

It is becoming more and more evident that the museums all over the world are going through modifications which manifest themselves at different levels. Beyond the traditional functions of collecting, conserving and exhibiting the objects. The museums aim is more and more to serve as means of communication open to the problems of our contemporary world. For this purpose they have modernized themselves by making use of all the technologies available, by keeping up-to-date with marketing and business management guide lines. In other cases, they act as centers of social/cultural incentive, searching to participate and be the vehicles of the development for the environment which sustains them.

As rudimentary as the attention given to the contemporary panorama of Museology in Portugal may be (including the Museum of Monte Redondo). We should recognize its multifarious character, where concepts, attitudes and objectives meet to express not only, museology's general tendencies, but also the role and the place the participants want to play in the society, asserting their rights as citizens.

The different forms of Museology developed throughout the country, especially after the revolution of the 25th of April, 1974 which brought democracy to the country and put an end to the colonial empire (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, Timor...) allow us to confirm that parallel to the State's Museums, come to life hundreds of museological processes due to the strong initiative of the cultural, ecological and associative movement, supported by the autonomous power amidst a deep decentralization process.

There are thousands of people which in different and more or less doctrinized ways found in museology the privileged means of expressing the many patrimonies, historical, architectural, linguistic, archeological and anthropological in a context of identifying and valuing the local skills and specializations.

We are without a doubt dealing with museological processes; permanent or intermittent, creative or reproductive of models, conservative or participant in the development of the communities which sustain them. We are essentially dealing with a poor museology without financial means nor sophisticated knowledge identified sometimes by outdated ideologies and contradictions. But we are also dealing with a museology which expresses the culture of our times, The mixed cultures and the expression of a changing society.

The museums and museological processes are in our thinking the real expression of contemporary Portuguese Museology. This everyday museology reveals itself to be an essential component of change. It is not a marginal or ruptural phenomenon, on the contrary, it is the product of a more democratic and freer society, of a more communal conscious, of a new model development which favors decentralization and consequently values natural and human resources at the local level.

The widening of the concept of patrimony causes the redefinition of the "museology's objects", the idea of the community's participation in the managing and practice of museology as a means of development, questions of interdisciplinary, the use of new technologies, museology as an autonomous means of communication.

The place and function of the participants (professionals, public, creators) is changed, as well as the notions of patrimony, museological objects and collections. The power of decision is more assessable to the museological participants and creators. In all cases the exhibits continue to be the center of the museological activities, whether we are dealing with the product or the process of exhibition.

Although not being a marginal or ruptural museology structuring and basing itself on the traditional and urban museology image. This NEW MUSEOLOGY which is a result of the new museological discourse, and therefore integrates the museological knowledge accumulated throughout generations, it shows by its diverse forms, a clearer conscience of what is meant by the idea of participation, therefore calling forth a more evident social implication.

We are therefore, talking about an informal museology conforming to a vast concept of SOCIAL MUSEOLOGY which expresses the considerable effort on the part of the museological structures in adapting to the conditions of modern society. This effort of adaptation extending itself to many other countries, was summarized by the General Director of the UNESCO, Frederic Mayor, on the opening of the XV General Conference of ICOM, as following: the "museological revolution of our times manifesting itself by the founding of community museums, museums 'sans murs', ecomuseums, itinerant museums or the museums exploring the infinite possibilities of modern communication. All have their roots in a new organic and philosophical awareness".

Remembering once again the conclusions of the 1972 Santiago de Chile's reunion, promoted by the ICOM, where it read: "The transformation of the museum's activities also demand a progressive change on the mentality of the curators and the people responsible for the museums, as well as the structures from which they depend". The need to train new museum professionals must include the new conditions of the museological discourse. It is without a doubt in the field of informal museology that we can find the innovation, change and most likely the new course.

The biggest challenge in the teaching of museology in Portugal is not to teach what appears in the museological manuals, but to give the future museologists the means to permit them to act in a context of social change which encompasses all the aspects of society.

If an exhibit limits itself only to the presentation without questioning, it becomes a kind of archeology belonging to an archaic museological thinking. In the museums we deal, most of all, with the ideas and not merely the objects. It is true that for a long time museography corresponded to set of rules that guaranteed the 'correct' exhibit of the objects. It was from this aspect that contemporary museography introduced improvements and novelties in all its aspects (new technologies, interactivities, virtual realities...).

For the benefit of the objects as well as the ideas, we should, nevertheless, recognize the fact that museography and the general techniques of exhibiting represent more and more an autonomous means of communication in relation to the museum, whether or not the museological object is exuberant or submissive, respected or manipulated, for the traditional museum it continues to be essentially an 'inherited' object.

Due to the discontent with this situation in Monte Redondo's Museum we give great importance to the question of museography. Question which is being studied in a research and development program with the participation of the Lusophone University of Humanities and Technologies (ULHT) and with the Lisbon's National Museum of Natural History, searching for museography ways based on the objects created by the museums; whose ideas are expressed through the manipulation of the forms.

Thus, museography as a means of visual communication can make use and develop the communicative potential of the FORM, not inherited from the object itself, but created for each separate situation.

The notions and ideas of balance, superposition, transparency, light and shadow, simultaneity, sequence, tension, distortion, centrality, form and depths are not foreign to this museography practices. Nevertheless we should emphasize that its current use by some museums is put only at the service of the exhibited museological object, and not at the service of the elements that express the new language of the forms created.

Looking to further examine a possible theory of museography, and if from a larger scope we think like Pierre Francastel about the epistemology of the imaginary creation, it is natural to accept the idea that the appearance of any element depends where it is placed and its function in a global setting. Thus, what we visualize is far from being only a sensory-mechanical element, it becomes a truly perception of



the creative reality as well imaginative, inventive, beautiful... "ALL perception is also thinking, all reasoning is also intuition and all observation is also invention. Therefore, the shape of an object does not merely depend on its retinal projection at a given moment. Strictly speaking, the image is defined as the total visual experiences with a given object all through our lives" (Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception*, Sao Paulo, 1994, p.40). The role of memory must be integrated in the essence of the imaginary which in the end conditions the creativity.

The bringing forth of concepts that constitute our work and which we judge to be fundamental, have all through the 16 years of the functioning of Monte Redondo's Museum serve as a guide for its interventions.

Thus, the chart presented shows us the importance of the form and the place occupied by each of its components in this museological process. Starting from the requests originating from different sectors of the population, and from the area of influence of the museum; social groups, companies, schools, cattle raising, structures are developed in the areas of school support, development initiatives, tourism, monitoring and cultural training. The area of the museum, which encompasses a ray of about 5 km around the Museum's Nucleus, corresponds to the boundaries of an old estate founded in the middle of the thirteenth century that has surprisingly kept its social-economic coherence up to our present times.

On one hand, the Informal Board of Administration limits itself to the coordination, making available the existing resources or assuring that its acquisitions are according to its needs. On the other hand, part of this Board is an active collaborator of the post-graduate training program in social museology of Lusophone University of Humanities and Technologies, whose teachers museological knowledge has been

acquired in Monte Redondo. This facilitates the learning process of the course and the collaboration in the research projects done in a copartnership; Museum/University.

This close relation with the University allows for essential and deep reflection that has brought to the museological milieu the natural acceptance of a apparently different aspects.

In a small rural environment with limited resources it is as important to value the position of hairdresser or seamstress (essential to the family's income) as well as accommodating a school for handicapped children, protests against the destruction of pine wood (main resources for the forest industry of wood and resin, legislate for the European Community, or take visitors on a tour of Ecomuseology.

Still an exhibit on the region's high technological companies (frozen foods and saw-mills) served to illustrate the fact that the migration towards other cities is no longer the only means to attain a better lifestyle; on the contrary a training program at a high level is best guaranteed in a rural environment to have access to a better income. The museum also provides the medical doctor with the necessary logistic means for people to be sensitized on work safety, give information to expecting mothers, provide the artisans with training and valuing their products through the organization of an annual fair.

It is understood these initiatives do not take place on a continual bases for there are periods when the museum reduces its activities. These examples illustrate the museums information chart, assuring whenever necessary that new activities will be opened according to the towns lifestyle which is in constant mutation, being the museum also part of that mutation.