei della scienza per celebrare la Giornata internazionale delle donne e delle ragazze nella scienza](...)

The content of the special issue is discussed below by the organizers; however, it is with great pleasure that we note the respect for equality represented in the authorship composition of the authors, besides, naturally, the quality of the texts whose reading we believe will bring new research questions and multiple possibilities of investigation. Several are the geographic and thematic universes reached, showing how much the future promises when horizons cross and knowledge/sharing is possible.

The presence of women in the technological and digital areas has been equated and the digital humanity aspect has, in our understanding, enabled their entry, and amplified their integration in a systematic and sustained manner. It should be pointed out here the DARIAH – EU WWIH Women Writers in History [Women Writers in History | DARIAH](...) and the recent integration of the WWR – Women Writers Route as Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. [Women Writers Route Receives Certificate of the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in Chania, Crete - Women writers route](...) The articulation in COST networks has also played a decisive role in the possibility of reducing the distance between researchers, creating synergies that would otherwise be impossible. For example, CA18204 - Dynamics of Placemaking also unites us here [Action CA18204 - COST](...).

We have known for a long time that women have been the losers of history, but that is precisely why we continue to fight for this, revealing the real dimension of their areas of intervention - from time immemorial to the present day. We are certainly pleased with the various and recent publications that bring together documented biographies of figures who have been systematically and unjustly sidelined by criticism in the diverse areas in which they were active. As an example, we would like to mention the work organized by Maria João Neto and Santiago Macias, *Mulheres Mecenas & as Artes* (Caleidoscópio Dez. 2022) in which they refer to:

"The studies included in this book reveal the role women have played in shaping taste, art collecting, and protecting the Arts and Letters since antiquity.

Women's and Gender History has only in recent years gained its own space. [...] In the field of art, too, women are no longer seen only as the inspiring muse of artists but are now valued as creators of the work of art, donors, and patrons."

The exhibition that took place at the FCG, curated by Helena de Freitas and Bruno Marchant, in 2021, "*All I Want – Portuguese women artists from 1900-2020*" with itinerancy during the Portugal-France Crossing Season" in June 2022 and whose catalog, translated into several languages, serves as a model. Graça Fonseca, then Minister of Culture, states:

"It is an exhibition that speaks outwards, but also inwards since it returns to Portugal. It is fundamental that these creative paths are also known by us and that contemporary achievements endure. The legacy of these women promotes new inspirations and new paths, allowing the young artists of today and tomorrow, women or men, to never stop being inspired by their example. This will be, in the future, the measure of our achievement, because, more than being remembered, achievements must be permanently renewed and lived." (p.10)

On the 8th, it will be presented to the public, in Alcobaça, the book of Acts that gathers texts of the Colloquiums organized within the Portugal-France Crossroad Season (Leiria and Alcobaça) under the title French Women in Portugal: Multiple Itineraries, allowing to give the stage to a considerable range of women that stood out in the several areas they chose as instruments to manifest their vocations. The reverse side took place in October, in Paris, featuring Portuguese artists and intellectuals in France. New initiatives are already on the horizon in the sequence started with Virgínia Victorino in Cena do Tempo and we will announce them in due time, with the certainty that the path that led women to invisibility can be reversed. To make known/recognize lives and works which have been silenced and buried will be the urgent movement that has already begun and which we will not give up.

In the wake of the work *Plastic Artists in Portugal*, organised in 2020, by Sandra Leandro, in which 12 case studies were presented, the words inscribed therein still make sense:

"Constituting itself as a further stage in the dissemination of knowledge, it is hoped that the contents will be assimilated by an Art History that integrates, without distinctions and with greater fairness, all genders. One is very pleased to see some collections including pieces by women artists more frequently, or more exhibitions being held, but much remains to be done." (p. 9)

Museums and Research gives the title to issue 8 of the IHA Art History Journal (org. Raquel Henriques da Silva); published in 2011 it contains a very interesting range of articles dedicated to the theme which we can read:

"Museums hold a determinant relationship with Art History. However, they are often omitted in disciplinary narratives as if seeing a work in reserve or in an exhibition, in good or bad conditions, was indifferent to its fruition, understanding, and contextualization. On the contrary, our position is quite different: seeing museums and exhibitions and studying them in the diversity of their aspects is an indispensable condition for the development of Art History".

The quoted passage serves as a transition to the editorial that, more than a decade later, to the invited organizers belongs once articulated with the new definition of Museum offered by ICOM last year:

"A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets, and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability.

They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection, and knowledge sharing."

Isabel Lousada

Ladies, the floor is Yours…

GUEST EDITORS'S PERSPECTIVES:

We'd like to start by expressing our gratitude to the authors, publishers, reviewers, and proofreaders for collaboration on this special issue of *Herança*. It has been a great opportunity for creative, speculative, and critical conversations about shifting perspectives on museums, heritage, and digital technologies. As colleagues working in related fields of research and teaching, we have been able to explore emerging intersections between digital media and curatorial practices in museums, and to highlight a paradigm shift in museology that we want to hear more about in academic settings and bring into our classrooms. As editors, we are very aware of possible limitations in our conceptualization of experimental approaches to preserving, displaying, and disseminating cultural heritage through museological design. Acknowledging that our point of view would affect the content included in this volume established a context for communicating with prospective authors and we aimed to encourage a range of submissions from a diverse group of scholars and practitioners from across cultures, languages, and disciplines. This, we hope, has been an effective way to signpost our interests in learning from contributors about how they problematize the established routines, practices, and theories used to define heritage and how they position digital experiment as a source of knowledge and forward-thinking hypotheses that challenge curatorial authority on which museums are based.

As we worked with contributors, we emphasized that we wanted to start conversations about how they frame their ideas about the role and extent of digital experimentation with museums spaces, collections, and design, and how those ideas inform their work and research instead of proposing solutions as something finite and fixed. We encouraged contributors to take a critical approach to conceptualizing the potential of digital media and technologies in facilitating interventions in the interpretation of objects and institutional remits. We asked contributors to consider in what ways digital and analog interactions affect their understandings of technological underpinnings of the design, management, and representation of museum collections. We also wanted contributors to discuss their work using experimental methods to integrate digital technologies into their curatorial practices and theory. So, we prompted them to ground their evaluation and analyses of technology and experimentation in their practical experiences of creating, preserving, and disseminating culture and heritage. Opening conversations about what it means to experiment with digital media and technologies in relation to museum collections, their curatorial strategies, and community outreach initiatives created a rather broad scope for contributors to engage with the concept of experimental museology. Especially as we are slowly reorienting narratives about the purpose of cultural heritage institutions in a post-Pandemic world, one of the exciting things about these encounters is that they ever so slightly shift or nudge your point of view.

It is easy to imagine curation as a process taking place in the analog world -- galleries, auction houses and museums have invested the greater part of their histories in establishing, maintaining, interpreting, and displaying collections of physical objects. The histories of curatorial interventions and innovations with physical collections can offer many interesting insights into the ideological and technological underpinnings of cultural institutions' experiments. Along these lines, as editors, we aimed to encourage reflection and critical analyses of museum histories as a means to understand evaluations and descriptions of experimental practices.

In this special issue, we proposed two strategies to framing critical analyses of digital experimentation for and in museums. The first strategy emphasizes theories we can use to critique the meaning of heritage and the authority of cultural heritage institutions. As editors based in Europe, we are very aware of the historical and cultural contexts informing the theories and critiques common in museums and curatorial studies. To balance our cultural context, we also invited contributors to use case studies to consider experimental museology and curatorial practices in context. As a second strategy, the use of case studies encourages reflections on possible flexibility or malleability of museum spaces and their design for participatory and grass-root creation and dissemination of knowledge.

Discussing how digital media and technologies can enhance access was by no means a default narrative in this special issue. Questions posed by contributors include: in what ways digital media and technologies might change object-based notions and narratives of heritage; how curators could bring distant, unusual, and otherwise problematic objects and culture-specific views into museum collections; what types of partnership might augment the curation of museum collections; how digital media and technologies might redefine museum objects and spaces to create a sense of belonging and engagement for diverse audience demographics; what new narratives, including opportunities for decolonization, and new aesthetic forms might emerge from reconfigured spaces of museums.

In this collection of articles, the authors focus on innovation in museum design and museology through building digital archives, databases, platforms, infrastructures for community outreach and crowdsourcing, and grassroots interventions, conceptualized as collaborative, educational, and distributed spaces for meaning-making and creating knowledge. They envisage such spaces as interdisciplinary laboratories and networks. They discuss cases that feature a wide range of museum 'objects', including video games that double as tools for outreach activities and as exhibits; architectural heritage such as caravanserais; artwork and creative processes behind it. Critical perspectives on funding, collection strategies, and curatorial practices emerged as they interrogate the applications of immersive technologies, such as Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality, to unarchive the traditional practices of design and curation through fostering community wide participation (such as focus groups, participatory collaboration, or crowdsourcing) and expansive discussions about culture, identity, and history.

Three themes about the integration of digital media and technologies into curatorial representation and management run through the articles in this issue. Curation is primarily **a selection of items** for a collection. In this context, curation is an active process of evaluation – a curator examines objects through this recognition to determine their condition and uniqueness. Contributors describe a variety of experimental approaches to curation that seek to leverage technologies to better reflect the possibilities of museums as distributed and networked spaces. They also urge us to consider curation as **a process of interpretation** that affects the value and significance of an object. Curation as an act of interpretation can, as authors in this issue demonstrate, underpin the way in which narratives are constructed around museum objects. In this light, some authors consider **curation** from a third perspective -- as **a semiotic machine** that reproduces or perpetuates systems of sense-making and knowledge that are historically contingent and culturally situated**.**

Quite a few curators, scholars, and activists address curatorial legacies and their ideological underpinnings. They elucidate how in each case of their specific project digital or digitized collections have been made accessible, visible, discoverable, and educational. They highlight the potential for technology to help museum professionals and visitors alike to reconceptualize what belongs in collections. Joanna Rivera-Carlisle foregrounds the conflicting aspects of spatial narratives that unfold in museums whose landscape is complex to navigate in physical and ideological terms. On the one hand, the integration of immersive technologies in the design of museum experiences is creating new ways to challenge curatorial authority; on the other hand,

they perpetuate Eurocentric power structures and hierarchies on which museums in the UK are based. With reference to *The Unfiltered History Tour,* the author delivers a critique of how digital technologies perpetuate limitations inherent in the physical and conceptual structures of museum space, which is echoed in another article discussing the successes and shortcomings of *Digital Kitambo*.

Kristina Dziedzic Wright, David K. Wright, Nicholas Wiltshire, and Jenna Lavin assess the goals, infrastructures, and practices that shaped the *Digital Kitambo* project. They pay particular attention to its aim to transform physical archaeological and paleontological collections into a digital spatially integrated database. They employ the Swahili term 'kitambo' to elucidate shifts in the narratives about Kenya's history as the physical collection moves online. In this contribution to the volume, the authors emphasize the importance of decolonizing history through the process of unarchiving of the curatorial strategies on which the physical collection is based by means of engaging local communities in the design of a digital display.

While conversations and analyses about the selection and accessioning of objects into collections unfold, we also learn about different approaches to using digital assets that do not fit the mainstream definitions of museum collections. Gulce Kirdar, Feyzanur Kocer Ozgun, Özgün Balaban, and Guzden Varinlioglu, for example, reflect on their work in digital archaeology to map lost heritage of caravanserais, ancient roadside inns that used to provide food, shelter, and trading opportunities for travelers. The team outline their methodology of interactive digital archiving as a way of distributed labour and design. Their article showcases a combination of rich ethnographic research with the building of digital resources open for extended curation and repurposing of its assets.

Ana Beatriz Bahia deals with the objects that entered a museum's space from beyond its collection: she traces the evolution of digital games from serving as instruments to foster public engagement with a museum's physical collection to becoming exhibits themselves. The ways in which the education department *Nubla* augments the art collection of the Thyssen Museum, Madrid, is at the centre of attention in her article. The author discusses the museum's mission to expose its collection to wider audiences through digital games and exploratory research at the intersection of art, museology, games, and communication. These cases encourage scholars and users alike to experiment with the interpretation of what might belong in museum spaces treated as an expansive notion.

The question of what we can do beyond beholding museum collections also runs through this special issue. Two articles focus on how museum spaces are reconfigured to bridge the gap between laboratory and exhibition. Jonathan Feldman explores the active role that the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Buenos Aires, plays in shaping new forms of aesthetic production and collaboration. The museum built the pipeline connecting a laboratory with other spaces and forms such as workshops, conferences, and exhibitions for artists to experiment and disseminate their experimentation – as resulting objects and processes that underpin the making of those objects.

In their discussion of another ethnography-rich project, Stefania Zardini Lacedelli, Fabiana Fazzi, Chiara Zanetti and Giacomo Pompanin argue that digital curation is one of the most experimental areas in museology. Their research of the Dolomites on the *Spatial* project emphasizes the role that communities of diverse backgrounds played in creating a dynamic participatory archive, which helped them challenge the mainstream notions of curation and reframe their museological goals in light of the shift from exhibition to laboratory.

By way of conclusion, we would like to reflect on our experience as editors working across languages and cultures. Editing a multilingual and multicultural edition has been a rewarding experience that has exposed us to an exciting range of responses to our editorial perspectives and objectives. We set out to revisit the emerging notion of experimental museology from different global and cultural perspectives, and we are pleased to share a collection of materials written by

authors from the UK, Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Australasia. Submissions were made in English and Portuguese, and we facilitated translating articles to encourage a collaborative and iterative editorial process based in the exchange of critical and creative ideas. We hope that these articles, as expressions of views and ideas grounded in their authors' practice, will prompt further conversations and exploration of museology at the intersection of heritage, culture, history, industry, and digital experimentation beyond the scope of this special issue.

Gabriele Salciute Civiliene and Kristen Schuster