Doctoral Thesis

Amateur Museum Practices: Leisure, Myth, and Ritual

Seven Case Studies from Catalonia and a Contrast Case from Colombia

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Doctoral Programme: Information and Knowledge Society

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

2017

AGRAÏMENTS

A la Natàlia Cantó Milà, la meva directora de tesi, que m'ha regalat tantes hores i que m'ha empès a treure el millor de mi mateixa. A la resta de membres del grup de recerca, especialment al Roger Martínez, l'Isaac Gonzàlez, l'Eunice Romero Rivera i també a l'Swen Seebach, per la seva generositat al llegir i discutir la meva feina.

A l'Alba Colombo Vilarassa, l'Ana Rodríguez Granel, el Pau Alsina i el Jesús Carrillo per el seu suport emocional i els seus comentaris. També a tots els companys que han compartit el procés de fer el doctorat amb mi, per les seves experiències, bromes i ansietats i, sobretot, pels dinars de tres anys: Clara, Elisa, Manu, Marina, Adriana, Ivan, Lara, Vanina, Débora, Lara, i en especial a la Karla Berrens, sense la que ni tan sols m'hauria decidit a començar a fer el doctorat.

Al ferranElOtro, que ho fa tot possible, inclosa la meva estada a l'Instituto Tecnológico Metropolitano de Medellin. Al Christian Papilloud per acollir-me a l'Institut für Soziologie, i a ell i a la Katja Müller pels seus comentaris i consells. A la Sylvia Terpe, la seva família i els seus amics per fer-me sentir a Halle com a casa. A l'Angela Jannelli per compartir la seva feina amb mi malgrat les barreres idiomàtiques i a l'Alicia Vela pels seus consells.

A la meva germana, que jugava a fer museus amb mi i als meus pares i avis que es veien obligats a visitar-los i a pagar entrada. Als meus pares també per portar-nos a suficients museus com perquè un dia se'ns acudís jugar a fer museus, per el suport incondicional a totes les meves decisions incloent la de fer el doctorat, i perquè sempre m'han ajudat tant com han pogut a aconseguir els meus objectius.

Al Sergi, per qui aquesta tesi ha estat un procés d'aprenentatge imposat, per ajudar-me a prendre'm menys seriosament a mi mateixa i a respectar el meu temps lliure.

Aquesta recerca no hauria estat possible sense la generositat dels museògrafs que han compartit els seus projectes, les seves histories i els seus pensaments amb mi: Joaquim, Magda, Agustí i Agustí, Martí, Joan, Antoni, Josep i Rafael.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Natàlia Cantó Milà, my thesis supervisor, who has gifted me so many of her cherished hours and who has pushed me to bring the best out of me. To the rest of the research group, especially Roger Martínez, Isaac Gonzàlez, Eunice Romero Rivera and also Swen Seebach, for their generosity in reading and discussing my work.

To Alba Colombo Vilarassa, Ana Rodríguez Granel, Pau Alsina and Jesús Carrillo, for their emotional support and their comments. Equally important, to all the colleagues that have shared the process of writing a thesis with me, for their experiences, their jokes, their anxieties and their lunch breaks: Clara, Elisa, Manu, Marina, Adriana, Ivan, Lara, Vanina, Débora, and specially to Karla Berrens, without whom I would not have even decided to enroll in a doctoral programme

To ferranElOtro, who makes everything possible, including my stay at the Instituto Tecnológico Metropolitano de Medellin. To Christian Papilloud for hosting me in the Institut für Soziologie, and for his comments and advises. Also to Katja Müller for her feedback, and to Sylvia Terpe, her family and friends for making me feel at home in Halle. To Angela Jannelli for sharing her work with me despite my language limitations and to Alicia Vela for her advice.

To my sister, who played museum making with me, and to my parents and grandparents who were forced to visit our museums and pay fees to get in. To my parents again, for taking us to enough museums so that, one day, we figured we could play museum making, for unconditionally supporting all my decisions, including my doctoral studies, and because they helped me, as much as they could, achieve my goals.

To Sergi, to whom this thesis has been an imposed learning process, for helping me to take myself less seriously and to respect my leisure time.

This work would have been impossible without the generosity of the museum practitioners that shared their projects, their stories and their thoughts with me: Joaquim, Magda, Agustí and Agustí, Martí, Joan, Antoni, Josep and Rafael.

ABSTRACT

Amateur museums are museums that are made as leisure pursuits by their makers. Amateur museum practitioners usually pour considerable amounts of time, effort, and resources in their museums, which often include and emerge from a collection. They differ from community museums in that they are mostly individual or quasi-individual endeavors and have no apparent political purpose. These museums have usually been neglected from current museology research, and yet, because of their specificities, they give us the opportunity to question relevant issues about the museum as an institution, the aim of its practices, the way in which individuals can relate to them and the role that they might have in our societies.

I approach amateur museums through the practices of their makers to find out from which position they pursue them. My work hypothesis is that they develop their museum productions from disadvantageous positions in relation to other museum practitioners. In these pages, I analyze their specific practices and the manner in which they relate to them. This allows me to show that the positions from which they act shape their practices and vice versa, that is, amateur museum practices serve them to improve their position by accruing symbolic capital.

To do so, I use a qualitative methodology based on the Grounded Theory. Seven case studies from Catalonia and a contrast case from Medellin (Colombia) conform the corpus of this research. All cases have been approached through participant observation, in-depth interviews and documentation analysis.

My theoretical framework and theory building rely mainly on Bourdieu's theory of practice as well as on de Certeau's conception of cultural consumption, which allows me to highlight amateur museum practices as being socially situated. The work of these authors is combined with specific research on amateur museums and other museums made from similar positions of disadvantage, as well as with other relevant literature from the field of critical museology. I also approach amateur museum practices through the lens of leisure studies, thus highlighting the relevance of leisure for their understanding. Myth and ritual theory is the analytical lens that helps me focus and make sense of how amateur museum practitioners manage to increase their symbolic capital and gain an advantage in their struggle for position-taking through museum practices.

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INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

When I was little, I used to play museum making with my sister. We selected objects, which, as far as I remember, were usually rocks and minerals some of which were part of my sister's incomplete mineral collection by installments. We disposed them inside a single room on tables, chairs, and any surface that could work as a pedestal or a cabinet. We made labels and we used a puppet theatre as a ticket window. But, above all, we made our parents, grandparents or whoever was at home that Sunday afternoon pay their entrance fee and forced them to visit the museum, while we (my sister probably more than I) tour them around it.

Now it is quite obvious to me that we did that because my parents took us often to visit museums, especially when being on holidays abroad. I also realise now that what caught most of our attention in those museums were not the objects displayed or the stories explained through them, but the museums themselves, the practices of museum making: labeling, displaying, building visual connections, selling entrances, giving guided tours. In the same manner that children at play imitate their parents' housekeeping practices or those of their teachers, careless about what they pretend to clean or teach, we imitated museum practices paying little attention to what we actually showed or explained through them.

Many years later, my sister has drifted towards other interests and I have continued playing museum making in a number of ways. I followed a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts and a master's degree in Cultural Management. My artistic practice has often focused on the analysis of museum practices, their naturalization, their capacity to create or change values and their implicit meanings[1]. Even when working in the production of exhibitions and other artistic events and products, a job that I have often combined with my artistic practice, I have often been more interested in museum and artistic practices than on the stories that were meant to be explained through them.

When I first realised that some adults spend their time, effort and resources making museums all by themselves at their home –the kind of museums that I have ended up

[1] Some of this work can be seen at www.marionamoncunill.com

calling amateur museums–, many questions rushed through my mind. The main one: why would someone do something like that?

Because of my long-term interest in the discursive capacity of museum practices and the power relations entangled in them, I could intuitively see that something relevant was at stake there, but my own position within the museum institution was too distanced to be able to grasp it. I also realised how awkward my estrangement with their practices was, especially considering that I used to play museum making myself. Of course, I am not claiming that such amateur museums are childish games like ours was, but why not continue playing museum making as an adult, in a more serious and engaging manner? It also amazed me how many of these amateur museums seemed to blindly reproduce some museum practices –maybe I remembered my own childhood blindness here–, and how, at the same time, they seemed to radicalize their institutional conception, questioning its very *raison d'être* and thus changing the directionality that museums are usually given.

This curiosity finally triggered the research that I have developed the last three years and is thus the seed of this thesis. Being aware of the influence that sociology has always had in my artistic work and in my ways of questioning cultural practices, I decided to approach this interest, turned into a research inquiry, from a sociological point of view. This forced me to dive quickly into an epistemic world that I only knew in a highly fragmented and self-taught manner. I could only do it thanks to the help of my supervisor and the research group that welcomed my inquiry despite being a foreigner in their field.

During these last years in which I have been meeting amateur museum practitioners, I have sometimes had the feeling that they have an amazing will and strength to pursue their activities, which made me admire and sometimes even envy them.

What Is an Amateur Museum?

The objective of this thesis is the manner in which amateur museum practices affect and are affected by the position from which they are developed, and which hints at the motivations behind them.

Amateur museums are leisure pursuits. Amateur museum practitioners usually invest a lot of time, effort, and resources in their museums, which most often include and derive

from a collection. These museums are usually installed in spaces owned by their founders, often their own homes, or in spaces lent by family members. Very importantly, they are open to the public in a more or less regular basis, although most of them function on the basis of prearranged visits. Even though they can be the product of a collective effort, I have focused on those that are mostly individual endeavors, or shared by couples or close relatives. Instead, collective amateur museographic proposals are often labeled as community museums, which differ from amateur museums in that they tend to have a more open political purpose of preserving, giving value, narrating and managing a community's heritage.

I am very aware of the controversies that the term "amateur" can raise, especially since I have been discussing and rethinking it during all the research process. The museum practices in which I focus are those conducted as a hobby, and by that, I mean that those museum practitioners view their efforts as such. The second chapter of this thesis deals with museum practice as leisure, and it is there where I will mostly develop and justify the convenience of considering their practices as amateur ones. One of the risks of doing so is that amateurism, hobbies and the practices pursued as leisure are still often seen as less valuable as those viewed as professional work. Literature on Leisure Studies helps to compensate and even dissolves this negative view. But more importantly, to consider these practices as amateur contributes to understand the disadvantaged position from which they are conducted.

These museum practitioners are not professionals, which means that they have not received specific museological training, backed with a certificate that could strengthen and legitimate their decisions. Overall, they do not perform their activities from within professional and legitimized circuits. Being amateur also means that they do not make a living out of their museum practices. On the contrary, they all sacrifice an important part of earnings in other jobs for their museums. In the course of my research, I have come to develop the view that to avoid saying that they are amateur practitioners is to hide the different positions that professionals and amateurs occupy in that shared field of practice, and it thus conceals power differences and the symbolic violence that results from them. The fact that these museum practitioners are amateurs should not imply any assumption about the quality, seriousness and relevance of their work, but should only point out the positions from which they work.

Amateur museums have been called differently by other authors. Angela Jannelli (2012) has considered them amateur but also "wild", following Levi-Strauss' *La Pensée sauvage*. Taimre (2013) has named them "DIY museums", something that has implications that, as I will detail in the second chapter, can be misleading. Amateur museums of this kind have also fallen under the more common concept of community museums. Although community museums receive such a name because they are conceived for and by the community –that is, from the bottom up and collectively–, some authors have included individual projects as community museums, like those researched by Klimaszewski and Nyce (2014; Klimaszewski, 2016) in Romania, which they also call "unofficial museums" (Klimaszewski & Nyce, 2014). Finally, amateur museums could also be considered micromuseums, the term chosen by Fiona Candlin (2015) to refer to independent small museums. I will review all these suggestions in the next pages.

It could be argued that these museological proposals are not museums. This, of course, depends on what definition of museum we use. One of the most common is that of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) which considers a museum to be:

> "[…] a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment."
>
> (ICOM, 2007, article 3.1)

Amateur museums, as they are understood in this research and as the reader will find out, fit this definition and also others. To give another example, Pearce (1992) considers a museum to be:

> "[…] constituted by its collections, however large or small, and by a broadly institutional purpose which relates to this material and which is likely to be expressed by building (whole or part) staff (not necessarily paid), visitors, and most crucially, by a cultural perspective which underwrites the whole and upon which, in their turn, museums themselves exercise some influence."
>
> (Pearce, 1992: 2)

Nevertheless, some other definitions imply that museums should be "permanent" and "established". Pomian, for example, considers amateur museums to be private

collections because they "are generally dispersed after the death of their creators and suffer the consequences of any financial problems the latter may meet" (Pomian, 1990: 42).

It is impossible to know if the amateur museums that are included in this research will disappear after the death of their owners. In some cases, it seems highly likely that will happen, because no organizations or persons have shown interest to continue their activities. The problem with this kind of limitation is that it forgets that one of the most common ways that a private collection survives its owners is through the possession of capital, mainly economic. When private collectors have enough economic capital to turn their collections into foundations shaped as museums, it is very likely that they will survive them and, in addition, that they will also get the interest and participation of public organizations.

Similar problems appear in the definition of the British Museums Association as explained by Ambrose and Paine (Ambrose & Paine, 1994): "A museum is an institution which collects, documents, preserves, exhibits and interprets material evidence and associated information for the public benefit" (quoted in Ambrose and Paine, 1994: 14). This would not be in contradiction with amateur museums if it were not because Ambrose and Paine further define the museum institution as a "formalized establishment which has a long-term purpose" (14). This has several problems, which we can define as follows: what exactly do they mean by "formalized" (may be having a legal entity?), and by "long-term" (are 50 years, like in the case of the Maternal Museum, long enough?)?

The Catalan law considers a museum any "institution that, fundamentally, is responsible for [the] heritage and is in charge of its custody" (Llei 17/1990, de 2 de novembre, de museus: 1). The heritage concept that it includes is "historical, artistic, archeologic, technical and scientific of Catalonia" (1). This wide definition can easily include the amateur museums that I have researched, and yet the Catalan register of museums does not consider them as such. Having a legal entity as museums in Catalonia does not rapport any advantage to private museums, but only costs. For the Catalan government, to be registered, a museum needs to fulfill a series of conditions that are costly and they do not receive anything in return (Joan Rosàs, responsible of the Section of Museum Coordination and Protection of Movable Goods, Generalitat de Catalunya, interview, 2015). Thus, many museums choose to be registered as "private

collections open to the public", a register that does not require membership conditions. Again, in this case, being able to register a museum as such depends on the economic capacity of the owners and their will to implement the government's conditions. This is, once more, a problem of economic capital.

Since little economic capital is the main reason why amateur museums, under some definitions, are excluded from being considered museums, I understand that these definitions only perpetuate power unbalances among museum institutions. These are exactly the issues this research aims to explore –that of the museum practice from a disadvantaged position. Moreover, because additional definitions of what a museum is include that of amateur museums as I research here, I will consider them museums as their owners do too.

The question of how museum practitioners identify themselves and situate themselves in relation to the museum as an institution is of great importance in this research. There are very similar amateur museum practitioners that do not consider their own museological proposals as museums, but rather as private collections. Thus, for operational reasons that also answer to the approach of this research, I have simplified what I consider an amateur museum. I will consider amateur museums those museological proposals understood by their makers as a leisure practice and as museums –the second, a condition also shared with Candlin (2015) and with Taimre (2013)–.

This has given me the chance to analyze the role that their conceptions of museum (chapter 1) and leisure (chapter 2) play on their practices. The condition to consider themselves amateurs excludes other museum practices that are also constructed from disadvantaged positions with no professional backgrounds, such as museums made as artistic works –usually framed within artistic institutional critique–, and that often have also an amateur appearance. Even if these artists would never get paid for their work –because they do not want to or because nobody offers them to do it– they do not plan it as a hobby but as part of their professional artistic output. The same happens with highly politicized proposals in which museum makers are political activists more than amateur museum practitioners; they can hardly be considered a hobby.

Although the case studies of this research are amateur museums, the object of study is not so much the products of these museums, but their practices. Nevertheless, these

practices need to be researched through the amateur museum practitioners and their museums, as they are the main evidences of their practices (Bourdieu, 2013).

Research Questions

Following Grounded Theory, this research started with one open question that, during the research process, prompted other questions as "concepts and their relationships [were] discovered" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 41).

The visit to some amateur museums and my understanding of museums in general as a highly institutionalised and professionalized activities managed from the top down, and capable of exerting symbolic violence on many social groups raised the first general question from which I started approaching amateur museums.

Why do people become amateur museum practitioners?

A very general hypothesis that led my work in its initial stages was that museum practitioners probably enjoy museum practice as a hobby and that it reports them some kind of benefit related to the legitimacy of museum practices and their capacity to validate worldviews.

This initial stand issued other relevant questions: What values and worldviews are behind the analyzed museum practices? Are their motivations similar to those behind highly institutionalised museums? Do they do it as a hobby? Do they do it as political resistance or activism? Are they mimicking institutional legitimacy? On what conception of museum are they basing their practice? Are they aware of the implicit meanings of the practices that they are reproducing? Do they expect to receive the same consideration than other kinds of museums? Do they care? What do they think about other kinds of museums?

The list could go on and on, but, to try to answer the question of why people become amateur museum practitioners allowed me to gather enough data during the first phase of this research to be able to narrow down my aim. During the research process, and after the first rounds of analysis and review of related literature from the fields of museology and the sociology of practice, two more detailed questions arose that guided the rest of the research and the writing of this thesis: 1) What positions do amateur museum practitioners occupy within the field of museums? And 2) how do their positions affect and are affected by their museum practices?

Let me focus briefly on each of these questions:

What positions do amateur museum practitioners occupy within their fields?

After analyzing the data that I gathered at the beginning of the research process, the hypothesis that amateur museum practitioners work from a position of disadvantage gained relevance. In relation to this initial conclusion, a question arises that attempts to determine what position these museum practitioners occupy within the museum as an institution and within other overlapping fields in their museum practices. A focus upon this question brings to light relevant issues, such as the kinds of capital that amateur museum practitioners can inject to their practices, as well as, the practice habituation derived from them.

How do their positions affect and are affected by their museum practices?

This question is a direct consequence of the first one, and it originates from the hypothesis that amateur museum practices are highly determined by the positions that their practitioners occupy within that field. Furthermore, it is also linked to the fact that museum practices have the consequence of affecting the positions of these practitioners by increasing their capital. In order to be able to give a proper answer to this question, specific practices need to be analyzed through their products (exhibitions, displays, guided tours, websites, and so on), as well as through the accounts of their own practices.

Objectives and Contribution

The objectives of this work are the following:

1) To contribute to highlight the importance of analyzing museum practices conducted from positions of disadvantage and as leisure.

2) To build an analytical framework and a methodological toolkit that helps approach amateur museum practices, and to develop a theory grounded on data.

3) To detect issues with which amateur museum practices can contribute rethinking museology and museum practices as being socially positioned and socially enabling.

4) To gather and offer research results on a type of museum that has been deprived of research, producing, therefore, data and analytical results that can be of use to other researchers.

My work contributes mainly to the fields of museum studies and, in a wider sense, to the sociology of culture as well as to cultural studies. This thesis aims to expand the knowledge on a type of museum that has been, till very recently, neglected in museum studies. With the few researchers that have focused on amateur museums (Candlin, 2012, 2015; Jannelli, 2012; Klimaszewski & Nyce, 2014; Klimaszewski, 2016; Martinez Latre, 2007), I share the same conviction that amateur museum practices can reveal important issues about the museum institution, and how it is perceived and used by individuals and groups that do not occupy its central positions. These practices can reveal alternative ways of planning museums, and help us understand the meanings and functions that lay beyond official proposals. Furthermore, this kind of museums, "with their fragile and minimal existence [...] at the inferior extreme of museums hierarchy throw questions of meaning to the canonical institution" (Martinez Latre, 2007: 76, my translation).

Thus, to focus on museum practices that are not managed from positions of advantage, authority and legitimacy, is necessary for mainly two reasons. First, to contribute to widen the path of access to museum practice and to help view it as available to virtually any individual or group that could take advantage of its deployment. Second, it is necessary because these practices exist no matter what, and they put relevant issues into question, issues about the museum institution and its purpose in the societies that implement them. Hence, to understand why people make museums from positions of disadvantage helps to redefine some of the reasons why they still make sense in our societies.

Amateur museum practices also show us how the positions of subjects within those fields affect and are affected by the practices that they develop, something that can also inform similar practices in other fields. Knowledge on why and how these kinds of practices are conducted from positions of disadvantage can help us understand, first, some of the needs and purposes of individuals in their cultural endeavors, second, the manners in which they engage with them, and third, the benefits that they might obtain from them.

My approach and my research can contribute to an understanding of museums, not so much as institutions, but as practices. Like any other resource available in a field, museum practices can be used by anyone that wishes to participate in the production of

meaning and sense, joining those that have tried to study museums from the point of view of sociology, and especially through Bourdieu's work.

This view could eventually lead to changes in public cultural policies, which are already taking place in other cultural areas but not yet in museums. These changes could critically encourage people not only to participate in their existing public and official museums but to consider the option of producing them. Policy makers, museum professionals, and public servants might, as well, slowly understand the value of this kind of proposals, learning to be critical about their own evaluations, which tend to neglect some museum practitioners and support others because of their higher social, cultural and economic capitals.

Considering the small amount of available data about this kind of museums, I believe that my contribution is also meaningful, because of the information gathered from the seven amateur museums of the Catalan context, and a contrast case of an amateur museum in Medellin (Colombia). I make all this available to other researchers interested in these practices.

Methodology

The methodology of this research is based on the Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), which can be described as "a way of thinking about and studying social reality" (1998: 8). It advocates going back and forth between gathered and analyzed data, research questions and theoretical thinking, thus allowing researchers to build a theory, a body of work that is necessarily and by definition grounded in data. The approach of Grounded Theory, therefore, helps to conduct a kind of qualitative inquiry that allows theory to emerge from data, whose gathering is, in turn, affected by processes of analysis and literature reviews. This methodology is especially suitable for research in areas that are still little known, as in the case of amateur museums.

In consequence, and on the basis of a very general research inquiry, I have gathered data in two main steps. Each of them was followed by a phase of analysis and theory building that allowed me to redefine the aim of the research and detect issues of interest, which brought two final research questions that narrowed down my initial goals, making them, in consequence, deeper and more concrete.

Data Gathering

The data upon which this work is constructed and based has been gathered between November of 2014 and December of 2016 in two main phases. During the first phase, I collected data from four case studies, and during the second, I focused on four additional cases, yet this phase was more prolonged in time. I gathered the data through participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews and documentation review. Although the methods were the same in both phases, in the first phase, the attention was placed on more general issues, while in the second phase, I narrowed down my focus thanks to the first round of analysis and initial theory buildup.

I have conducted participant observation as a visitor to each museum, which sometimes included following guided tours and other informal accompaniment with the owner. I have visited each of the museums as a regular visitor, although, in some cases, when they have asked me for the reasons of my visit, I have told them about my interest in independent and amateur museums. Some of the visits meant following a structured guided tour. In other cases, the founder accompanied me during the tour, which involved informal conversations that were, in consequence, more directed by my questions and comments.

Furthermore, in some cases, I was invited to visit the museum alone, enabling a one-to-one conversation with the owner and museum practitioner. In other occasions, I was asked to join, or I simply joined other groups of visitors. In one occasion, I was also accompanied by my thesis supervisor and, in two other cases, by my partner.

The initial visit to the museums was also used to decide about including or excluding them from my research as cases. The rationale of these decisions is explained in the next section. The visits were not recorded in order to affect, as little as possible, their outcome. In most cases, I did not present myself as a researcher to the museum practitioners. Thus, the resulting data on each visit that further fed my research were my own written field notes about them.

Once the cases were selected, I attempted to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews with each of the museum practitioners. At the end of the process, I was able to conduct these with six of the eight museum practitioners. The reason why I could not interview Magda from the Maternal Museum was that, although she had agreed to be interviewed, her health problems and personal difficulties made the meeting too

complicated. Having to force too much the situation, I felt it was too invasive from my side to do so. I certainly did not want to cross certain lines. Under other conditions, I would have discarded her museum and would have opted for analyzing another case instead. Yet, considering that hers is the only museum that was founded and managed by a woman, and that she has, moreover, produced a lot of documentation that I could include in my analysis, I chose to keep the Maternal Museum as an example, despite its asymmetry with the other cases in terms of the kind of the data gathered. In the case of Martí from the Vietnam Museum, he did not wish to be interviewed unless it was by e-mail. Although we agreed on that format and in at least two rounds of questions, he only answered the first leaving the interview incomplete. Since I have not been able to contact him again, I ignore the reasons why he stopped answering the second round. I believe, furthermore, that an e-mailed (thus written) interview is much more structured, directed and certainly less dynamic than a face-to-face interview, producing hence more controlled and thoughtful answers than they would in a more or less improvised conversation.

In regards to the rest of cases, one in-depth interview was conducted with each of the museum practitioners. They are all between an hour and a half and two hours long. Whenever possible, they were conducted in the same museum premises, but I was often asked to do them elsewhere, at their workplaces (The House of Butterflies), their homes (Geology and Gypsum Museum) or in a bar, late in the evening, on their way home after work (The Den of the Shark). I also conducted an in-depth semi-structured interview with Joan Rosàs, head of the Section of Museum Coordination and Protection of Movable Goods (Secció de Coordinació Museística i Protecció de Béns Mobles) of the Generalitat de Catalunya, so as to understand how the Catalan government views these museums and what are the objectives and functioning of the registers of museums and collections open to the public. Interviews were recorded, then transcribed with a memo written following each interview. Although they were conducted in Catalan and Spanish (this is how they are included in the Annex at the end of this thesis), I have translated all the excerpts used in this thesis to facilitate their reading.

Finally, the documentation review has allowed me to gather data from the amateur museum practitioners' products. This includes the spaces that house the museums themselves, the displays of objects and everything involved in the exhibition constructs in each of the selected museums. It also includes the leaflets, catalogues and websites

or social network accounts that the museum practitioners maintain in relation to their museums. All these documents are tangible products of their practices –as such, they inform me about them– and, at the same time, they convey information about them, which I used to contrast and complement the data gathered during my visits and interviews. The websites, when available, and the information published by others on the Internet has also served me to prepare my visits and my interviews.

The following table summarizes the kind of data gathered in relation to each museum.

Museum	**Participant Observation**	**In-Depth Interview**	**Documentation Review**
The House of Butterflies	Guided group tour	Yes	Exhibit Booklet Website
The Bread Museum	Guided tour with thesis supervisor	Yes	Exhibit Booklet
Vietnam Museum	Accompanied by museum practitioner	By e-mail (unfinished)	Exhibit Website
The Den of the Shark	Guided tour joining group	Yes	Exhibit
Toy Museum	Accompanied by museum practitioner	Yes	Exhibit Blog Facebook
Geology and Gypsum Museum	Accompanied by museum practitioner	Yes	Exhibit
Antoni's Museum (Coca-Cola Museum)	Accompanied by museum practitioner and other visitors	Yes	Exhibit Website
Maternal Museum	Accompanied by museum practitioner, her daughter and my partner	-	Exhibit Website Catalogue

I have experienced a few difficulties in the data gathering process. One of them was the location of the museums and availability of the museum practitioners. Amateur

museums are scattered all over Catalonia and are most often found in small towns and villages. One of the probable reasons for this, as some interviewees have stated, is that spaces are cheaper and more easily available there. Also, although they are open to the public, they do not have regular opening hours (only the Coca-Cola Museum has them). They usually only schedule visits during the weekends and only by appointment. In some cases, like The House of Butterflies, they only open on Sundays, during summer. It also happens that sometimes they do not accept individual visits, but only groups (The Den of the Sharks, The House of Butterflies). This forced me to insist adamantly about my reasons, forcing me to reveal the purpose of my visit beforehand. To visit some museums, I had to ask to be part of a group, which meant lots of flexibility from my part and a disposition to be ready to go to the museum as soon as they assigned me a visiting slot. Notwithstanding this, sometimes it took months to get in. I could only overcome the restrictions of time availability and the remoteness of some locations because I have a car. This research could have hardly been done otherwise. In fact, this is one of the reasons that, as Fiona Candlin (2015) suggests, there is such a lack of research done on micromuseums: it has a notable access cost compared to the easy availability of other kinds of museums.

Another difficulty has been to convince amateur museum practitioners to share information with me and to allow its publication. Hiding their identities was not helpful either since anyone could identify each museum only by the descriptions I made of them. Some of the museum practitioners were reluctant of being interviewed and worried about the possible outcomes of my research. In some cases, I could easily see that they were afraid of being negatively judged. In others, they have been so often disappointed by interviews, especially those conducted by the media, that they feared they would lose control over what is said about them.

Finally, I found is hard to talk to them about their museum practices rather than about their fields of interest and their collections. This is the same problem that Belk and his colleagues found in the hundreds of interviews they gathered with American collectors. They did not wish to talk much about their collecting practices but would have talked forever about the contents of their collections (R. W. Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, & Holbrook, 1991).

Analysis

Content analysis has been applied to the data through several stages. Such codified data was then analyzed in several processes of interpretation "carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organizing these into a theoretical explanatory scheme" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:11). These various phases of interpretation, including their relationship with relevant literature, lead to changes in the codes and the definition of questions that drove the research.

The first phase of analysis included only data related to the first four cases, which helped me narrow down the aim of the research by adding two more specific questions. This analysis led to a first paper, entitled *Museum-Making as Serious Leisure* (Moncunill-Piñas, 2015) in which I started conceptualizing this kind of museum as an amateur type. This phase of codification and analysis, guided by an ongoing literature review, led me to include four more cases in a second phase of data gathering.

After that, I conducted a second round of analysis to include all the new cases and take into consideration the issues detected in the first phase, which helped me to polish the categories that I was using. Lastly, I ran a final phase of analysis in a much more detailed way, searching for specific data that might have been overlooked and applying the new codes to the data of the first four cases.

Case Studies

I have chosen to work through case studies for several reasons. The main one is that my object of interest, the amateur museum, has certain delimitations that allowed me to understand it as a unit and as a relatively independent entity. It is also viewed like that by their members, which are, in this case, mainly the museum practitioners (Marcelo, 1991). Yet I understand that amateur museums as cases are a theoretical constructs built in order to answer my specific questions (Ragin, 1992).

Case studies allow studying specific phenomena and organizations holistically. That includes different approaches and enables direct observations of practices, as well as, relates abstract explanations to data derived from the perception of everyday life (Marcelo, 1991). Because of the difficulties to consider large amounts of cases, case studies might sacrifice the amplitude of the study, but they provide instead in-depth observation (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Case studies are furthermore especially useful in areas

that have not been widely researched and that need to produce, therefore, more exemplars (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Selection

The the final selection of the cases is a result of my intentional decisions and also of the circumstances and availability of the amateur museum practitioners.

Amateur museums are not a closed and uniform category of museums but an operational category that I had to develop in order to approach certain kind of practices with characteristics in common. To choose my cases, I needed to narrow down which of these features would I consider essential. Finally, those were, as mentioned a few pages ago, that the museum practitioners consider their endeavors as leisure and that they named their products "museum".

I also limited the geographic aim of my research to Catalonia. This has two reasons. One is the practical one of defining a geographical scope that I could physically handle with my resources and the time available for the research. The other one was that Catalonia has administrative and cultural determinants that are known to me, at least better than those of any other region in the world. I am aware that researching on one's own cultural context has advantages and disadvantages. I do not need to conduct such an extensive research as I would if I was studying other regions. On the other hand, however, I am so immersed in the context that I might lack the distance necessary for a detached analysis.

This is one of the main reasons why I also included a contrast case, that of Medellin, Colombia. This case helped me discover that certain issues that appeared in all other cases were specific characteristics from Catalonia, its traditions of museum practice, its recent history and its laws. The importance of specific social and political conditions behind certain kinds of museum practices are briefly highlighted by Candlin in the case of the United Kingdom (Candlin, 2015) and by Levin in the case of the USA (Levin, 2007). In this last case, those were, for instance, the cult of individuality, the lack of a network of public museums, and the increased mobility spurred by the rise of automobile sales, as well as, the spread of the road system in the 1950s. Unlike those cases, I will not focus on the contextual conditions that allow amateur museums to appear in Catalonia. It is important, nevertheless, to keep in mind that they are rooted within their own specific context.

During the 1980s, many museums opened in Catalonia. After Franco's death and during the transition years toward democracy, the creation of museums was instigated by public and private organizations. Reuben Holo (2002) explains this remarkable effort through the identitarian specificities of Catalans, who finally had the chance to recover the management of their own heritage and culture, by means of their business tradition and the strength of a private sector that got involved in the cultural renewal of the nation. In this process, the middle class, and small and medium size companies played a very relevant role. Within the time span of two decades, museums of (Catalan) national scope were created in Barcelona, as well as, many small local museums in hundreds of towns and villages. To regulate them, the government finally approved the Catalan law of museums in 1990. Reuben Holo highlights how the decade of the 1980s benefited the creation of small local museums while, in the 90s, the law was intended for the creation and establishment of Catalan national museums. This decade was also when the bigger changes in the professionalization and optimization of museum personnel took place, something that was occurring also in parallel to a general Western trend (Reuben Holo, 2002). It is hard to say how all these changes affected the creation of amateur museums, which did not have the help of any public or private organization. Probably, many overlapping issues contributed to the creation of the conditions on which this took place. The euphoria of the eighties, for instance, made citizens think of themselves as directly responsible for the reconstruction of democracy, of Catalan culture or of the economic growth of that period.

A first search through the Generalitat de Catalunya's data base of museums and private collections open to the public (Generalitat de Catalunya, n.d.), together with several searches online (Google) and specific local tourist websites, gave me a list of about 40 museums that seemed to fit a loose amateur definition, those that were not recipients of the support of public or private organizations. Many of them did not have a website and the information available was very poor and linked to traveller blogs or local government's tourist information websites. The list of collections that are open to the public in the register of the Generalitat is not exhaustive, as evidenced by the scattered but steady information about collections and museums I received from colleagues and friends during my research, and as Joan Rosàs, responsible of the Section of Museum Coordination and Protection of Movable Goods (Secció de Coordinació Museística i

Protecció de Béns Mobles) of the Generalitat de Catalunya confirmed to me (Joan Rosàs, interview, 2015).

I conducted a first round of visits to some museums on this list. Some of them were impossible to reach with the information I got, maybe because they had closed or the contact data that I found was incorrect. Others were private collections that were no longer open to the public or they were run by very old people that were unable to accept visitors anymore. Between November 2014 to December 2016, I visited around twenty museums. From those, I discarded many to be part of the research. I did that for two main reasons: either the founders were too old and in poor health, or they were already dead. In those last cases, even though their families were continuing with the museum, my chances to get first-hand information from the original founders were largely curtailed. Being able to meet the founders was, therefore, a condition for inclusion, since it provides me first-hand information on their motivations and decisions. Other museums could not be included as case studies because of the refusal of their owners, which happened in a couple of occasions.

Other museums were further discarded because they were directly linked to some business and, as such, they were conceived as lures to commercial interests. I also took out of the list those museums that were run by hired personnel and not by their founders. I considered them professionalized cases, lacking an amateur condition.

This lead to an initial selection of three cases: the Bread Museum, The House of Butterflies, and the Maternal Museum. For contrast, I added an extra case during my research stay in Medellin (Colombia): the Toy Museum.

In a second phase, after gathering data from the first four museums and having completed a first round of data analysis, I also included the Vietnam Museum, Antoni's Museum (Coca-Cola Museum), the Geology and Gypsum Museum and The Den of the Shark.

A Note on Gender Unbalance

The case of the Maternal Museum needs further explanation. Although its founder, Magda, was willing to participate in the research, I never had the chance to interview her because of her health problems. Although the interview was an important means to gather relevant data for this research, I finally decided to keep the museum as a case

highlighting gender issues. Almost all the amateur museums that I located in Catalonia are founded by men. In a few cases, credit for the initiative seemed to be shared by husband and wife. Although the wives of all these museum practitioners have a very relevant role in making their husbands projects possible, their efforts are mostly unrecognized. The Maternal museum is not only founded by a woman, but its creation was due to Magda's concern with the nil presence of women in Spanish museums, especially in the 1960s, when she opened her museum.

It would be very interesting to further research and find the reasons for such gender unbalance in amateur museum practices. In Spain, although 85 to 95% of art museum professionals are women, they occupy few higher positions (Mujeres en las Artes Visuales, 2010). In addition, there is an important lack of information about the presence of women as leading other kinds of museums. There is almost no research about Spanish collecting practices, but research in Britain, for example, has shown that there are more women than men collectors (Pearce, 1998). Collecting is gendered in relation to the topics that women and men are likely to collect because we are socialized into specific roles and topics of interest since childhood. Some researchers have also found that collecting practices are seen as frivolous spending when conducted by women (Belk & Wallendorf, 1994), and that women had often tended to prioritize their work and their family before they started collecting (Gere & Vaizey, 1999), a conclusion that can be found as well in relation to demanding leisure practices in general (Green, Hebron, & Woodward, 1990). In opposition to the librarian work, which, since the nineteenth century, was considered especially suitable for women, museum's positions of authority have traditionally been reserved to men (Bennett, 1995: 32-33).

It is for this reason that, despite not having been able to gather all the data I wished from this museum, I decided to maintain the Maternal Museum as one of the cases. The asymmetry of the data in comparison to the rest of the museums could be partly compensated because Magda has published a lot of information in books and on the website of the museum on which I have heavily relied to complete my investigations.

Cases

I have dedicated Part I to do an extensive description of each of the eight museums. In it, I present the museums and their makers as I have known them, conveying my

impressions as accurate as possible, not only of the museums but of my approach to them and the relations established with their practitioners.

Nevertheless, I will next briefly list and give basic information about each museum to help readers become more familiar with them. The names of the museums are in Catalan, only the case of the Toy Museum of Medellin is in Spanish. Only here and until the end of the thesis, however, I will translate and keep referring to them in English and help, therefore, their identification. In one case, I will change the name of a museum; Antoni's Museum (Museu de l'Antoni), which has no direct reference to the objects it displays, into "Coca-Cola Museum" to help the reader to identify it.

The House of Butterflies (La Casa de les Papallones)

The full name of this museum is "The House of Butterflies, Small Museum of Natural History". It is located in the village of Planoles in the Catalan Pyrenees. It is run by Agustí and Agustí Jr, father and son who, following a hobby inherited from the grandfather, have assembled a wide collection of butterflies, beetles, fossils, rocks and minerals. Since 2005, the museum fills the upper floor of the vacation home of Agustí Jr where they spend all spare Sundays away from the family furniture business established somewhere else, in Vic.

The Den of the Shark (Museu El Cau del Tauró)

The Den of The Shark was founded and is currently run by Joan in Arboç, a village almost 60 km southwest of Barcelona. He opened it in 2001 on commercial premises that once belonged to his uncle. The museum displays a small part of a collection of preserved sharks and fossilized shark teeth in an enveloping environment in which walls and ceiling are decorated like the sea bottom. Joan's main purpose is to research the compared anatomy of shark teeth, although he has also become an expert in preserving dead sharks and their body parts.

Maternal Museum (Museu Matern)

Magda opened her Maternal Museum in the late 1960s as a response, at that time, to the absolute lack of female presence in Spanish museums. After its initial location in Sant Vicenç dels Horts, near Barcelona, the museum is now installed in the small village of Guimerà (Lleida). It shows part of Magda's collection of items related to motherhood, works of art, obstetric instruments, pregnancy planning and prevention posters, regional ethnologic objects like as cradles, political emblems like the Nazi

medals to exemplary mothers, and objects belonging to mothers of well-known personalities.

Bread Museum (Museu del Pa)

The Bread Museum is located in the village of Tona (Spain), 60 km north of Barcelona. Joaquim, its founder, is now a retired baker whose family owns a 100-year-old bakery that occupies the ground floor of the family home. Since 1983, the museum fills the top floor of this building and shows a collection of baking tools, traditional types of bread from the area and other areas of Spain and of other countries. It also shows, through documentation and self-made dioramas, types of bakeries and baking processes from different historical periods.

Geology and Gypsum Museum (Museu de Geologia i del Guix)

Josep started working on his museum during the late seventies. The museum is located in Vilobí del Penedès, a small village at approximately 50 km to the southwest of Barcelona. It shows, in a custom-made building, a collection of gypsum and other minerals. It also includes fossils from the area and a collection of self-made models of old Moorish gypsum ovens. His family owned a gypsum factory in the area and he, like many people there, used to work for one of the gypsum companies that are now closed.

Vietnam Museum (Museu del Vietnam)

Martí's museum is about the Vietnam War. It is located in Castellfollit de la Roca, a small village next to the city of Olot, at about 100 km to the north of Barcelona. It shows a collection of military objects, especially uniforms, weapons, flags and other emblems as well as everyday life objects collected from both sides of the conflict, but especially from the USA army. After 20 years of collecting, the museum opened in 2003 on the ground floor at the family house of Martí's wife.

Antoni's Museum (Museu de l'Antoni), here called the Coca-Cola Museum

Antoni's Museum is located in the city of Castellar del Vallès, in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. It occupies the commercial premises that he bought exclusively for this purpose and it shows, in a space totally packed with objects, part of Antoni's collection of Coca-Cola bottles, cans and merchandizing objects (clocks, toys, glasses, telephones, posters, pins, and so on). Antoni opened the museum in 2006 after a whole life working for the Coca-Cola Company.

The Toy Museum (Museo del Juguete)

The Toy Museum is located in downtown Medellin (Colombia) in an industrial street crowded with garages and repair shops. It shows a collection of toys mainly found in Medellin and dating between the late 19th century and present time. It is part of Rafael's studio, where he works as a sculptor. The museum now occupies the whole second floor. He started collecting old toys 30 years ago. The collection gradually became the museographic structure that today is opened to the public.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured in two parts. Part I, entitled "Amateur Museums, their Makers, and Me", offers a thick description of each case study with the intention to draw a complex picture of the museums and their makers, conveying my view of them, as well as, the way I have been interacting with their owners and the displays they have designed. These accounts are especially based on my field notes and the memos that I have been writing after every meeting.

Part II, entitled "Practices, Leisure, Myth and Ritual", consists of four chapters divided into two sections. These four analytical chapters differ in the stress they put on different aspects of the practices developed at the eight amateur museums. I have reviewed those practices through four different lenses: the sociological theory of practice, theory of leisure, the institutional myths of museums, and through museum rituals. The analysis of amateur museum practices runs, therefore, all across each of the four chapters, introducing the different lenses used and digging out issues relevant to both, the understanding of the positions that amateur museum practitioners occupy and of the practices they perform.

The aim of the first section "Amateur Museum Practices" is mostly related to the second research question (What positions do amateur museum practitioners occupy within the field of museums?) and it is focused on showing that the researched museum practitioners work from disadvantaged positions within their fields and that these positions shape their practices. To construct this analysis, I have divided this part into two chapters. In the first chapter "Amateur Museums as Practices", I approach amateur museums as a highly institutionalized set of practices that the amateur practitioners appropriate, reproduce, resist, modify or refute. The second chapter, "Museum Practice

as Leisure", adds to this analysis the vision of these practices as leisure, which is, in itself, a field that in which many institutions overlap and that has important structural implications. Situating museum practices in relation to the field of leisure helps to further understand the position that amateur museum practitioners occupy in the field as well as, to situate some of their most conscious motivations at work in their practice.

The objective of the second section of Part II "Myth and Ritual in Amateur Museum Practices", mostly related to the third research question (How do their positions within the museum field affect and are affected by their museum practices?), is to show that amateur museum practitioners take advantage of opportunities given by the distribution of capital and by the position-takings (Bordieu, 1993) that museum practices allow, and they do that despite their positions of disadvantage. To do so, I approach the myth and ritual systems on which amateur museums rely and which have their roots in modernity.

Thus, the chapter "The Mythological System of Amateur Museum Practices" analyzes precisely their practices in relation to the myths of the museum institution. In other words, it shows how these amateur museum practitioners relate to the myths that have had and still have a structural function in the museum institution.

The "Ritual in Amateur Museum Practices" adds to the analysis an account of the role of ritualization in amateur museum practices, focusing especially on how those rituals affect the positions that the museum practitioners occupy in their fields.

After the conclusion, the Annex collects the full transcriptions of the interviews in their original language, mostly in Catalan and Spanish.

State of the Art

For this research, I have relied on the work of authors coming from mainly two fields of study: museology and sociology of practice. Despite the fact that I consider that my research mainly relies on and wishes to contribute to these two fields, I have also delved in academic literature in the fields of leisure studies, and myth and ritual theories in the second, third and fourth chapters.

Critical Museology

Museum studies or museology, as an academic field, is essentially interdisciplinary. It feeds from history, art history, anthropology, sociology, gender, postcolonial studies,

and so on. Although the influence of sociology on many authors working in museum studies is remarkable, there are not that many sociologists who have been interested in researching museums (Fyfe & Jones, 2016).

In the 1980s, museology shifted towards a critical understanding of museum making, hence giving way to a new or critical museology. New museology is a term used after Vergo (Vergo, 1989) to explain and bring about an attention shift in relation to a theoretical and critical understanding of museums that some authors were demanding in the area of practical museology (what European continental writers often understand by museography[2]). Although the labels of new museology and critical museology have been used by many authors as synonyms (Halpin, 2007), depending if the influence of the writer was North American, British or European, others have defended critical museology as a further shift from the tenets of new museology:

> Critical museology has as its subject, the study of operational museology. As a field of study it examines the imaginaries, narratives and discourses; their articulations and integrations within diverse organizational structures which taken together constitute a field of cultural and artistic productions articulated through public and private museums; heritage sites; gardens; memorials; exhibition halls; cultural centers and art galleries. It is distinct from Peter Vergo's new museology, which never defined its field and methods of study, or subjected the 'old' museology to sustained critical evaluation.
>
> (Shelton, 2011: 31)

Whether we follow new museology or critical museology, the fact is that, since the late 1980s, museology has gained strength as an academic field, and academic training programs have multiplied in Western universities. Since then, some authors (for instance Macdonald, 2006b) have also detected shifts in the aims of museology, being, more theoretical, first, and most applied to specific museum practices, as Shelton demanded (2011), after. I would still add another more recent shift in connection to research that is very directly engaged in museum practices, similar to the relational museology proposed by Grewcock (2014), and that aims at an "open, comparative approach to research that is always with museums-in-the-world" (186). We are talking,

[2] Mostly used in European literature, museography refers to the procedures, methods and techniques used to put the museum product into practice. In other words, museography is the "applied aspect of museology" (VVAA, 2010: 52) or the "practical level of applied museology" (Maroevic, 1998: 99). It is thus, by analysing the museography of amateur museums, that we can develop their museological theory.

in other words, about a situation in which both museum practice and research are understood as a craft, as different aspects of the same practice.

The influence of Foucault has been remarkable on many museum studies scholars and practitioners, especially during the initial phase of critical museology. Some have compared museum practices to the institutional practices of the prison and the asylum as Foucault analyzed them. They have developed the concept of the disciplinary museum, the exhibition complex and the technologies of vision (Bennett, 1988, 1995, 1998; Crimp, 1980), as well as the knowledge-power relations maintained through them (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, 2000; Macdonald, 1998). Although the Foucauldian influence on museum studies seems to have resulted in a pessimistic view, Lord has also defended that understanding museums as Foucauldian heterotopias offers them also the opportunity to get rethought and critically exposed (Lord, 2006).

The powerful capacity of museums to create knowledge and maintain or affect social reality has been also explained through the ritualized practices of museums by Duncan (Duncan & Wallach, 2004; Duncan, 1995, 2014) and also by Macdonald (Macdonald, 2005b), as stated in the compilation "Science, Magic and Religion. The Ritual Processes of Museum Magic" (Bouquet & Porto, 2005). Some of these authors are also in line with Foucault's critical understanding of history with which they can track the formation of museum practices and their embeddedness in society. These proposals help to build a critical history of museums and they also contribute to show museums as sets of social practices, describing how they originate in relation to the economic, political and social situations and how they become institutionalized disguising their ideological effects. In these works, the influence that the ideological system produced by modernity had on the formation of museums has been especially analyzed. Some authors have focused on scientific thought and their academic disciplines (Dias, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Silva, 2005; Teslow, 1998) and others on the idea of the nation-state (see for example Chapman, 2007; Kaplan, 2006; S. J. Macdonald, 2003; Meng, 2004; Preziosi, 2009). History and the relation with the past have also been the main approaches of many authors either by tracking the formation of the current Western use and interpretation of the past through museums and heritage, or by discussing the power relations that are entangled in the definition and management of heritage itself (Cameron & Kenderdine, 2007; Groot, 2009; Johnson, 1999; Kalay, 2008; Shyllon, 2016; Silberman, 2016; Smith, 2006). Especially relevant for my

research in this area is the work of Smith who has highlighted the directionality from which heritage is identified and managed. Such directionality creates an "authorized heritage discourse" (Smith, 2006) that, in turn, legitimizes certain identities and certain representations of those identities. Opening conceptions of heritage to the needs of non-western populations that might have different forms of remembering the past have also been discussed during the last decades (Urry, 1996).

Many authors have focused on the analysis of museum discourses and museum representations to be able to highlight power inequalities (Bennett, 2006; Karp & Kratz, 2014; Karp & Wilson, 1993; Karp, 1991, Ball, 1994, 1996; Meng, 2004). In relation to this subject, some authors have applied semiotic analysis to museum displays, showing their meaning-making capacity and detailing the manners in which we make sense out of them. These approaches have been capable of delivering great insights and also benefit from the perspectives and theorizations of other disciplines (Ball, 1994; Kratz, 2011; Moser, 2010).

All these critical proposals have been influenced by the shift of the theoretical work on museums towards poststructuralist, feminist and post-colonialist approaches (like that of the pioneering Haraway, 1984 or Clifford, 1988) in which the ideological discursivity and power relations of representational practices were the main target of analysis (Bergsdóttir, 2016).

We can find thus some authors that have especially focused on the anthropologic and ethnographic museum traditions, showing, through specific cases, how the disciplines of anthropology and ethnography shaped the institution of the museum and, in return, how the museum was a powerful tool for the establishment of these disciplines. Through these analyses, museums are shown as having helped in the constitution of racial differences and the shaping of the idea of "the other", a contribution especially evident through their visual representations and radicalization of identities (Bennett, 2004; Dias, 1998; Gable, 1996; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991; Riegel, 1996; Teslow, 1998; Tolia-Kelly, 2016).

The proposals that tackle with these museum discourses and representations have had to deal with the risk of having to interpret the intentionality of museum practitioners in a given exhibition or display (Widdowson, 1998). This is why many museologists often sustain their research with ethnographic inquiries. This perspective helps to reduce

some of the risks of inferring the intentions and understandings of producers and receptors, forcing an analysis that stems only from the finished products of the museographic procedures –an analysis of exhibitions, catalogs, guided tours, museum shops. In this sense, visitor studies deserve a special mention because they offer us an understanding of what visitors make out of museum products. I want to distinguish two main approaches in relation to the current research on museum visitors: One perspective delivers a general understanding of the profiles of museum visitors, highly influential and paradigmatic examples of this are Bourdieu's *The Love of Art* (1991) and *Distinction* (1984). Bourdieu's work, which was based on large surveys of the practices of cultural consumption, has had direct continuity in the work of younger scholars like Laurie Hanquinet (Hanquinet, 2014, 2016) and Tonny Bennett and his colleagues (Bennett et al., 2009). The other perspective has micro-analyzed the practices of museum visitors (see for example Bagnall, 2003; Fyfe & Ross, 1996; Lindauer, 2006; Longhurst, Bagnall, & Savage, 2004; Macdonald, 2005), focusing on uses beyond the discourses constructed by the museum (Bagnall, 2003; Dicks, 2016; Hooper-Greenhill, 2006). These kinds of approaches tend to highlight the interpretations of visitors as well as their behaviors.

Specific research on collecting has also been very relevant within museum studies. Other contributions on collecting practices like, for instance, those that stem from the fields of consumer culture or leisure have also been of great importance in my work. Pearce has been one of the most prolific authors in this matter. Her historical approaches (Pearce & Bounia, 2000; Pearce, 1995) and the analysis that, through surveys and interviews, she conducted on the subject of contemporary collecting as a leisure practice in Britain (Pearce, 1998), or her mostly psychological understanding of collecting (Pearce, 1994), which shows the obvious influence of Baudrillard (Baudrillard, 1969, 1994), are proof to that. She has also deeply explored the role of collecting as a central practice of museums and the formation of knowledge through them (Pearce, 1994; 1992). In his qualitative and quantitative research on what he calls "popular collecting", Martin has also focused on Britain (Martin, 1999), and paid special attention to the relations between collectors and museums. Macdonald (Macdonald, 2006a) has also understood the relevance of museums in the institutionalization of collecting practices. Quantitative and qualitative data from USA

collectors has been gathered by Belk and his colleagues (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, Holbrook, & Roberts, 1988) and, in the case of Israel, by Danet and Katriel (1994).

Others, like Clifford, have enhanced the ideological backgrounds of Western collecting as it is currently related to hegemonic views, hierarchies of value, and the construction of the self through the accumulation of wealth (Clifford, 1988). This last issue has been further developed by those who have researched collecting as a practice of consumption (R. W. Belk et al., 1991; Bloch & Bruce, 1984). Many researchers have approached the motivations of collectors through surveys and interviews, like, for instance, Formanek, who identifies collectors' motivations to be based on the construction of the self (as a defense against low self-esteem; as a challenge, as a wish to accrue expertise, knowledge or mastery), and in relation to others, as something that enhances communication among like-minded people (Formanek, 1994: 334). Danet and Katriel, instead, found the sense of closure, completion, perfection and an intense emotional involvement, as well as a playful and aesthetic dimension to be central motivations for collectors (Danet & Katriel, 1994).

More recently, as an answer to the first wave of critical museology that focused on the analysis of museums discursivity, its power inequalities and its symbolic violence, other authors have paid attention to museum practices that are performed from positions of disadvantage and to the empowering opportunities that museum practices can offer (Butinx & Karp, 2006; C. A. Kratz & Karp, 2006). Other authors have been interested in museum practices through the analysis of specific cases, both historical and contemporary. Such approaches often have a strong feminist and post-colonialist influence, taking them not only to question hegemonic museum practices and authorized discourses, but to propose a use of them that would affect power relations through the directionality of museum discourses, or their processes of legitimation and authority. A strong focus is put on the exclusive practices of museums, which "reinforce in-group/out-group stratification" (Coffee, 2008: 266), and on their effect maintaining or changing subject positions. Feminist scholars have offered critical understandings about the naturalizing discourses the museums were issuing in relation to the concept of "the other", be it women, working classes, non-western peoples or invisible social groups (see Haraway, 1984; Porter, 1995). More recently, they have been pushing towards a feminist theory of museums that would have an effect on their practices and materiality (Bartlett & Henderson, 2013; Bergsdóttir, 2016; Hein, 2007). In fact, there

are proposals that have the practical intent to provoke changes in museum practices with the ideological effects of rethinking the positions of the agents involved and empowering the social groups that have historically occupied less advantageous positions within the field of the museum (see, for instance, Peers & Brown, 2003; Golding & Modest, 2013; Silverman, 2015; or Watson, 2007, for examples related to the partnership between museums and source communities concerning the subject of collecting, exhibition design, decision taking and museum management).

The analysis of museum practices has often merged with the practices themselves, being the same curators or proponents the ones that add them to their academic research or open debates with the communities most affected by them, the museum workers and audiences. In a moment when the museum's legitimacy and authority are highly contested, the critical revision of museum practices from within has become a common museum practice in itself. Benefiting from a circular effect, the gains of such critical revision return to the institution, allowing it to regain or reinforce its legitimacy.

Amateur Museums

There is very little research done in relation to amateur museums or similar museum practices. Nevertheless, in the last years, a few works have been published that started to shed light on them. They all coincided in commenting the lack of interest that these museums have raised within museum studies and how insightful they can be in proposing alternative, inclusive and participative practices.

One of the most relevant proposals is that of Fiona Candlin (Candlin, 2012, 2015) and her research on British micromuseums. Her research has produced, among other things, an on-going archive of 1300 small independent museums (Candlin, n.d.) and the book *Micromuseology. An Analysis of Small Independent Museums* (Candlin, 2015). Although Candlin considers that micromuseums are not necessarily amateur museums, amateur museums are usually micromuseums because they are tiny and independent. Candlin complains that independent museums are only taken into account in very specific debates on heritage and community, implying that they cannot effectively "contribute to wider discussions" (36):

> Discounting or marginalizing independent museums effectively attributes expertise and knowledge to the established public institutions. Many museological accounts highlight the fact that minority ethnic, working and lower-middle class people have

> been marshalled into productive self-improvement or are excluded from major museums. However, they do not consider those organizations that were founded and are visited by those same people unless it is to examine questions of community. It is as if these authors do not believe that independent museums and their 'communities' can be relevant beyond their immediate locale.
>
> (Candlin, 2015: 36)

For her, this exclusion "maintains ingrained structures of social and cultural exclusion, but it also homogenizes museum studies, limiting its concerns and scope" and ignoring "potential areas of enquiry" (Candlin, 2015: 36).

Candlin also needed to re-define what a museum is by questioning the most standard and used definitions, which, in the case of the United Kingdom, is that of the Museums Association. She criticizes that this definition implies that a museum has to be "tied to public ownership and a particular form of governance" (2015: 9). As she claims, this definition does not allow the inclusion of independent museums unless they have charitable purposes. She takes this exclusion to the whole professional discourse, which has left micromuseums, which "cannot revolutionize museology because they are not officially recognized as museums" (2015: 10), in a limbo. Consequently, she took the decision to include, as independent museums, any venue whose makers declared it to be so and that, being opened to the public, are "acknowledged as such" (2015: 11).

Candlin's definition of a micromuseum is complex, and it includes:

> collections that are variously run by trusts, businesses, special interest groups, and private individuals, and are open to the public; that concentrate on types of objects, themes, or individuals, that fall outside of the traditional academic compass, occupy a low level in the hierarchy of traditional academic classificatory tables, or that take a non-scholarly approach to subjects that could be encompassed by academe; and finally, are small insofar as they have relatively low visitor numbers and /or modest incomes and/or occupy a physically limited space.
>
> (Candlin, 2015: 12)

She emphasizes the position of disadvantage from which most micromuseums are founded and maintained:

> Low visitor attendance means that museums do not generate a significant income, and operating with tiny budgets, they make do with home-made vitrines, display boards recycled from offices hand-written or typed labels [...], and makeshift facilities [...].

> Nor can they afford to employ professionals and although there are some notable exceptions, the staff at micromuseums often lack the capacity, skills, money, or inclination to comply with health and safety legislation, to store and display the exhibits in a way that minimizes damage, or to develop interpretation strategies. Judged within dominant paradigms of good practice, micromuseums do not and cannot provide exemplars. At best, they suggest ways of surviving on scant resources and at worst they illustrate the pitfalls of running a museum with an inadequate income.
>
> (Candlin, 2015: 14)

Through the description and analysis of a few micromuseums, she defends that such independent museums, despite being private and with very controlled environments, are spaces for public life in which individuals confront and discuss worldviews and in which museum discourses are not presented as asserting and rightful, but as a subjective, specific and situated account of someone who can be put into question in every visit. Candlin argues that, despite having a single-perspective approach, micromuseums differ a lot from the kind of single-perspective that modern museums have always been accused of holding, or even from the multi-perspective approach that many museums have tried to adopt in the last decades and that presents them as inclusive. From the direct involvement and daily experience of museum practitioners, micromuseums tend to build single-perspective narratives, but they offer, also, complexity, debate and negotiation.

She also highlights how most micromuseums do not follow the style or the fashion of more professionalized or institutionalized venues. Instead, most of them are packed with objects, often following an old-fashioned style, which, nevertheless, visitors value and acknowledge. In their apparently random and playful curatorial decisions, the displays appear to the visitor to be closer to a work of art than to objective material displays. Even in the few cases where curators are not present, their presence and authorship are obvious.

Micromuseums also offer the opportunity to question notions of expertise because the knowledge of such museum practitioners, who are often very specialized, is linked to their lives and families. In fact, micromuseums "pertain to groups and practices that are rarely represented in major institutions, while the use of these exhibits means that they remain part of the associated communities' lived experience and have a role in securing those groups as communities" (Candlin, 2015: 181-182).

Candlin's contribution is double-sided. On one side she offers one of the few existing accounts of this kind of museum practices and, on the other, she vindicates the interest of these museum practices for the understanding of museums in general and for an approach to museums that would really be inclusive and engaged with the communities.

Candlin is one of the only authors that have seriously dealt with micro and amateur museums. She is not alone, however. Other authors have focused on similar types of museums. Such is the case of Angela Jannelli (Jannelli, 2012), who has researched amateur community museums in Germany. She has conceptualized those museums as "wild" after Lévi-Strauss' *La pensée sauvage.* Although her work has been only published in German, a language unknown to me, I had the chance to talk about it personally with her. The museums that she analyzes are community museums, founded and maintained by groups of volunteers. Jannelli proposes to differentiate them from more professionalized and institutionalized museums and to defend their validity at once. Like Lévi-Strauss does with magic and totemic thought (Lévi-Strauss, 1966), Jannelli considers amateur museum practices as valid as professional proposals and being able to respond to similar needs, yet in different manners.

Community museums have attracted more interest from researchers than individual museum practices. Many of them can be considered amateur because the persons involved in their design and development are mostly volunteers –a form of leisure (Stebbins, 1992)– without specialized knowledge or expertise in museum practices. Often, such museums offer local historical approaches that do not necessarily match the narratives of national or regional museums or the practices and discourses expected by the current curatorial trends (Levin, 2007). In any case, Levin argues for reframing the importance of such museums for the understanding of local identities and their role in the construction of local and national histories. Some of these community museums are run by groups that are in disadvantageous positions within their social context, and who choose to take the initiative in the preservation and activation of their heritage (Crooke, 2006). This kind of museum, which is understood as tactical by Butinx and Karp (2006), responds to political frictions among groups rather than among individuals (Kratz & Karp, 2006).

Taimre (2013) has also focused on Estonian amateur museums. She considers them Do-It-Yourself museums, which, as I will argue in the second chapter, dealing with museum practice as leisure, is an interesting but misleading proposal. Although her

object of study is very close to mine, there is only one short paper available. Taimre seems to find in self-realisation the main reason why museum practitioners pursue their practices, overlooking, in my opinion, very relevant structural causes and consequences. Like Candlin, she also finds that personal contact with visitors and with their local communities is very relevant in determining subject choices and the specific practices of these museums.

Klimaszewski (2016) and Klimaszewski and Nyce (2014) are researching amateur museums in Romania, most of them made by peasants and with an ethnologic approach. Despite describing them as amateur, they usually name them "local" museums or "unofficial" museums. Klimaszewski considers amateur museums as "social-constructive acts of bricolage" (2016:7) that produce knowledge. Their work adds also a degree of complexity when trying to understand the role of these museums in their communities: some museum practitioners believe to be working on behalf of the community, even though members of that community might despise them. Mikula (2015) has also focused on a similar type of museum, which she calls "vernacular", an expression that she believes to encapsulate "the 'domesticity' of the practice, while at the same time pointing to its grassroots public politics and its role within the broader ethno-national discourse" (Mikula, 2015: 757-758). Her research, however, is limited to one museum in Finland made and managed by a Karelian evacuee to preserve and her Karelian past. Mikula approaches her museum as a site of "communal bonding and memory transfer" (761).

Research on collecting is often close to amateur museums. Collectors display their acquisitions at home, which sometimes open to the public. For example, Martin (1999) focuses on the relationship between independent museums and private collectors, understanding that independent museums turn the profane space of the collection into sacred spaces and that converting a collection into a museum is a form of validation (Martin, 1999: 102). Also, Belk and Wallendorf have found, on their extensive USA database, some amateur museums among private collectors, although they do not pay special attention to them (Belk & Wallendorf, 1994).

Amateur museums in the Spanish context have only been approached by Martinez Latre (2007). She is centered on ethnologic local museums –which show the "vanishing daily life" (2007: 17, my translation)– from the northern Aragon region. These museums are mostly amateur. Martinez Latre found that the reasons why people make museums from

their disadvantaged positions are economic, related to the construction of identity, and for individual or collective affirmation. She claims that these museum practices are not only mimicking the practices of the elite but that they develop their own ways of doing that answer complex and often opposed tensions between "the inside and outside of the community, the center and periphery of society, the quotidian and extraordinary, the sacred and the profane, the past and the future, expert knowledge and common sense" (2007: 415, my translation). She pays attention to issues of power and to how these museums are situated in marginal positions, those that the museum institution seldom acknowledges. In fact, she finds a reciprocal distrust between this kind of small local museums and public institutions. All in all, she claims that these practices are somewhat distanced from the history of the museum institution, but that it is obvious that museums have some kind of meaning for people when they choose to make them their own.

Sociology of Practice

The sociology of practice has played a central role in the framing of this research, which has sought to gain a closer understanding of museum making seen as a set of practices. Practice is considered central to individual and social life, as being "at the root of the constitution of both subject and social object" (Giddens, 1984: xxii). Practice theory focuses on what Schatzki considers the two main approaches to practice, that is, "as spatiotemporal array of linked behaviours and […] as the do-ing of behaviour" (Schatzki, 1996: 133). Understanding practices and the "structured dispositions" that generate them is "central to the understanding of social and cultural phenomena", as well as their social systems (Barnes, 2003: 25). Furthermore, theories of practice allow merging thought and action because practice relies on "embodied theory [as] a part of [it]" (Barnes, 2003: 28). And, finally, because collectives are defined by the agreement in their shared practices (Barnes, 2003), the theory of practice also helps understanding individual practices collectively, in other words, to analyze the social relevance of specific actions made by specific individuals within a wider context.

My approach to museum practices relies especially on Bourdieu's theory of practice as he developed in *The Logic of Practice* (1990), *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (2013), *Practical Reason* (1998), *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), *Symbolic Space and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu, 1989) and *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Bourdieu & J.D. Wacquant, 1992). To understand practices as a tactical form of production, I

draw on de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988). I am also taking into account some other authors that are seminal in the sociology of practice (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Giddens, 1984; Gramsci, 1971; Schütz, 1976a, 1976b, 1976c), as well as, others related to the "practice turn" (Schatzki, Cetina, & Savigny, 2003) and to the rethinking of the field (H. Collins, 2010; Schatzki, 1996; Suchman, 1995; Warde, 2014). I will also complement some of the key issues developed by the authors above with insights from authors from other fields like that of Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1989) and Cultural Studies (Hall, 1980; Hall & O'Shea, 2014).

Bourdieu's theory of practice situates practices as central to the understanding of society, including the maintenance and transformation of its structure and the role of individuals within it. His efforts are focused on discerning how individual actions are orchestrated in order to understand one another and how this leads to a quasi-circular maintenance of society: it leads to individuals that reproduce and maintain with their actions the structure that predispose them to act as they do. One of the most influential concepts of his academic output, articulated across all his theory, is that of habitus, which is a series of

> systems of durable, transposable dispositions [...], principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1990: 53)

The habitus is produced by conditions of existence and "objective regularities" (56). It generates all sensible, reasonable and common-sense behaviors within a particular field.

A field is a "system of distinctive properties" (Bordieu, 1993: 30) that determines a "space of positions", in other words, it is a structured space that distributes "the capital of specific properties which governs" practices and, with them, the "success or specific profits which are at stake" within it. Capital is "accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated,' embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor" (Bourdieu, 1986:46) and it can be presented in three forms:

> as *economic capital,* which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital,* which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital,* made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1986:47)

Different kinds of capital have different values depending on the field in which they are at play. Furthermore, these capitals might be perceived as symbolic capital, which is often "unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence, as authority exerting an effect of (mis)recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986:49). Symbolic capital is the recognition that someone owes economic, cultural and social capital. It produces symbolic power relations that "tend to reproduce and to reinforce the power relations that constitute the structure of social space" (Bourdieu, 1989: 21), which can even lead to symbolic violence, that symbolic form of domination exerted through inequalities in symbolic power and "the communication in which it is disguised" (Bourdieu, 2013: 237).

Fields are spaces of "position-takings" in which practices and their products are inseparable from the capital, as well as inseparable from the position of subjects within the "structure of the distribution of this specific capital" (30). Power struggles tend "to transform or conserve […] field forces" (33):

> The network of objective relations between positions subtends and orients the strategies which the occupants of the different positions implement in their struggles to defend or improve their positions (i.e. their position-takings), strategies which depend for their force and form on the position each agent occupies in the power relations *[rapports de force]*.
>
> (Bordieu, 1993: 30)

The habitus is bodily incorporated and reproduced in every individual, mirroring society and allowing individuals to be part of society in their own specific way. This is what ultimately permits the institutionalization of practices. Processes of institutionalization are thus central to the possibilities of movement within a field, as well as within the forming of the habitus. As defined by Berger and Luckmann (1966), institutionalization "occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized

actions by types of actors. Put differently, any such typification is an institution" (1966: 72). They further add that such typifications are always shared: "They are available to all members of the particular social group in question, and the institution itself typifies individual actors as well as individual actions" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 72). In a simplified way, Wagner (1994) defines social institutions "as relatively durable sets of rules and resources, which human beings draw on in their actions" (19). He adds that institutions are "built in everyday practices" (1994: 23), and persist only through their continuous use and transmission through "interaction, most strongly in socialization and education, but also in any other everyday practice" (19). Wagner also understands that institutions are "relatively stable sets of social conventions" (1994: 31) that are built through processes of conventionalization, de-conventionalization and re-conventionalization. Although Bourdieu often uses the term convention to talk about "conventional practices", he does not put much effort to describe it. Lewis, in his philosophical analysis of conventions (2002), describes them as regularities "in the behaviour of members of a population when they are agents in a recurrent situation" (58), as long as everybody in that population conforms to such behavior regularities, expects everybody else to do so and prefers to do so. Conventions are for Lewis the manner to regain "coordination equilibrium" when facing "coordination problems" (Lewis: 2002: 58).

The habitus is thus behind the possibility of conventionalism and institutionalization, which are, in turn, central in the shaping of habitus. Habitus generates regulated practices "without express regulation or any institutionalized call to order" (Bourdieu, 1990: 17). It is the source of actions and series of actions that, although sometimes might be perceived as strategic by the individuals that perform them, are mostly the result of a series of dispositions beyond one's agency. In this sense, habitus is "history turned into nature […] and denied as such" (78), which is the same as saying that it is naturalized history because the historical formation of the habitus is forgotten. Because we are mostly not aware of the "cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus" (78), we do not realize that we are reproducing it in all our actions: "Each agent, wittingly or unwittingly, willy-nilly, is a producer and reproducer of objective meaning […] which always outruns his conscious intentions" (79). It is precisely this lack of awareness, of consciousness in regards to our actions, that the consequences of what we do have meanings and effects unknown to us. The habitus is shared with other

members of a same social group, but this does not mean that it is exactly the same for everyone. It also depends on the specific social trajectories of each individual, turning its shared habitus into an individual one despite being as well collective.

The possibilities that we have to strategically change (power) positions within a field will depend on the objective social conditions, our capital within the field, and also on our specific social trajectories. Thus, power relations are the cause and consequence of practices. Moreover, persons or groups with enough capital and in better positions have a higher effect on the mechanisms that validate or recognize certain practices. Through this acknowledgment, these practices become inscribed in the habitus, and those groups have, therefore, more chances to influence the maintenance or change of the social structure and improve their positions within it. Position improvement and maintenance are often done through what Bourdieu calls "officialising strategies", the aim of which is to transmute "particular interests […] into disinterested, collective, publicly avowable, legitimate interests" (1990: 40). This means that power, and especially institutional power, through its objectified authority and the legitimacy derived from it, can be used to create patterns of practices that permeate into the practical decisions of groups and individuals, finally changing their habitus. Of course, possibilities for these types of strategies rest solely on the capital and the position of the groups who pursue them. There are, however, other manners in which the structure and the habitus benefit individuals or groups. Bourdieu highlights, for instance, how conforming to the rule within a specific field brings individuals or groups of individuals "secondary benefits" (1990: 22) like prestige and respect, which are also linked to symbolic power.

The notions of field and habitus make Bourdieu's conception of practice highly relational since individuals and their practices are always dependent on their position (and position-takings), which is relative to those of all other individuals within a field. Similarly, the habitus allows them to share a complex system of practices with all other members of a social group acting within a specific field. Changes in the habitus will, in turn, provoke changes in the structure of a field, affecting the relations between the members who share that habitus.

Although Bourdieu's proposal is thus offering a complex system in which structure and agency are not opposing each other, he tends to be quite vague in determining where specifically agency or freedom lie in practice:

> Between the areas that are apparently "freest" because given over in reality to the regulated improvisations of the habitus [...] and the areas most strictly regulated by customary norms and upheld by social sanctions [...], there lies the whole field of practices subjected to traditional precepts, customary recommendations, ritual prescriptions, functioning as a regulatory device which orients practice without producing it.
>
> (Bourdieu, 2013: 21)

It seems that for Bourdieu the only space left for any agency is the space of improvisations of the habitus. This seems, however, in contradiction to the position-taking struggle that he finds within the social field, like the officialising strategies mentioned before, unless such need for position-taking is also and totally inscribed in the habitus. His insistence is, in fact, placed on the tendency to reproduce established orders, where naturalizing arbitrariness becomes its main means.

Naturalization and taken-for-grantedness are relevant in relation to practices because they allow practices to be embodied and reproduced in an unconscious manner; in fact, they remain always inscribed in the habitus. Fairclough defines naturalization as a process by which

> a discourse type so dominates an institution that dominated types are more or less entirely suppressed or contained, (ceasing) to be seen as arbitrary (in the sense of being one among several possible ways of 'seeing' things) and (coming) to be seen as natural, and legitimate because it is simply the way of conducting oneself.
>
> (Fairclough, 1989: 91, emphasis in the original)

Naturalization is thus the process by which a language, a discourse type, an institution, a convention or a procedure, tend to be perceived as natural and truthful, and cease to be seen as historical and arbitrary. This is when ideology becomes hidden, which is, for Fairclough, a "fundamental ideological effect […] pretending to be what it isn't" (1989:92). The discourse type is then learned not as what it is, but as an operational technique or skill that seems to be ideologically neutral: "Practice which appear to be universal and commonsensical can often be shown to originate in the dominant class or the dominant bloc, and to have become *naturalized"* (Fairclough, 1989: 33, emphasis in the original).

De Certeau does not use the term "naturalization", but he describes processes and practices of cultural consumption and production that shed light on some issues related

to it. He points at how the discourses that an institution produces seem to always make sense to observers sufficiently immersed in that institutional context (De Certeau, 1988). The lack of distance between individuals and the institutions that produce these discourses prevents them from perceiving their arbitrariness. Similarly, by focusing on the historical processes of institutionalization, Bourdieu claims that "the instituted institution makes us forget that it issues out of a long series of acts of institution (in the active sense) and hence has all the appearances of the natural" (Bourdieu, 1998: 40, emphasis in the original). The persuasiveness of common sense is due to the appearance that it "is a product of nature rather than of history" (Hall & O'Shea, 2014). It has been constructed through time and without leaving a trace of their sources.

For Bourdieu, one of the most important and generalized kinds of naturalization is that of a "sense of limits" or "sense of reality" (1990: 164), which is "the correspondence between the objective classes and the internalized classes, social structures and mental structures, which is the basis of the most ineradicable adherence to the established order" (164).

Hall, who explains message production and reception as coding and decoding processes, states that the high distribution of some codes, together with their early learning, leads us to perceive them as natural. This has the "(ideological) effect of concealing the practices of coding which are present" (Hall, 1980: 132). He is concerned about processes of naturalization in relation to coding and decoding of messages:

> Certain codes may, of course, be so widely distributed in a specific language community or culture, and be learned at so early an age, that they appear not to be constructed – the effect of an articulation between sign and referent – but to be 'naturally ' given. Simple visual signs appear to have achieved a 'near-universality' in this sense: though evidence remains that even apparently 'natural' visual codes are culture-specific. However, this does not mean that no codes have intervened; rather, that the codes have been profoundly naturalized. The operation of naturalized codes reveals not the transparency and 'naturalness' of language but the depth, the habituation and the near-universality of the codes in use. They produce apparently 'natural recognitions' [...]. Actually, what naturalized codes demonstrate is the degree of habituation produced when there is a fundamental alignment and reciprocity- an achieved equivalence- between the encoding and decoding sides of an exchange of meanings.

(Hall, 1980: 132)

Familiarity (common sense, naturalization, taken-for-grantedness) does not let us see the historical and social conditions and consequences of the actions taking place in our institutions (Bourdieu, 1998a). If we do not realize that these actions are historically and socially determined, in other words, if we do not know their cause we will not be aware of their effects. Naturalized knowledge is knowledge that becomes common sense, and whose ideological effects are intensified precisely because their ideological content and origin are no longer perceived (Fairclough, 1989). In the institution, power relations are then reproduced and maintained through naturalized concepts and practices:

> The naturalization of the meanings of words is an effective way of constraining the contents of discourse and, in the long term, knowledge and beliefs. So too is the naturalization of situation types, which helps to consolidate particular images of the social order. The naturalization of interactional routines is an effective way of constraining the social relations which are enacted in discourse, and of constraining in the longer term a society's system of social relationships. Finally, the naturalization of subject positions self-evidently constrains subjects, and in the longer term both contributes to the socialization of persons and to the delimitation of the 'stock' of social identities in a given institution or society. Naturalization, then, is the most formidable weapon in the armoury of power, and therefore a significant focus of struggle.
>
> (Fairclough, 1989: 105-6)

Fairclough's concept of subject position is close to that of the typified roles of Schütz (1976b) and, of course, to the habitus of the subjects conditioned by their positions and capitals within a particular field (Bourdieu, 1990). A subject position determines what someone is supposed, allowed or expected to do and not to do, in particular situations and in relation to other participants with similar or different subject positions. Subject positions are both constraining and enabling us "to act as social agents" (Fairclough, 1989: 39). As we can read in the last quote, they are naturalized through, for example, the sense of limits already mentioned above (Bourdieu, 1990), ascribing a social position to certain kinds of subjects depending on characteristics such as gender, age, class, origin, but also extracted from objectified authority –or lack of it– such as that of scholars, teachers, policemen or judges.

The most effective way of fighting naturalized meanings, practices, subject positions or institutions is to denaturalize them by tracking their sources, revealing that certain cultural patterns are only applicable "to a specific historical situation" (Schutz, 1976b: 96). This position is also shared by Gramsci (1971) or Benjamin (2006). It is also within this ideological framework that Foucault's work can be situated when he demonstrates the historical formation of the practices of the clinic (2012) or of the asylum (2001). Bourdieu's view, although less historical and more sociologic, is similar in relation to the scholastic field (1998b), the family (1997a) or the notion of taste (Bourdieu, 2006).

> These cognitive structures are historically constituted forms and therefore arbitrary in the Saussurean sense, conventional, ex instituto, as Leibniz said, which means that we can trace their social genesis.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1998:53)

In consequence, the denaturalization and naturalization of conventions is often due to the struggle of position takings. Issues of power become so specific because naturalized conventions "control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, which channel it in one direction as against the many other directions that would theoretically be possible" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 72).

Naturalized action-knowledge driven by the habitus is called by Bourdieu "practical sense" or "practical knowledge" (Bourdieu, 1990, 2013) and by other authors "habitualization" or "habit" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Warde, 2014), "routinization" (Giddens, 1984), "tacit knowledge" (H. Collins, 2010; Polanyi, 1983), "knowledge-recipe" (Schütz, 1976c) or "common sense" (Gramsci, 1971; Hall & O'Shea, 2014). This kind of action-knowledge simplifies everyday life decisions and any action reproducing embodied knowledge with no need to make it conscious. Such kind of action is relevant because it explains an important part of the practices of people, their temporal and spatial spread and, again, the unconscious perpetuation of power relations and its ideological implications.

Giddens (1984) pays special attention to the perpetuation of practices in time and space. Practices for him rely on rules (codes and norms) and resources. Rules and resources are what constitutes a social structure. It is Schatkzi (1996), in his interpretation of the work of Giddens, who emphasizes that the reason "why rules and resources structure practices and systems is that actors draw [on them] in their interactions" (146). But

practices are also determined by what Giddens calls the "reasons" (which are discursively conscious) and "wants" (rooted in the unconscious) of the actors. This contrasts with Bourdieu's work, who thinks that motivations, reasons, or wants would also be mainly given or justified by the habitus.

Other authors focus on the concept of habituation and its object, the habit. Warde considers habits to be "embodied procedures" (Warde, 2014: 293), in other words, procedures that become fused with our bodies as if they were an extension of ourselves. Procedures and actions that are often repeated, especially those into which we are socialized, become, in Bourdieu's terms, practical knowledge and sense (Bourdieu, 2013). In Berger and Luckmann's terms, they are apprehended, retaining "their meaningful character for the individual although the meanings involved become embedded as routines in [their] general stock of knowledge, taken for granted and at hand for [their] projects into the future" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 71). And they add: "Habitualization carries with it the important psychological gain that choices are narrowed" (71). Bourdieu also considers that what he calls "practical sense" "orients 'choices' which, though not deliberate, are no less systematic" (1990: 67). Instead of habituation and practical sense, Giddens writes about routinization and practical consciousness, which "consists of all the things which actors know tacitly about how to 'go on' in the contexts of social life without being able to give them direct discursive expression" (Giddens, 1984: xxiii).

Tacit knowledge is, nevertheless, not to be understood as opposed to explicit or conscious knowledge. Explicit knowledge is always partially tacit or relying on tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1983). Collins (2010) differentiates between three kinds of tacit knowledge: embodied-somatic, collective, and relational. These differences are only relevant in that some authors have focused, more or less, on one of them, but these kinds of tacit knowledge do not exist without each other. Somatic tacit knowledge, which pertains to the kind of practices that require a bodily, as well as a physical response, and manifests itself as an automatism, is always embedded in a wider collective and relational tacit knowledge. The relation works, as well, the other way around: since knowledge is partly derived from our bodily characteristics, capabilities and limitations, collective tacit knowledge is also based on bodily tacit knowledge.

The conception of practical knowledge is closer to Schütz's "knowledge-recipe" (1976c). Followed "as if it were a ritual", knowledge-recipe indicates "how to bring

forth in typical situations typical results by typical means. The recipes indicate procedures which can be trusted even though they are not clearly understood" (Schütz, 1976c: 122). It is a kind of knowledge of means and procedures that can be applied without knowing its origin or its deep functioning, allowing us to deal with situations and solve practical issues like driving, cooking or healing the flu.

This type of socially derived knowledge is inherited and transmitted as socially accepted knowledge within an "in-group". Belonging to an in-group allows us to presuppose that we share with our interlocutor a common knowledge or view of the world. Only different standpoints and small differences related to our biographic experience and knowledge will slightly distance and complicate interaction between members of the same in-group. This presupposition is a consequence of what Schütz (Schütz, 1953) calls "the idealization of the interchangeability of the standpoints" and the "idealization of the congruency of the system of relevancies" (1953: 8). These are idealizations that allow us to presuppose, mostly in an unconscious way, that our system of relevancies and standpoints are shared and agreed with others belonging to our in-group. An in-group "has a relatively natural concept of the world which its members take for granted" (Schutz, 1976c: 121) and whose origin remains hidden. Individuals or sub-groups within the in-groups might select "different elements of it as an object of further inquiry" (121). The process by which a group of individuals become linked to each other as a result of these systems of relevancies and standpoints originates in the shared problems that are faced in common situations. This leads to a socially approved system of typifications and to take for granted domains of relevancies that are ideologically charged. This system is, nevertheless, not static and the typifications and prevalences are often in conflict. They enter a crisis when they stop serving their purpose and, in such crisis, their historical and social specificities become revealed (Schütz, 1976a). This system of relevancies and typifications that are part of a socially derived knowledge has the social function of homogenizing facts or events and, as a consequence, also their treatment, transforming unique actions by unique individuals into "typical functions of typical social roles, originating in typical motives aimed at bringing about typical ends" (Schütz, 1976a: 237). It also functions as a scheme of orientation and interpretation, constituting a "universe of discourse" among the members of an in-group, granting the congruency and success of human interaction. Finally, this socially approved system of typifications and relevancies serves as a

common field, where both individual and group structures of belief meet. Also, as a consequence, individuals conform themselves to that typification accordingly or depending on the situation and the problem they have to solve. In other words, they take a specific role, even if it might be in contradiction with any other roles that they would assume at other moments and situations.

Finally, Gramsci (1971) uses also the term "common sense", which he defines as a response to specific problems that draw on inherited ideas and traditions but that keep adapting themselves to the present, transforming themselves continuously. Similarly, for Hall and O'Shea, common sense is

> A form of 'everyday thinking' which offers us frameworks of meaning with which to make sense of the world. It is a form of popular, easily-available knowledge which contains no complicated ideas, requires no sophisticated argument and does not depend on deep thought or wide reading. It works intuitively, without forethought or reflection. It is pragmatic and empirical, giving the illusion of arising directly from experience, reflecting only the realities of daily life and answering the needs of 'the common people' for practical guidance and advice.
>
> (Hall & O'Shea, 2014: 8-9)

As we already saw a few pages ago, social fields are spaces of struggle in which positions can be renegotiated. In that negotiation, the habitus, as well as the naturalized practices and the practical sense derived from it, enables and constrains the possibilities of position-takings:

> It is only when the dominated have the material and symbolic means of rejecting the definition of the real that is imposed on them through logical structures reproducing the social structures (i.e. the state of the power relations) and to lift the (institutionalized or internalized) censorships which it implies, i.e. when social classifications become the object and instrument of class struggle, that the arbitrary principles of the prevailing classification can appear as such and it therefore becomes necessary to undertake the work of conscious systematization and express rationalization which marks the passage from doxa to orthodoxy.
>
> (Bourdieu, 2013: 169)

Nevertheless, as Foucault (1995) explains through the concept of power-knowledge relations, it is power what determines "the forms and possible domains of knowledge" (Foucault, 1995: 28). For resisting subjects, therefore, it is more difficult to apply such

knowledge to their struggles. Bourdieu claims that "in the symbolic struggle for the production of common sense or, more precisely, for the monopoly over legitimate naming, agents put into action the symbolic capital that they have acquired in previous struggles" (Bourdieu, 1989:21).

This struggle for power through symbolic capital, which is a struggle of position-takings, is by other authors, Fairclough (1989) in particular, understood as processes of empowerment. For him, empowerment is the process by which persons or groups that are "excluded from particular types of discourse or particular subject positions within types of discourse" use and infringe, resist or adapt to conventions "without radically changing them" (Fairclough, 1989: 244). This infringement requires a certain process of denaturalization, the awareness that the specific conventions or institutions that need to be changed are not natural but the result of complex historical processes. Bourdieu explains this struggle from within in a similar manner, through the notion of *illusio*, which is a specific relation that we have with the fields we belong to. *Illusio* makes possible for us to try to change power relations within a social field. To exercise this will demonstrates that we recognize its legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1998: 76-79):

> Wanting to undertake a revolution in a field is to accord the essential of what the field tacitly demands, namely that it is important, that the game played is sufficiently important for one to want to undertake a revolution in it.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1998: 78)

When naturalized institutions, or concepts and practices within them, become denaturalized –by the effort of some sub-groups or because they fail to solve the issues they were attending to– their historical and ideological contingencies become evident and other options might arise, becoming, eventually, naturalized in their turn. Denaturalization is, therefore, an empowerment tool. Empowerment, however, is possible and spread out through the use and reproduction of naturalized codes, conventions and institutions.

Issues of legitimacy and authority are at stake here. The process of legitimation is both cognitive and normative and it "'explains' the institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectivated meanings" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966: 111). Legitimacy is understood as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms,

values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman, 1995: 574). Suchman emphasizes how the stability and comprehensibility of legitimate activities help institutions and their "legitimate organizations to become almost self-replicating, requiring little ongoing investment in collective mobilization" (Suchman, 1995: 574).

Thus, legitimacy requires some degree of naturalization. Both processes are totally intertwined. Taken-for-grantedness is "the most subtle and the most powerful source of legitimacy identified to date" (Suchman, 1995: 583). Furthermore, when legitimacy is cognitive, in other words, naturalized, it is "more elusive to obtain and more difficult to manipulate, but it also becomes more subtle, more profound, and more self-sustaining, once established" (Suchman, 1995:585). For Bourdieu, the arbitrariness of legitimacy can also be misrecognized, concealing the "competition for legitimacy, and hence [the] conflict between groups claiming to possess it" (Bourdieu, 2013: 168).

Certain practices are reserved to those with the authority to perform them. Such authority, which is the power to act or to influence others, which is perceived as such by them, is given or transferred by the institution that holds the legitimacy to enforce it. Authorized persons or groups have, then, "access to the legitimate instruments of expression" and participate "in the authority of the institution" (Bourdieu, 1991: 109). Bourdieu further adds that the maintenance of legitimate authority to perform certain actions and practices depends on proper performance, legitimate time and place, use of legitimate forms and the reception of legitimate receivers (Bourdieu, 1991: 132). But, although authority needs to be granted by legitimate institutions, the process works, furthermore, in both directions: socially approved knowledge is also a "source of prestige and authority" and the "home of public opinion", assets that distinguish the expert and the well-informed citizen (Schütz, 1976c: 134). This means that the use of legitimate practices can be seen as strategic and, thus, disposable "resource" (Suchman, 1995: 577).

Legitimate practices, as resources available in a field, are thus used and consumed by individuals and groups. In *The Practice of Everyday Life,* de Certeau (1988) analyzes how users operate in the practice of consumption. He shows how the consumer or user is, in fact, a producer through consumption. In his view, "users make (bricolent) innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules" (xiii-xiv). Users "reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production [...] by

means of a multitude of 'tactics' articulated in the details of everyday life" (xiv). Users re-arrange, re-use, and re-produce new products through their everyday use and the interpretation of received messages and products. They do so as *bricoleurs*, in other words, with the inventiveness of an artisan. De Certeau's production through consumption is tied to social situations and power relations: "The tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices" (xvii). In Bourdieu's terms, individuals develop these tactics and strategies within a specific field by putting their capital and the available resources in play.

> Many everyday practices (talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc.) are tactical in character. And so are, more generally, many "ways of operating": victories of the "weak" over the "strong" (whether the strength be that of powerful people or the violence of things or of an imposed order, etc.) , clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things, "hunter's cunning," maneuvers, polymorphic simulations, joyful discoveries, poetic as well as warlike.
>
> (de Certeau, 1988: xix)

Institutional practices are assimilated and appropriated by those to whom they are directed, contesting or resisting the power unbalance and even the symbolic violence exerted against them. De Certeau takes the speech act, which is at the same time "a use of language and an operation performed on it" (33), to exemplify the consumption both as use and production. In fact, in order to be used, language needs to be first appropriated, assimilated, and then re-employed in the creation of linguistic products. De Certeau suggests how, by talking, speakers operate "within the field of a linguistic system", effecting "an appropriation or reappropriation of language" and proposing "a contract with the other (the interlocutor) in a network of places and relations" (de Certeau, 1988: xiii). Hall also thinks that language needs to be appropriated "as meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded" in order to be used, allowing the product of "the institution-societal relations' to be realized and 'have an effect" (Hall, 1980: 130). In order to use it to construct meaning with it, or to code and decode it, we need to take language (a socio-cultural product) as our own.

In appropriation, there is more at stake as Lefebvre (2009) thought. For him, appropriation is a practice "of political strategy" that functions by "de-alienation" (Lefebvre, 2009:150). It is a fight against domination by the modification of meanings

and purpose (Lefebvre, 2009a). If a process of de-alienation is possible it is because of a previous alienation or a "dispossession" of language. In Bourdieu's terms, such dispossession occurs because the authority and the legitimacy over language is restricted to specific social groups, to

> a body of professionals, objectively invested with the monopoly of the legitimate use of the legitimate language, who produce for their own use a special language predisposed to fulfil, as a by-product, a social function of distinction in the relations between classes and in the struggles they wage on the terrain of language.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1991: 59)

Thus, tactical users appropriate a language that is legitimate within a specific field and use it without having the authority to do so. They act "in the space of the other, through the re-use of frames of reference which proceed from an external power" (1988: 17). He also describes what he calls a "popular use" of religion, which is a re-employment of a system constructed and spread by others. In this re-use, the followers of a religion, readapt the highly ritualistic and institutionalized practices to their needs, mixing them with other religious practices and bringing them to their social contexts. This appropriation modifies the frame of reference of the institutionalized practice, but without compromising "the sincerity with which it may be believed [or] the lucidity with which […] the struggles and inequalities hidden under the established order may be perceived' (de Certeau, 1988: 17-18). Thus, as explained a few pages ago, this kind of struggle, of empowerment, needs a certain degree of acceptance of the field and of the myriad positions available in it.

> A way of using imposed systems constitutes the resistance to the historical law of a state of affairs and its dogmatic legitimations. A practice of the order constructed by others redistributes its space; it creates at least a certain play in that order, a space for maneuvers of unequal forces and for utopian points of reference.
>
> (de Certeau, 1988: 18)

Although Bourdieu produced a theoretical framework that is widely used, he insisted in the fact that practice can only be assessed through particular cases, as he did, for example, with the analysis of the parallel-cousin marriage (2013). Such particular cases are produced "from a small number of schemes that are continuously applied in all domains of practice" (Bourdieu, 2013: 16). For Bourdieu, the "modus operandi reveals itself only in the opus operatum" (18), in other words, in the specific practices and their

products. Said otherwise, the structuring structures that shape practice can be "revealed only in the objects they structure" (2013: 90).

To do so, Bourdieu proposed to rely on the informants' discourses about their practices. Informants, in their apparently misleading explanations, not only depict their practices but also theorize them, which exposes the habitus that produces both the practices and the discourses:

> The explanation agents may provide of their own practice, thanks to a quasi-theoretical reflection on their practice, conceals, even from their own eyes, the true nature of their practical mastery, i.e. that it is learned ignorance (docta ignorantia), a mode of practical knowledge not comprising knowledge of its own principles. It follows that this learned ignorance can only give rise to the misleading discourse of a speaker himself misled, ignorant both of the objective truth about his practical mastery (which is that it is ignorant of its own truth) and of the true principle of the knowledge his practical mastery contains.
>
> (Bourdieu, 2013: 19)

Foucault (1992) also considered that research on practices means to consider them as events and "not as an institutional fact or ideological effect" (1992: 76), breaking them down into smaller processes and seeing how they become central for their institutions. Foucault's method is known as genealogy, a concept that he developed from Nietzsche's work. Foucault describes genealogy as effective history, in other words, as "gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary [which] operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times" (Foucault, 1984: 76). Effective history does not look for origins and escapes from the determinism of "destiny or regulative mechanisms" (1984:88); it understands events in terms of relations of power. At the end, effective history focuses on moments of decadence and "studies what is closest, but in an abrupt dispossession, so as to seize it at a distance (an approach similar to that of a doctor who looks closely, who plunges to make a diagnosis and to state its difference)" (89-90).

Leisure, Myth and Ritual

I have also understood amateur museum practices under the light of leisure, and of myth and ritual theory, which I have always put in relation to the literature on museology and on the theory of practice. The second, third and fourth chapters include a short review

of literature on these fields, although they do not attempt to be an exhaustive state of the art. The reason why leisure, myth and ritual theories are in this research is that they propose different approaches to practice; they allow an explanation of museum practices through different lenses. I do not attempt, however, to do a contribution in any of these fields and the limitations of time and extension of this thesis do not allow me to further delve into these fields.

I have explored the concept of leisure through a few authors from that field, specially Rojek (2001, 2005) and Kelly (1996, 2009), among others (Critcher, 2006; Freysinger & Harris, 2006; Roberts, 2006; Shaw, 2001;1985). Myth and ritual have been approached mainly through Segal (1998, 2004) and Kolakowsi (2006), while ritual includes also the insights of Bell (2009), Durkheim (1995) and Rappaport (1999), as well as other authors that have used ritual as a lens through which understand some cultural practices (R. Collins, 2004; Couldry, 2005; Kertzer, 1988; Lukes, 1975; Pyyhtinen, 2014).

PART I

Amateur Museums, their Makers and Me

In the following pages I offer a thick description of each of the museums that I have chosen to be a part of this research. It is a situated description, that is, I have written it trying to situate myself in relation to the museums and their practitioners. I show as much as possible how I approached them, what my feelings were about them and how my relation with them evolved.

To do so I have relied on the field notes that I have been taking before, during (when possible) and after each contact with them as well as on their explanations in the guided tours and interviews, and on the information on their websites and booklets. I also offer a selection of the photographs that I have taken when this was possible. The order in which they appear is that of my first visit to each museum. I have taken this decision because I consider that the order in which I have been meeting them has affected my approach and understanding of them. Nevertheless, sometimes the interviews took place much later than the first meeting, so my contacts with each museum had a completely different rhythm in every case.

Hopefully these descriptions will give the reader an idea of how these museums are like and will serve as a key to understand my interpretations of them and of the museum practitioners' explanations about their own practices.

Museu del Pa (the Bread Museum)

The Bread Museum appears in the register of collections open to the public of the Catalan government. Although the museum does not have a website, I could find some on-line information on a show of the Catalan Autonomic Television (Cassadó, 2012) where Joaquim, the museum owner, talked about bread. He is also mentioned in a local magazine (Lleopart, 2015).

The Museum

The Bread Museum is located in Tona, a small town at approximately 60 km to the north of Barcelona. It fills the upper floor of Joaquim and his wife's house. The building has four floors and the family bakery from which Joaquim has already retired is at the ground floor. The second and third floors are used as their home and the attic, which was build afterwards for this purpose, harbors the museum.

Visitors follow Joaquim through the bakery and the staircase until the last floor, separated from the staircase by a closed door. The last floor is a garret that is strongly characterized by its pitched roof and an absolute lack of natural light (fig. 1). There are only two rooms here, the main one, occupied by the museum, and a smaller room which is Joaquim's office and. Because of the urban regulations which limit the height of the buildings in the center of the village, the walls at both ends of the pitched roof are very low, complicating the use of the space.

The museum shows a display of part of Joaquim's collection of baking tools, breads, and flour sacks. There are also some dioramas made by him with the help of a woman from the same town who is a manger maker (fig. 3, 4). These dioramas represent bakeries or baking processes of ancient civilizations such as the Egyptian or Roman. Other clay figures are also exhibited with the same aim (fig. 5). There is also printed documentation on the walls, some of which is framed. Most of this documentation has also a historical focus, specially again related to ancient bread baking techniques.

The display is lit up with fluorescent lights installed at the ceiling and with some smaller lights inside the cabinets and dioramas, in this case with a dramatic effect. A part from these cases, the general lighting is warm but not dramatic. The place is quiet and isolated from the external world, although not for the temperature: it is very cold in winter and very warm in summer.

All the breads are labeled with the city of origin of the bread, the name of the bread, the autonomous community of origin, and sometimes the number of inclusion in the catalogue (fig. 8). All the labels are either handwritten or made with a label writer. The other objects do not have labels but only the number of inclusion in the collection catalogue.

The breads seem to be grouped by place of origin, but they are scattered around the room on shelves, glass cabinets -filled with foreign breads- and on old tables that are catalogued as well as baking tools (fig. 1, 2). As Joaquim explained to me during my second visit, he would like to highlight the thematic disposition of objects, but his options are quite limited because of the lack of space. The sections in which the display is nevertheless divided are farmhouse bread baking, early industrial production, local objects (especially from neighboring bakeries), shop and sales utensils, and flour. Breads are scattered around the place but they keep certain geographic order: the Catalan breads are grouped together, those of the rest of Spain too, and the ones from other countries are also kept together inside glass cabinets.

The Bread Museum does not have a website and Joaquim does not consider it a necessity because he considers that visitors find information about the museum that others have uploaded. Furthermore, he does not like social networks at all. Yet some years ago Joaquim edited a small catalogue, almost a booklet (fig. 11, 12) [3]. The front cover of the catalogue shows a black and white picture of the exhibition, the logo of the museum, which includes its full name "Museu del pa", the name of the village, Tona, and five drawings of objects that also appear in the interior. The back cover follows the same pattern with six more drawings, the continuation of the image of the cover, and contact information. Joaquim is the author of the drawings and he got the texts corrected by another friend. His drawing skills have appeared often in our conversations. For example, he sometimes draws the objects in the catalogue files, he makes informative drawings for the exhibition (fig. 10), and he teaches his grandson to draw. The booklet is divided into 3 sections: a presentation text in which he acknowledges the help received by friends and neighbors, a section with drawings of objects and brief

[3] He has only one copy left, so I had to ask him to allow me to make copies of it. As it seemed to me that he was very protective of his last copy, I decided to change my proposition (that meant taking it somewhere else to scan it) and just photograph it. Of course this meant losing quite a lot of quality and having to fix the distortion of the camera with Photoshop. The colour and the strange shades of the resulting images do not correspond to the original.

explanations of their use, and a section with photographs of the exhibition. As expected, there are no logos of other partners or collaborators.

Joaquim, History and the Family Bakery

Joaquim is a retired bread baker who owns a hundred year old bakery that has always belonged to his family. His interest in ancient history, which included bread baking in ancient civilizations, was one of the origins of the museum. Furthermore, he had a lot of old baking tools that belonged to his family bakery, which he did not consider as a collection; he simply stored them. It was when a friend of his, Joan Lleopart, the founder of Mas Colomer, a wheat museum not far away from Tona, convinced him about the interest of all that material. The year 1992 he finally decided to make his own museum and thus he turned all those stored tools into a collection and selected some of them for display. Since then the collection has grown with donations by other bakers from the area that either retired or renewed their tools. Joaquim has also purchased some objects in antiquarians. Later on he started another collection, that of breads from Catalonia, from different regions of Spain and from the rest of the world, which he buys taking advantage of his holiday trips or that friends and family members bring him. Joaquim has had to learn to conserve these breads, and because bread is not a common material to be preserved he has had to find his own method. If a piece of bread is damaged, he bakes it again, but he can only do this with the breads that he has the ingredients and the tools for, which excludes many of the foreign ones. More recently, he has also started a collection of flour sacks that he usually buys online or at antique shops.[4]

Joaquim has sought for help any time he needed to, for example from the already mentioned founder of Mas Colomer and also from his son, who contributed to the booklet. Joaquim also got help from a friend linked to the university to classify the objects of his collection.

He often collaborates with a local archeological interpretation center (El Camp de les Lloses), where he makes demonstrations of ancient bread baking techniques. He also

[4] Joaquim also collects old comic books (in which his older grandson starts to be interested) and cinema programs. Nevertheless, these collections do not seem to be so well catalogued and preserved and are not part of the museum.

has a strong implication with local schools, not only by receiving school groups at the museum, but also by doing bread baking workshops at their classrooms. Joaquim has received a local recognition (premi Mil·liari) for his work as bread historian, baker, and collector.

Joaquim has classified and catalogued all the items of his collection, although he considers that the tools are better catalogued than the breads. He uses the classification forms that the Catalan government used in the eighties, when he started the collection: a hand written sheet of paper for every item (fig. 13, 14).

He is systematic in his work and he takes advantage of any free minute that he can dedicate to the museum or to the study of bread history. As he said, the museum was one of the two ideas that he has ever been confident about –the other one was to marry his wife-, and he thought that either he did it properly or it would be better not to even start. He seems to be perfectionist and hard working. Nevertheless, he is also aware that he has been able to make the museum because of the sacrifices of his wife who took care of all the housekeeping tasks. His sons have only helped him when he has needed to go to pick up objects donated by some other bakery. In fact, he says that he does not see a clear future for the museum because no younger members of his family are interested enough in it. Because he is getting old, he wants to leave certain things done in relation to the research that he has been doing on bread history, so if anyone would be interested in it in the future, it could be of some use.

The Visit

I visited the Bread Museum for the first time with Natàlia, my thesis supervisor. The museum is close to her home and she was interested in it to better understand my object of study. The Bread Museum was one of the easiest museums to contact: the visit to the museum is always by appointment, but the flexibility of the owner made it easy to find a suitable date.

Joaquim received us punctually at the family bakery, and lead us to the last floor of the four-story building. Before we had time to start wondering around, he started guiding us in a manner that made me think that he has done it many times before and that he has the contents and order of the visit very articulated and clear in his mind. He often answered my questions by saying that he will explain it later on, not allowing me to change the direction and order of the visit.

Natàlia listens carefully but stays totally quiet. She already told me she wanted to remain very discreet, like she wasn't there. I wonder how she would behave in the exact same place if we were visiting just for enjoyment, with no relation to my research. I decide to ask questions, more or less like I usually do as a visitor, especially if I am alone or almost alone with a host: I feel uncomfortable if I do not express some interest. This is mainly due to my own experience as a guide in contemporary art exhibitions, which made me appreciate the importance of an interested listener, or, even better, an interlocutor. Of course my questions and reactions are a mix between a genuine interest in the topic, a genuine interest in the museum, and an attempt to obtain information that could help me decide whether or not to include the Bread Museum among the case studies of my project. With our slightly forced attitudes, Natalia and I follow Joaquim through the narrow corridors that are left between objects: dry preserved pieces of bread, old baking tools, framed photographs, newspaper clippings and dioramas. The dioramas are the only trigger able to break Natàlia's silence at the end of the visit: and yes, he makes the dioramas himself with the help of a neighbor who makes the human figures.

Joaquim describes and explains many objects, showing a deep historical and technical knowledge on them. He, differently than what happens in other amateur museums, almost does not refer to his personal links with the objects until I ask: some objects belonged to his family who used them years ago in the bakery of the ground floor, others are donations from other bakers in the area, or gifts from friends and family members from many parts of the world. He has travelled to what seemed to me a surprising amount of countries from where he gathered more objects and breads. This makes me think that some of them are also souvenirs of such places or of his family's past.

He refers a few times to the difficulties due to the lack of space –he has many more objects stored somewhere else- and money to, for example, reprint the old pictures and reframe them. When asked, he tells us he has learned how to manage the museum by himself, asking for help when needed and using the templates of the Catalan government for cataloguing the objects. He seems especially proud of the difficulty of preserving the pieces of bread and the skills he has developed to overcome them.

Although he is very polite and welcoming, I feel somewhat uncomfortable from time to time because of the degree of control that he tries to exert on our movement around

the space. He gives us little chances for freely wandering around and it is impossible for us to build our own tour. The visit lasts about two hours and our feet are frozen by the time we leave the museum. I end up with the conviction that Joaquim and his museum would be interesting for my research. When I call him after almost three months to ask for his participation in the project he seems interested and collaborative.

Interview

I reach the museum after a one-hour drive. I am sleepy and a bit nervous because the battery of my sound recorder is low. Joaquim receives me at his office, right next to the museum. It is then that I notice for the first time that there is a door on one of the walls of the museum that I did not perceive in my first visit, overwhelmed, I guess, by the density of the objects on the walls. The room is a cozy office with one window. The two larger walls are completely covered with bookshelves, which are filled up with history books and quite a few classics of literature and philosophy. Some books are labeled with a number and many have several bookmarks. The shelves of one of the walls are filled with cardboard file boxes. There is no computer on the table but still more books, some handwritten notes, and a trophy. Behind the desk, against the only wall that is not covered with books, there is a glass cabinet filled with manger figurines.

Joaquim does not seat behind the desk but on an old chair next to mine, side by side. I briefly explain him again the interest of his museum for my research, and ask for permission to record our conversation.

I have the feeling that our conversation starts a bit clumsily, he answers my questions too fast and I feel unable to get him talking more comfortably and going into more detail. I start with a very important question to me, about the origins of the museum, but I think that it is for him an easy question to answer to warm up. Gradually we start getting more comfortable and I start to see that he is very talkative about certain topics but very brief and pragmatic about others: the contrast is so great that sometimes I feel confused.

A few weeks after the interview I visit him again to take some pictures of the museum. He accompanies me while I do it and he keeps explaining some things to me. Since the last time I was there he has included a few items in the collection and the exhibition. I see that they already have the small label with the catalogue number. He also explains

that he will remove some items soon to clean them and that one of the glass cabinets will be changed for another one that has just been given to him.

While I am there, he insists in the lack of interest of public administrations in helping such kind of museographic proposals. I try to push him a bit to start a conversation on how museology pays more attention to bigger an often public museums, but I do not manage to start a discussion. The feeling that I have is that although he has been studying bread and thinking of his museum practices, he has not reflected much on museum making itself, like it was a mere tool empty of meaning and content.

Figure 1: View of the Bread Museum.

Figure 2: Display of breads in the Bread Museum.

Figure 3: Breads, tools, documentation and dioramas in the Bread Museum.

Figure 4: Detail of a diorama in the Bread Museum.

Figure 5: Detail of a figure representing an Egyptian bread baking procedure.

Figure 6: Detail of dioramas and documentation in the Bread Museum.

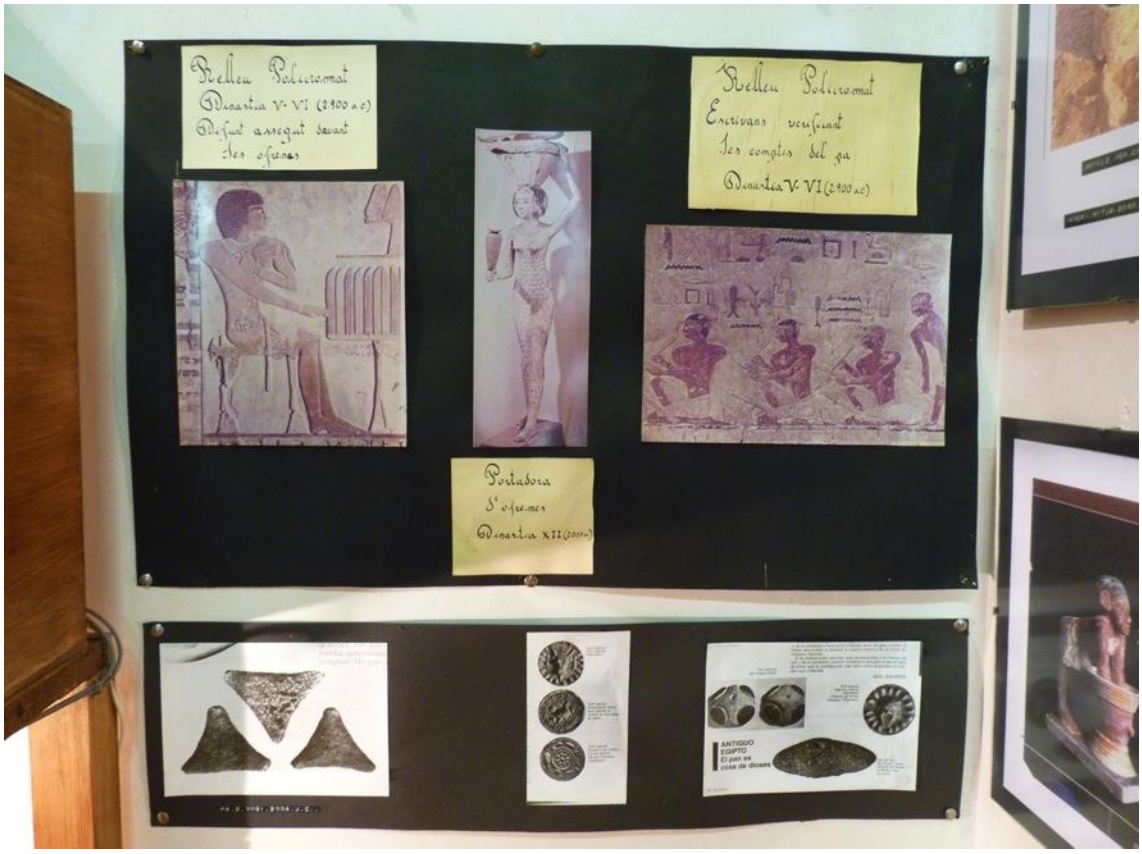


Figure 7: Documentation on the walls of the Bread Museum

Figure 8: Detail of the display and labels in the Bread Museum.

Figure 9: General view of the Bread Museum.

Figure 10: View of the Bread Museum.

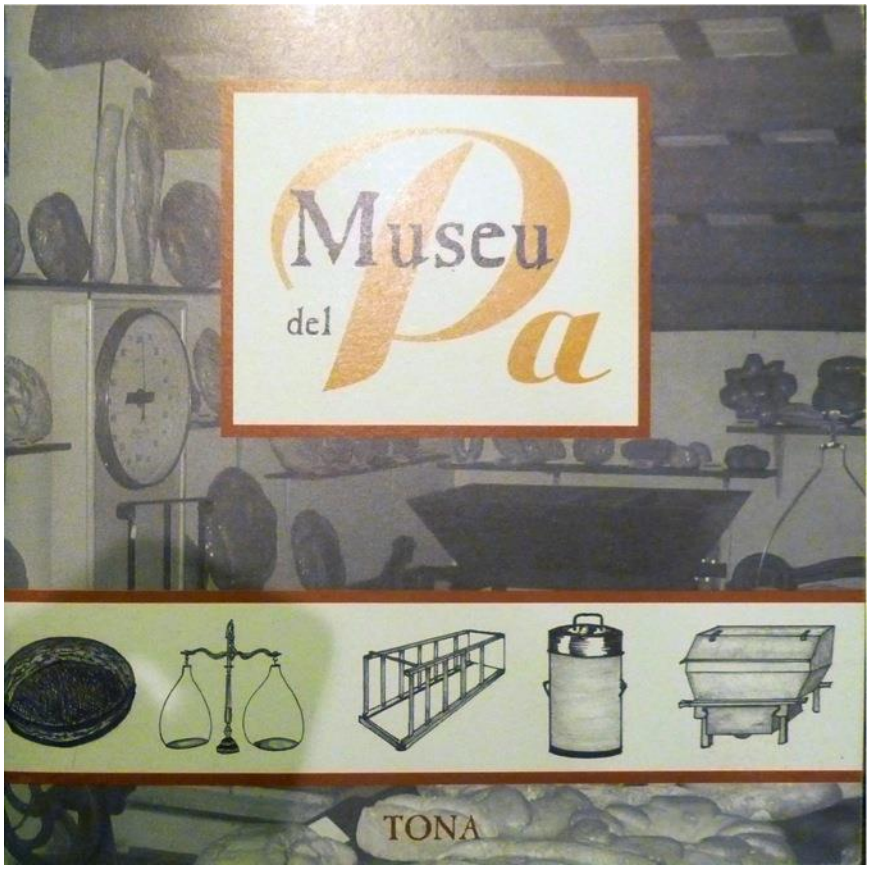


Figure 11: Cover detail of the booklet of the Bread Museum.

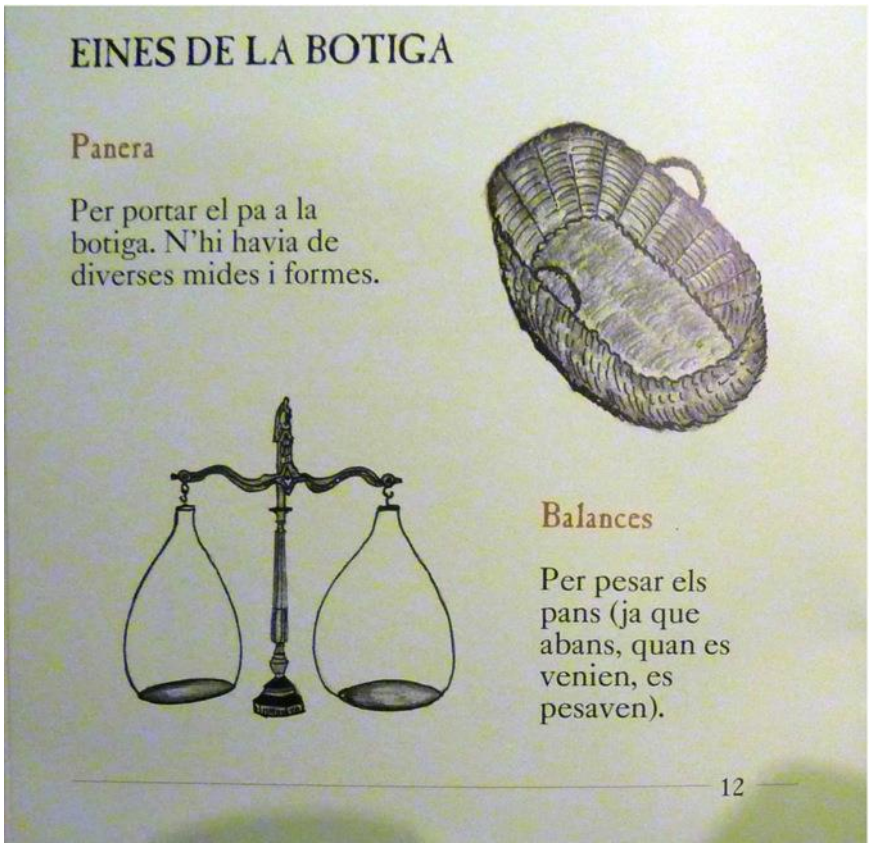
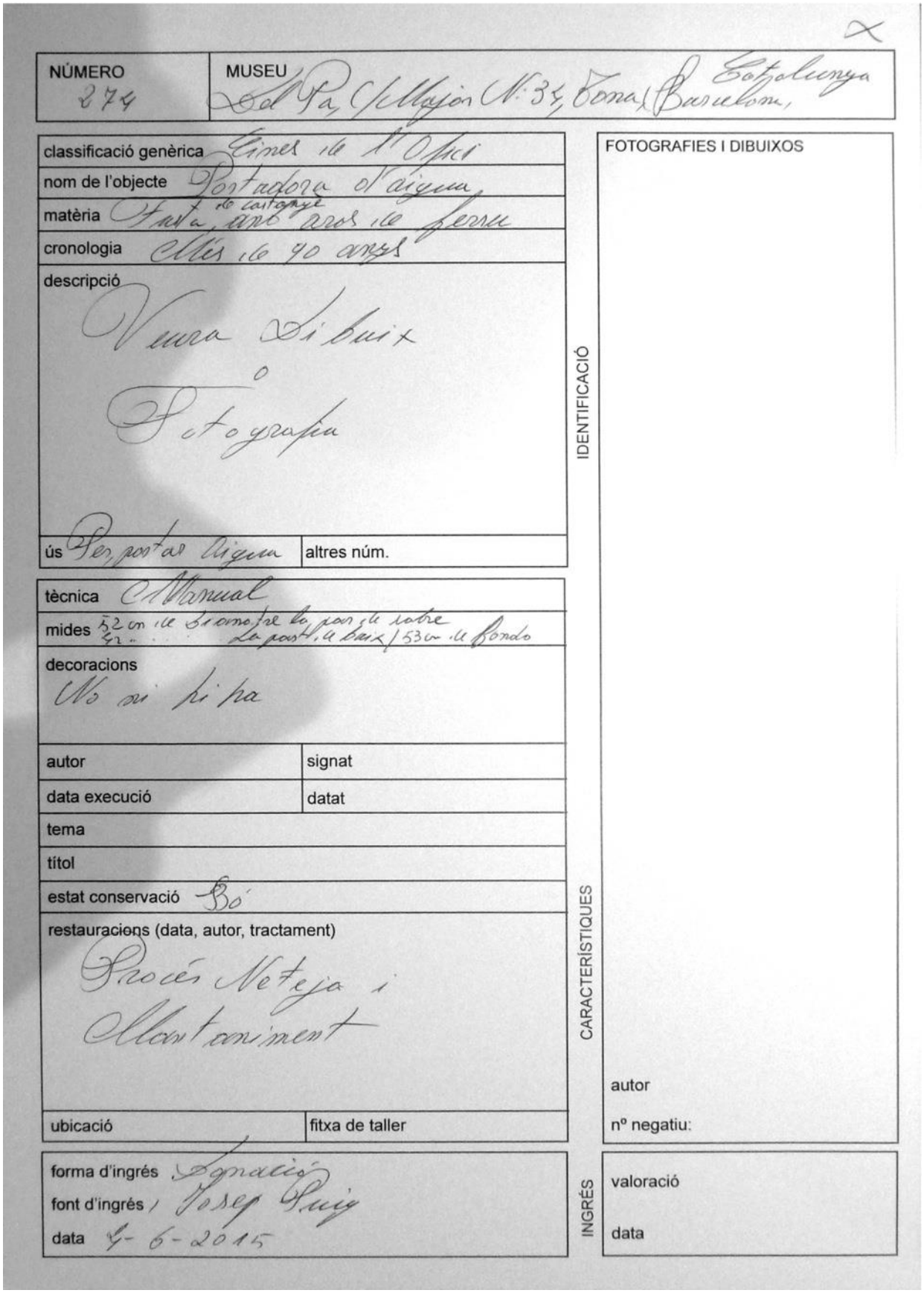


Figure 12: Page detail of the booklet of the Bread Museum.



NÚMERO 274

MUSEU Del Pa, C/Major N. 34, Tona, Barcelona, Catalunya

classificació genèrica Eines de l'Ofici

nom de l'objecte Portadora d'aigua

matèria Fusta de castanyer, ant aros de ferru

cronologia Més de 40 anys

descripció Veura Dibuix o Fotografia

ús Per portar aigua

altres núm.

tècnica Manual

mides 52 cm de diametre la part de sobre / 42 " La part de baix / 53 cm de fondo

decoracions No ni hi ha

autor

signat

data execució

datat

tema

títol

estat conservació Bó

restauracions (data, autor, tractament) Procés Neteja i Mantaniment

ubicació

fitxa de taller

forma d'ingrés Donació

font d'ingrés / Josep Puig

data 4-6-2015

IDENTIFICACIÓ

CARACTERÍSTIQUES

INGRÉS

FOTOGRAFIES I DIBUIXOS

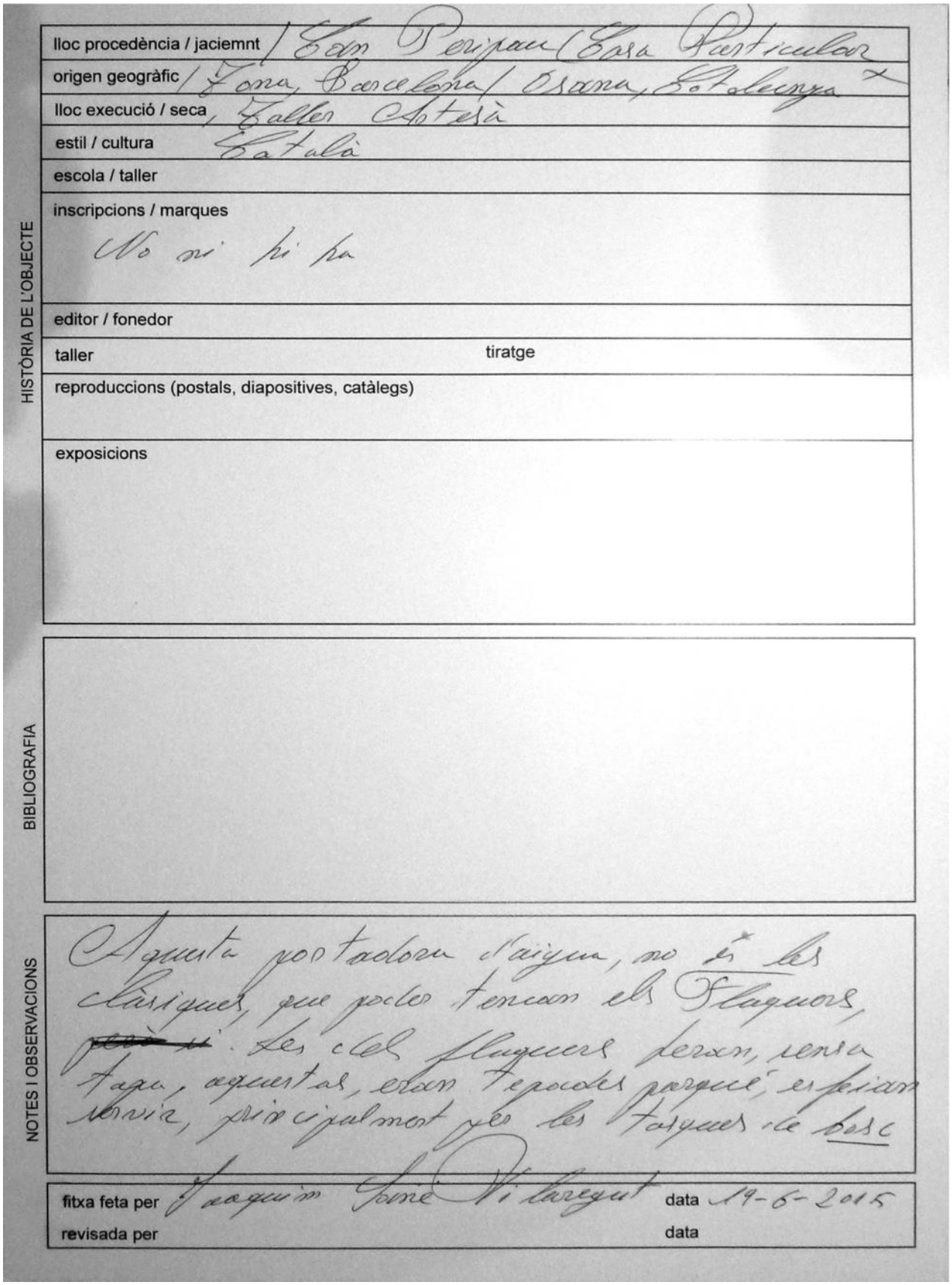
autor

nº negatiu:

valoració

data

Figure 13: Catalogue file of the Bread Museum (front).



HISTÒRIA DE L'OBJECTE

lloc procedència / jaciemnt / Can Peripau (Casa Particular

origen geogràfic / Zona, Barcelona / Osona, Catalunya

lloc execució / seca, Taller Artesà

estil / cultura Català

escola / taller

inscripcions / marques

No ni hi ha

editor / fonedor

taller tiratge

reproduccions (postals, diapositives, catàlegs)

exposicions

BIBLIOGRAFIA

NOTES I OBSERVACIONS

Aquesta portadora d'aigua, no és les clàsiques, que poder tencan els Flaquers, ~~però si~~. Les dels flaquers feran, sensa tapa, aquestas, eran tepades parqué, es feian servir, principalment per les tasques de bosc

fitxa feta per Joaquim Soné Vilaregut data 19-6-2015

revisada per data

Figure 14: Catalogue file of the Bread Museum (back).

La Casa de les Papallones. Petit museu d'història natural (The House of Butterflies. Small natural history museum)

The House of Butterflies does not appear in the register of museums and collections of the Catalan government, but I found it by searching for private or independent museums through online search engines.

Agustí and Agustí Jr. founded the museum at the last floor of the summerhouse of the last one in Planoles, a tiny village in the Catalan Pyrenees. Before visiting the museum Agustí and I had already talked on the phone a few times. During those conversations he explained me that the museum is closed in winter because of the cold weather, and that in spring and summer they only open during their summer holidays and on some Sundays, the only free day that they also dedicate to catch and observe butterflies. So many Sundays they do not open the museum either. He let me know also that they only receive group visits as for them it is an effort to drive from Vic to Planoles, prepare the museum and show it, so I agreed in visiting them when a group visit would be arranged by joining the group. After trying to visit the museum for more than eight months, Agustí Jr. finally sent me an e-mail telling that I could join a group that he had already scheduled for the last week of my holydays, so I made my best to make it to Planoles. My partner and I rearranged our holydays to spend a few days at a friend's house in the Pyrenees, quite close to the museum so I drove with my partner to The House of Butterflies.

By that time I already had quite a lot of information about the museum, mainly taken from their own website (Gabaldà & Gabaldà, n.d.), which surprised me for having a quite a professional style judging by the design and the information offered in three languages, Catalan, Spanish and English, a rarity among the websites of amateur museums that I have already seen. The website offers a lot of photographs of the museum, a short presentation and a lot of information about butterflies. They include some of the booklets that they have been editing which can be downloaded.

The Visit

So a Thursday of mid-August we reach the museum at 5 pm. We are the first ones to arrive and I get the chance to talk a bit to Agustí Jr, but we have the same conversation

that we already had several times on the phone: about the difficulty of opening the house every Sunday. The house is a two story detached house with a fenced garden surrounding it. Architectonically, it looks like many other houses in the area, with a slate roof and stonewalls, imitating the traditional architecture.

Soon the group of around sixteen persons including four children between five and eight years old arrives. Agustí tells me that it is too large of a group and that they usually keep it down to ten persons because the space is quite small. I ask him if I can record the sound of the guided tour, and he tells me that he prefers me not to. The reason he gives me is a bit strange: there will be children. I try to make it clear that is only the sound that I want to record, but he does not change his mind, so I agree with him that I will only take notes.

Agustí Jr and his father Agustí lead the guided tour. After welcoming us, they lead us through the garden and a small entrance hall where Agustí's wife also welcomes us, and we go directly to the first floor. It looks like the ground floor is dedicated to the living areas. We reach the first floor and we all start chatting about the few pictures and dried butterflies hanging on the walls of the upper hall, some as old as from 1760. Four closed doors surround us. After a few minutes of confused chattering, Agustí Jr, introduces the visit with a video projected on the wall. We stand there to watch it. The video describes butterflies with an educative tone and scientific approach. It shows still images of butterflies, edited with a slight zoom motion, and an off male voice in Catalan on constant Vivaldi music. The video seems somewhat amateur (because of the zoom motion used in all the pictures, for example, something that is not common at all among professional video editors) and professional at the same time (for example, because the off voice is very well recorded, the narrator has perfect diction and very standard central Catalan accent and expression that remind the off voices of the Catalan autonomic television). The credits acknowledge the photographers (family members and two other names that I do not recognize) and the collaboration of the Museo de Mariposas of Irun in Guipúzcoa, the Basque Country. The video starts situating butterflies within their scientific families, then differentiating the day and night butterflies and afterwards explaining their vital cycle. Some curiosities trigger comments or laughter from visitors. The whole video has a totally scientific and naturalistic discourse. There are no comments on the museum, on the task of catching and mounting butterflies or on the cultural meanings and influence of butterflies. There is only a reference to the

interference between butterflies and human activity in relation to how insecticides kill them.

We enter the first room where four signs on a table tell not to touch, take pictures, or smoke, and welcoming tips. Agustí Jr opens a triptych cabinet on the wall (fig. 15). It is very impressive because of its size and because the unexpectedness of all those aligned butterflies. It seems, though, that my partner and I are the most impressed, maybe because we have both worked with museum displays. It occupies the whole wall and shows only a tiny part of the butterfly collection. From left to right, Agustí starts explaining some characteristics of some of the specimen. His explanation is mainly scientific, going through physical characteristics, habitat and some curiosities. He highlights some special specimens; the ones that are weird, difficult to find or that have some special peculiarities. He also explains some personal anecdotes linked to the manner in which each butterfly was cached. Each sub-frame has a main label indicating the scientific family. Smaller labels show the specific scientific names and the gender of the specimen as well as the place and the year of the finding. Some are computer typed, others are handwritten in what looks to me like an old person's handwriting, making me guess that it's Agustí, the father, the one that wrote them. The labels are attached to the frames with the same kind of needle that is used to hold the butterflies, making them appear to float within the frame and sometimes provoking a superposition of up to three tiny labels. The impression this gives me is that of beauty and delicacy.

Agustí also makes some comments and he takes the lead when we switch to the other side of the room where he shows and explains the butterflies hidden in a piece of furniture with dozens of drawers (fig. 17). His discourse seems a bit less scientific and more personal, full of anecdotes and references to his father, the grandfather of Agustí Jr. He tells us that they have between 15.000 and 20.000 specimen, almost all from the area around Vic (Osona) and around Planoles (Ripollès), and the group shows their surprise with comments and "wows". Counting the three generations, they have been gathering the collection for 110 years, and all the specimens have been either gathered by them or exchanged with other collectors. As they explained to me during the interview, the specimens from the eighteenth century are part of collections that others have donated them.

The tour switches from butterflies to fossils of the area of Vic, all part of the grandfather's collection. It is then when they tell us about the fossils of three vertical

glass cabinets (fig. 16) with handmade labels and wood bases painted in blue and green, all handmade by the grandfather at the the beginning of the 20th century. I seem to be the only one showing interest in the grandfather and the family heritage, so Agustí father shows me a few old notebooks and boxes of the grandfather that they keep piled on a corner of the room and that look to me like a pirate's treasure.

There are also some corals and minerals in the room, but they do not give importance to them explaining that they have almost only a decorative purpose in the museum.

We leave the room and, to my surprise – and to the other's too judging by the comments-, the guided tour is not finished. Agustí opens another door across the hall and we enter a space with a couch, and a wall full of framed beetles of many different sizes and colors. They are framed and labeled in the same manner than the butterflies, and there is another impressive triptych on the opposite wall. Again the explanation is mainly scientific, but Agustí Jr also explains some details of the administrative procedures to obtain some protected species. He highlights again the value of some of their specimens because of their rarity and explains that some scientists visit the museum to study them. Because of the question of a visitor, the conversation switches into matters of security and the danger of a robbery, which indeed is confirmed as a fear of Agustí Jr during the interview.

One last smaller room, filled also with books, keeps stones with natural traces, which, they say, have a lot of value. We end the visit in the hallway, where Agustí Jr complains about the lack of interest and support that they receive from public administrations. I do not want to ask questions because I prefer to keep them for the interview, but my partner asks why they opened the collection to the public. Agustí starts answering somewhat erratically until he asks: "what's the question again?" The way he answers it makes me think that the question does not make sense to him or rather that the answer is obvious: they thought it has a public interest and that it would be nice to show the collection and share their knowledge with interested people.

They finally tell us that the museum accepts tips that will be used for its daily management, and that we have the chance to buy a booklet for 5 euros (fig. 20, 21). About six booklets are sold -one per family- and I buy one too.

When we finally leave the building Agustí Jr takes a picture of the group standing in front of the main door. We agree in meeting another day for the interview and we leave.

Interview

It was hard to convince Agustí Jr for the interview. Every time that I talked to him on the phone, he seemed to be suspicious about my intentions although I tried to clearly explain him the research project and my interest in their museum. Although after the visit to the museum he seemed to agree in the interview, afterwards he feared that I would give a negative image of them or judge the quality of their work. Agustí Jr always talks in an accelerated manner so it is hard for me to calmly explain him my position, so I decided to send him a short explanation about the project and my specific intentions for the interview. I insisted as well in that evaluating the quality of their work is not among my interests, but only to understand why and how they have made a museum. I also sent him some of the questions that I would like to ask them. I also sent him information about the database of museums and collections of the Catalan government because they did not have information about it, and hoping that they would understand that my intentions are good. Agustí Jr finally answered agreeing to do the interview.

I am a bit tense before starting the interview because of all the doubts that Agustí Jr has expressed to me. I arrive forty minutes too early to Vic because I am afraid of being late: they seem to care about punctuality. I hope to be able to get all the information that I need but also to be able to make them feel comfortable.

We are meeting at their furniture shop in Vic, where they work from Monday to Saturday. I enter the door at exactly the agreed time and, indeed, they positively comment my punctuality. I find them both standing almost behind the door and I wonder if they were already waiting for me or if it was just a coincidence. The shop is huge and the furniture they sell seems elegant and pricey. They show me around and explain me that they design and produce all the furniture that they sell. They take me to another shop right next to this one, because they tell me that is quieter, and we sit at a table of a teenager room set for sale next to the window shop.

I thank them again for the interview and I start to record the conversation as we already agreed by e-mail. At the beginning, Agustí talks much more than Agustí Jr but the roles change over the course of the conversation and, by the end of it only Agustí Jr is talking. He talks a lot and they both hop from one topic to the other one. It is very hard for me to redirect the conversation because Agustí Jr does not allow me to interrupt him in any

manner. The conversation lasts almost two hours and Agustí spends the last half an hour looking at his watch.

I leave with the feeling that they are very thoughtful about what they do and that they are strongly committed to their museum and their collection. It has been very hard to make them talk about specific museum practices, as if they were a natural consequence of the hobby of entomology.

Agustí Jr and Agustí, Perfectionism, and a Family Tradition

Agustí Jr and Agustí inherited their passion for natural history from the father of Agustí, who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, started gathering a collection of butterflies and minerals. They still keep that collection as well as the notebooks and other documentation of that period of time. Agustí and Agustí Jr already had displayed their collection in a house near Vic that they no longer owe, but they started thinking of turning their collection into a museum when Agustí Jr started building his summerhouse in Planoles. They installed the collection there and made all the cabinets by themselves. When they were satisfied with the result they considered opening it to the public as a museum.

The family, that includes Agustí, his wife, and Agustí Jr, seems very united. They work together in their family business from Monday to Saturday and, when the spring comes, they drive to their summer house in Planoles on Saturday evening to catch butterflies or other specimens. Then they take them home and prepare them right away for their conservation, and then, "without time for a nap or even to sit down" (interview), they receive visitors and come back to Vic to get ready for another working week. Their calendar is so tight that they complain that they never have the chance to visit other museums.

They give the impression to be hardworking and perfectionist. They tend to comment the quality in which they want certain things to be done and they often hire professionals to help them with some of their needs, such as the design of the website, or the recording of the off voice of their introductory video. They are, nevertheless very demanding and they often question or improve the work of these professionals.

They are also very critical about the work of politicians, in part due to their disappointment with the lack of interest and help received from them. In fact, every time that I have talked to Agustí Jr he has asked my opinion on how could or should

the local government of Planoles help them with the museum. The local government covered the costs of their leaflets but they have not managed to involve them in any other way. They have also had relations with other kinds of organizations, public and private, like a consortium for tourism or the Society of Entomologists of Catalonia.

Agustí and Agustí Jr feel close to peers that have had similar collections to theirs, usually families as well, and that have sometimes inspired them. Nevertheless, there is certain sadness on how they talk about them because some are already dead and their collections are, in the best cases, stored by their descendants. Some of these collections are sometimes donated to local governments or public museums, where Agustí and Agustí Jr think that are mistreated and never displayed.

Figure 15 : Detail of the butterfly display of The House of Butterflies. Photograph by Agustí Gabaldà, The House of Butterflies.

Figure 16: View of the first exhibition room in The House of Butterflies. Photograph by Agustí Gabaldà, The House of Butterflies.

Figure 17: Display of minerals, fossils, corals and butterflies at The House of Butterflies. Photograph by Agustí Gabaldà, The House of Butterflies.

Figure 18: Detail of the display in The House of Butterflies. Photograph by Agustí Gabaldà, The House of Butterflies.

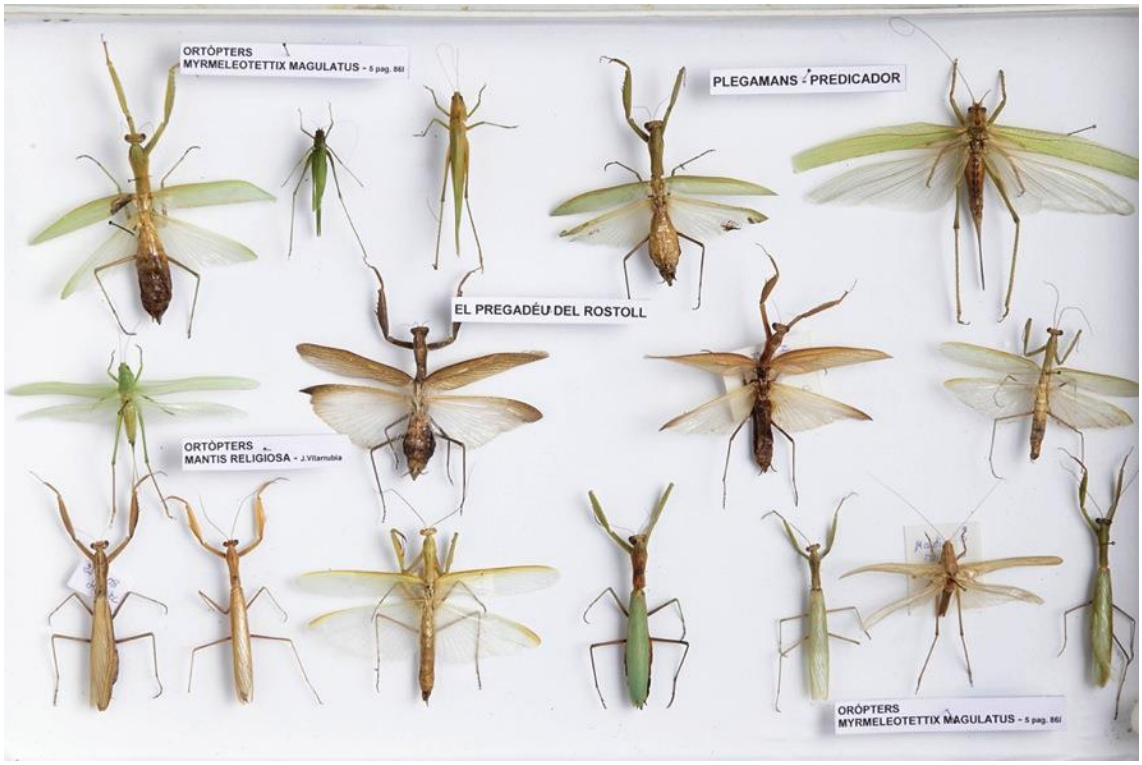


Figure 19: Detail of the display in The House of Butterflies. Photograph by Agustí Gabaldà, The House of Butterflies.

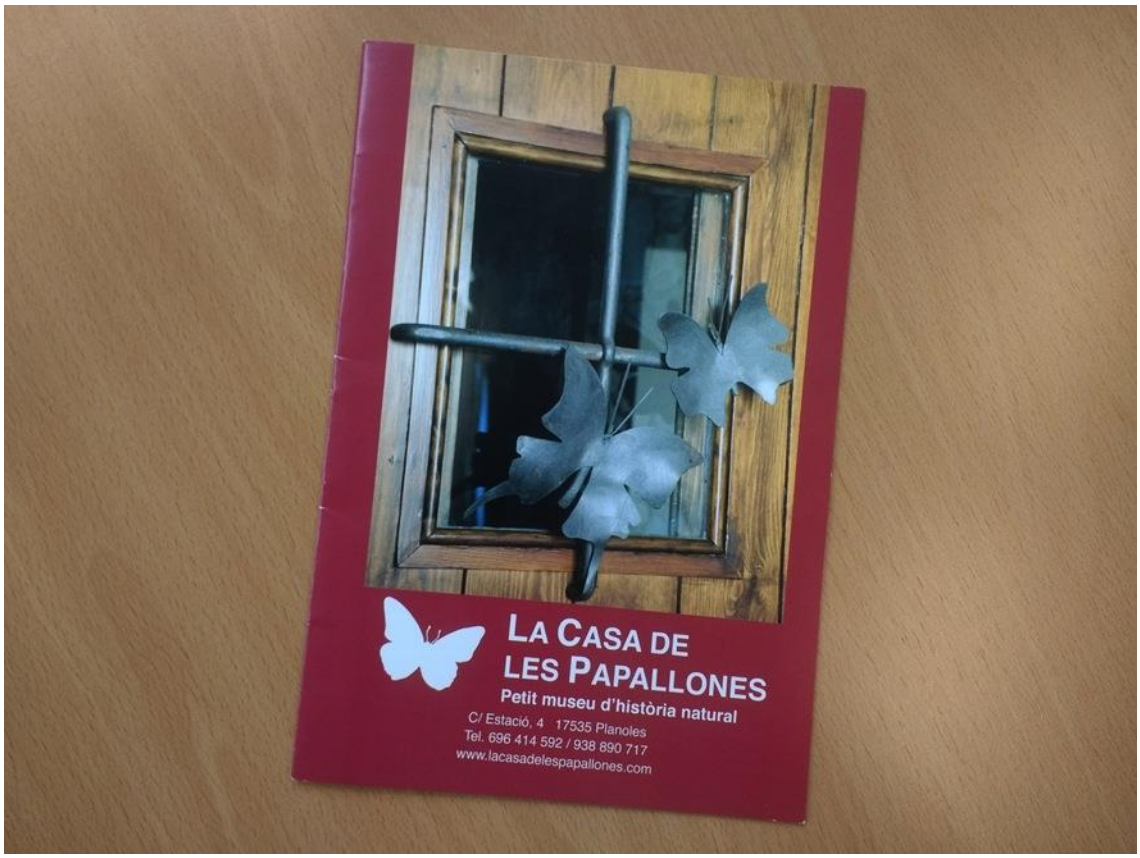


Figure 20: Cover of the booklet of The House of Butterflies.

Figure 21: Inner pages of the booklet of The House of Butterflies.

Figure 22: Screenshot of the main page of the website of The House of Butterflies.

Museu Matern (Maternal Museum)

The Maternal Museum is located in Guimerà, a small village near Lleida. The first time I visited Magda's museum I already had the thesis project in mind but I did it in a quite informal manner: it was the first day of a long weekend and I was on my way to the Catalan Pyrenees with my partner. So both of us visited the Maternal Museum (sometimes also called Museum of Maternal Art). I called Magda and her daughter several times during the last months in order to find the right moment to visit them. As the museum is far from where they live, they open it only under appointment, and it is complicated for them to do it for just one person. I was waiting for the chance to join a group visit till Easter holidays came and, with them, a few opening days without appointment. As Magda told me, Easter and some other special holidays bring quite a lot of visitors to the village, which are also potential visitors of the museum.

I had some expectations coming from the information of their website (Sanrama, n.d.) (fig. 24), our short previous phone conversations –in which I learned, for example, that Magda and her daughter currently live in Barcelona were Magda was originally from and where she lived till she married a farmer from Guimerà, where the museum is located.

The Visit and the Museum

I parked the car at the entrance of the village, a few meters away from the museum entrance, which is located at the village main road. The museum fills the ground floor of a refurbished two story building of the nineteenth century (fig. 23) that does not stand out whatsoever from the neighboring ones. The door was wide open and Magda and her daughter Marisa were sitting inside, next to a table that served as a reception desk.

Mother and daughter received us and they soon started guiding us through the museum, distributed on the two rooms of the ground floor. One of the first things that Magda told us was that her daughter is especially involved with the museum since her husband, Marisa's father, died. Because of her wet eyes, serene smile and shaky voice, I did not dare to ask about it but she already got us emotionally disarmed.

Magda asks her daughter to attend us but she cannot help explaining details and anecdotes every now and then, like the origin of her project. In the beginning of the

1960s, during Franco's regime she and her husband visited a military museum. She was shocked by the absolute absence of women's stories, something that she already realized that happened in many other museums. As she explains, this was the seed for a new pursuit: making a museum that would focus on women, specifically through the idea of motherhood because there is always a mother behind any personality around which museums revolve.

Almost half of the first room is devoted to artistic works, mainly paintings and sculptures around the topic of motherhood. Such works have mostly been donated by artists participating in the exhibitions that Magda organized during the 70s and 80s. Some of the works are by relatively known Catalan and Spanish authors. Despite the huge amount of works of art and the importance given to each donation on the historical overview in the museum's website, we skim the artistic section a bit superficially. Magda and her daughter do not seem to be interested in explaining details about the artworks and we do not ask about them. In fact, most of their comments are about the lack of space to display the paintings and sculptures, some of which are piled up in the corners of the room.

The conversation becomes fluid when Magda starts giving hints of her engagement or at least her sympathizing with anarchism and feminism, and her visits to members of the Committee of Soviet Women in the seventies, still under Franco's regime. Although I already read about it on the website, I am surprised when she tells us about certain objects of her collection, like the essay tube used in the first in vitro fertilization and how she got it as a donation, like most of the objects of her collection, thanks to her public relations skills. The essay tube, like other valuable objects, is not displayed at the museum because, as they say, the building is not safe enough and they prefer to keep them somewhere else. We get interested in a couple of glass cabinets that show other objects of gynecology and obstetrics, as well as representations of maternities of different cultures, mostly in the shape of souvenirs. The second room is filled with cradles and other objects related to the raising of children in the rural areas around Guimerà. There is also a collection of posters on sexual health and education.

We start moving around the two rooms and Magda makes us pay attention to the swimming suit of Montserrat Treserras i Douon, the first Spaniard to swim across the Strait of Gibraltar. She also shows us some objects through the catalogue of the museum, that she does not display because they are too valuable, such as the Nazi Cross of Honor

of the German Mother and a handwritten cooking book made by the women of the Ravenstück Nazi concentration camp, who wrote it to imaginarily fight their hunger and remember their favorite meals. She also explains her visit to Pau Casals and the days that she spent at his home in order to talk about his mother. She has also met other well-known personalities with the same objective.

There are some framed photographs and documentation hanging on the wall surrounding the staircase to the upper floor, which is not part of the museum. Among them, there is a framed education title of a museology course offered by the Generalitat de Catalunya that Magda followed.

She addresses me more than my –male- partner while talking, and I wonder if it is because she thinks that I should be more interested in the topic or because I am actually showing more interest and trying to keep the conversation going.

Magda pays most attention to the personal details attached to every object: who donated it or how she spent a few days with this or that personality in order to gather information from their mothers. Her daughter sticks to the description of the objects, and often refers to her mother's work in relation to the museum.

At the end of the visit I buy the catalogue that she has used to show us some of the stored objects. It costs 20 Euros. Magda has written other books, most of them related to birth houses of relevant personalities of Catalonia, Aragon and Valencia. She looks for a pen to sign the book and dedicate it to me –which I did not ask for- with a very shaky hand that makes my reading, once we are again in the car, quite difficult: "To Mariona, with all the love. Guimerà. 3-5-15". When handing it to me, she asks me to give her some feedback, which I do after some weeks by telephone.

Instead of waiting to think properly if I want to include the Maternal Museum as a case study, I ask them right away if they would like to be part of it. It is then when Magda gets interested in my background and my project, but she has already accepted, explaining me as well that she does not mind being interviewed and that she always likes to talk about the museum. Nevertheless, the interview will never take place because Magda has been suffering health problems since then.

After the visit, gain in the car, I find out that both my partner and I are somehow touched by Magda, by the immensity of the experiences that she has apparently lived, at least through the museum, by the manner in which she explains them, and by the energy that

she still has left. We discuss the problems behind the intention of highlighting the political role of women through motherhood, although I cannot find convincing explanations without exposing my own prejudices.

The Website and the Catalogue

Because I did not have the chance to interview Magda, I pay special attention to all the documentation that she has produced about it like the website (Sanrama, n.d.) and the catalogue (Sanrama, 2012).

The website's design copyright is from 2006 but judging by its aesthetics and navigation, it seems from the 90's (fig. 24). It hasn't been updated for years but it is still under construction: there is an evident lack of content and inactive links. The presentation text, the history of the museum and some sections about the collected objects provide quite a lot of information. The website is written in Catalan, Spanish and English –the presentation is also in French- although the English version is quite rudimentarily translated from Spanish. In the short introduction to the museum, there is a reference to the website itself, and it attempts to promote participation in the forum, which has very few contributions.

I learn from the website that Magda has a university degree (*diplomatura*) in archaeology and that she also followed a course in museology by the Department of Culture of the Catalan government, to which the title that I saw framed at the museum belongs to. She has professional experience as a journalist and has published six books on the topic of motherhood. Because of that, the little care put at the writing of the texts of the website surprises me: the historical text is written like a list of facts one after the other, making it quite boring to read. Most of the information of the website is under this section, which covers the museum's history from its origins in 1967 to 1995. This means as well that 20 years have passed since the last update. The text is written in a schematic manner, year by year. The contents are clearly determined by the collection acquisitions with especial attention to the persons that donated or facilitated acquisitions and donations –through their names and sometimes their professional positions-, to media appearances, to activities such as exhibitions and conferences that were the only activity of the museum when it did not have yet a physical permanent exhibiting space, and to the collaborations with private and public organizations. The

references and links with well-known personalities have also an outstanding and recurrent presence in the text.

The history of the museum before its current location in Guimerà revolves around another village, Sant Vicenç dels Horts, where they lived for many years. The local government humbly financed some of the activities of the museum, but this support ended the year 1978. Magda negotiated with the local government the cession of a public space for the museum, but in 1992 the conversations finally ended with a negative resolution for Magda. Magda was also able to get financial support from some private organizations, mainly banks and thrifts (like Banc de Sabadell and La Caixa), especially to hold public activities like art exhibitions and talks in spaces other than the museum. Some private companies have also participated as collaborators and hosts of activities (like El Corte Inglés or Prenatal). In general, public funding seems less relevant, including only 6000 pesetas per year till 1978, and also the cession of exhibition and conference halls. Some other organizations sporadically collaborated in some activity as donors and as facilitators of contacts.

On the website, a lot of emphasis is placed in the appearances in the press, radio and television, most of them local and autonomic. Some of them are referred to by the title, the name of the media and of the journalist. The general presentation of the website already explains that the museum has appeared more than 200 times in the media.

The references to the collection structure the whole text. It is impossible to know if the text gathers absolutely all the items of the collection at the moment of their inclusion until 1995 or if it is just a selection. From this information it is obvious that except from a few purchases, most of the collection is gathered through donations. The lack of differentiation between artistic and ethnological objects is also remarkable to me because it is not usual, although there seem to be differences in the manner that they are acquired: artistic objects are donated by artists mostly without the intentional selection of Magda while other kinds of objects are specifically pursued with effort by her. In most of these activities and exhibitions the participation of the artists seemed voluntary and completely open to anyone, with no filters of quality or suitability for the collection. Differently, other objects seem to be sought more specifically by Magda. There are no explanations on the interest of the objects or their role in the collection. Instead, the net of relations that allow such donations and acquisitions is made visible in this text, and it includes some very well-known cultural, intellectual, medical and

political personalities. This offers an insight to the public relations efforts of Magda, including several trips to other countries to meet possible collaborators, to gather items for the collection and to promote the museum. Several exhibitions on the concept of maternity, as well as the "maternal weeks", and similar kinds of activities were held till 1980. Magda's family only appears briefly as company for her trips or in one case as the only representatives of the museum when Magda could not be there.

The website also has a page about the sections of the museum but it has very little information, only including gif pictures of some objects without any reference, and a bibliographic list of the contents of Magda's library.

The book that I bought during my first visit at the museum for twenty euros offers different kinds of information. I bought this book among all the others that Magda has written because it was the only one made as a catalogue, in direct relation to the museum.

The book was published in 2012 by Pagès Editors and done with the help of her daughter, to whom the book is dedicated as the "soul of this book" and "continuator of the museum" (Sanrama, 2012). The book is divided into several sections, the most relevant ones being a "justification" (7-15), and a section on museum pieces (19-177) divided in "mothers' kitchen", "cots", "maternities in public space", "the other mothers", "songs and poems", "traditional religious songs to the Virgin Mary", "illustrious people: motherhood homage", "bibliography on maternal theme", "sentimental pieces", "philately and marcophily", "maternal medals", "mother's portraits", "politics", "birth homes", "sculptures and figures", "obstetric and gynecologic instruments", "votive offerings, taboos, fetishes and amulets" and "maternal art, paintings". Finally she offers a list of "exhibitions, screenings, conferences and book presentations" (179-181) and a bibliography.

The justification is a personal text, written by Magda in first person (actually in the middle of the text she changes from first person to an impersonal third person). The information is strangely organized, giving an awkward feeling. She first provides an argumentation about the justification, going through the justifications of the six other books that Magda has written and ending with the justification of the current one. This gives a feeling that this book is one of a series, or that she understands it as some kind of continuation although the other books were not that directly related to the museum. The justification for this current one is "to inform about the creation of a museum that

was born from a collection" (9, my translation). She sets the origin of the museum in 1968, and follows with a paragraph on its presence in the media.

Afterwards she talks about the location of the museum: first in Sant Vicenç dels Horts in a "deficient" (9) installation and then on its current location in Guimerà, after 40 years, in a refurbished building of the end of the 19th century. There is no information about why and how this change was possible. She ends with a confusing list of mothers of personalities, with no further explanation and ends suddenly with her signature.

The section about the collection gathers photographs of the museum's collection divided in several sections. In general there is not much information about the objects, and it does not offer the traditional cataloguing information. In this manner, most of the pictures of the objects stand alone, with no direct explanation about them. Under most of the pictures a text frame offers explanations about issues related to motherhood but often holding no relation with the picture above it. In this manner, under the pictures of objects related to "mother's kitchen", we have some paragraphs about writers, emperors or actresses and their link to motherhood. A double narration is then developed: pictures of objects in the context of their exhibition at the museum or on white background in the upper part of each page, and textual histories and references on the lower part of the page. Only the paintings and sculptures have specific information about the author, title and technique, as also do some pictures of well-known personalities.

In general, the website and the book have the appearance of unfinished and somewhat chaotic work and, at the same time, are a hint to the enormous amount of effort and passion invested in them and in the museum.

Figure 23: Main door of the Maternal Museum in Guimerà.

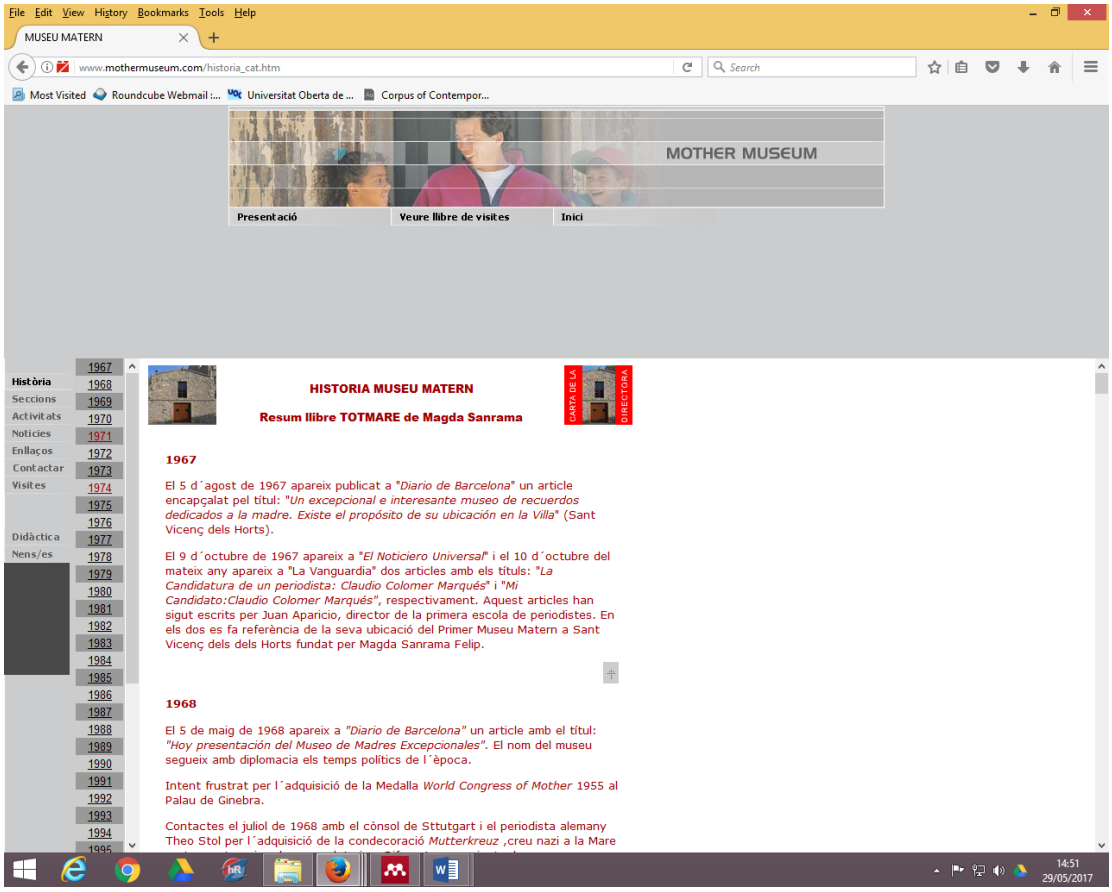


Figure 24: Screenshot of the website of the Maternal Museum.

Figure 25: Display of cradles at the Maternal Museum. Extracted from the catalogue.

Figure 26: Display at the Maternal Museum. Extracted from catalogue.

Museo del Juguete (Toy Museum)

I am spending a month in Medellin, invited by the Instituto Tecnológico Metropolitano to give a workshop to Fine Art students. Before travelling there, a friend of mine already told me about the Toy Museum. Although it is not my first intention to add it as one of the cases, I realize that visiting it and interviewing the founder might be interesting for me anyway.

Thus I face this case quite differently than the others. First, I am in Medellin, I hardly know the context, and even the Spanish that Antioquians speak is different enough from mine to mislead me. Second, my time here is limited and also the time of Rafael, the museum owner. So we agreed that I would interview him in my first visit. I will be visiting the museum again with the participants of my workshop. Hopefully this other visit and the conversation with the group will lead me to further information.

There is a lot of online information about the museum: a blog (Castaño Correa, n.d.-b) (fig. 38), a Facebook page (Castaño Correa, n.d.-a), a television broadcast on YouTube ("Museo del Juguete," 2011), and newspaper articles (Correa & Mesa, 2003; Montoya Carvajal, 2015). So I approach this first visit with quite a lot of information. I also feel ideologically closer to Rafael than to other amateur museum practitioners that I have already interviewed: maybe because he studied Fine Arts like me, although in a different context and time or because of the comments that I read in the newspaper articles. For example, he seems to emphasize the relevance of the community: the "recyclers" that pick toys for him and come back again to see how they look like in the museum, or those who recognize their own toys (the exact same ones) in the display, or the stories they explain him. But this emphasis might result from the bias of journalists.

The Visit to the Museum

I had a really nice time doing this visit/interview. As I anticipated, I felt quite close to Rafael's opinions in general. The interview felt like a conversation with a colleague with whom to share opinions on museum making.

The Toy Museum is located at the center of Medellin, at an industrial neighborhood crowded by repair shops. I got there a bit too early, but the neighborhood didn't seem

friendly enough to start walking around just to spend time: I am being warned all the time about safety measures and about how to behave in order to not look like an easy European target. Rafael sees me standing at the door when I am still looking for a bell to ring and he welcomes me with a huge smile.

He invites me inside and briefly shows me the ground floor where he has his studio: an absolute mess of found objects and tools, and already three or four cabinets with some toys. A cat sleeps on a pile of papers. There is not much light and the old roof looks like having gone through several repairs. Rafael talks in that very sweet and melodic Spanish that Antioquians speak, which makes them seem very friendly to me.

He leads me to the first floor, where the museum is. The staircase leads directly to a square room surrounded by cabinets full of toys (fig. 27, 28, 30) with no labels (fig. 29, 37). It has the same accumulative appearance than the studio, but there's much more order here, less dust, and more light. He switches on some lamps to illuminate the cabinets. The effect is quite impressive because of the amount of toys but also because they seem to be alive. Also, some of his sculptures are installed there (fig. 35), which adds a mysterious and nostalgic appearance to the room. At the central part of the room there are some transport wooden boxes that serve as pedestals for other toys, most of them of bigger sizes. Other toys hang from the ceiling or placed on the cabinets (fig. 36). At first sight I cannot identify an order, although there is certain groupings by types of toys, like cars, dolls, or robots. Later on, Rafael will explain me that he places the toys like a child would do, or like he would have done as a child. Natural light comes in through a large window partly covered by more cabinets and toys. The noise from the street also comes in through that window. A table with some chairs and a couple of armchairs occupy a central space. A visitor's book lies on the table (fig. 31). The wooden boxes that serve as pedestals are also full of toys and he also has many more stored somewhere else.

Rafael offers me drinks and food, which I first decline, and I start the recording machine after asking for his permission to do so. He seems comfortable with being recorded, something that has not happened yet with any of the Catalan museum practitioners. I am aware that he has given many interviews to newspapers and local televisions. He speaks calmly and slowly, and although he first asks me what I want to know, he keeps talking without making me ask almost anything.

We move around the space with no specific direction, at least not one that I am aware off. Our conversation is interrupted three times by persons who come to see Rafael or to sell him something. Taking advantage of one of these interruptions, Rafael comes back with fruits and drinks. We sit down at the table in the middle of the room and a cat comes to sit on my lap. He gives me the impression to be a happy man, but again, most people that I have met in this city gave me the same feeling. He seems to love what he does even more than the other amateur museum makers that I have already met, but I am aware that this might be again because of the manner in which he talks and expresses things.

Rafael and the Stories Brought by Toys

Rafael is a collector of collections, as his wife tells him. He started collecting stamps with his aunt when he was little and did not stop since then. Nevertheless, he started collecting toys "only" 30 years ago when, while riding a bus, he saw a toy truck that he had when he was little being sold at the post of a recycler [5]. Since then, he has not stopped to buy old toys, mainly to the recyclers, who have also learned with him to find old toys and to clean them without modifying them nor fixing them. Every time that they find a new toy they keep it for Rafael. Rafael explains how they also feel engaged with the museum and how they sometimes visit him to see the toys that they found displayed in the museum. Rafael thinks that the museum somehow turns their tough work into something more than garbage and makes them feel proud of it.

Rafael has bought the building where his studio and the museum are located to his brothers because it belonged to their father and they all inherited a share of it. His family has sometimes collaborated with the museum, and some of them show special interest, like his nephew and niece, who play with some of his old toys, and especially his wife, who often helps him mounting toys, installing them in the cabinets, cleaning them and doing administrative tasks when Rafael lends toys to other museums.

I realize that most of the stories Rafael explains me, I already know from the newspaper articles. This might mean either that he has a well-constructed story that he repeats all the time, or that he is really so moved by these stories that he wants to tell them again and again. They are actually beautiful and moving stories, and I am glad that he

[5] The recyclers of Medellin make a living out of finding objects and materials thrown away as garbage and clean it, fix it and sell it at very cheap prices.

explained them to me too. He says that he is thinking of writing them down because they are only in his memory. One of these stories is, for example, that a man insisted in meeting him after seeing his toy collection in an exhibition in Medellin. They finally met and the man explained him that a toy plane that Rafael exhibited there belonged to him when he was a child. When Rafael told him that there were thousands of planes like that one, he answered taking the two wheels that the plane was missing out from his pocket, which perfectly matched the plane. He explained that his ex-wife had thrown the plane away with many of his belongings after their divorce and that only the two wheels were saved because they were somewhere else. There is also an old woman that sometimes goes to visit Rafael only to hold in her arms a doll that she had when she was little. And a man once identified, among Rafael's toys, the tinplate toys that his father used to sell on the streets. Rafael explains all these stories with great emotion.

I also find especially interesting how he claims to be looking for sponsors or support from public institutions to open what he considers that would be a real museum (with opening hours, well-kept and so). But he also explains that he has had many chances to do it… and finally never felt like. It always felt to him that he risked losing his collection, which is for him as important as a family member. What would he do with the money and all that empty space? How could he negotiate with such a powerful sponsor or associate?

We openly talk about his feelings in relation to talking to someone that he perceives as having more knowledge on museums, to which I remind him that I am not really a museologist and that I have no specific idea on how museums should be done. I tell him about the reactions that I perceived in other museum makers about that. We also discuss how the comments that he receives from museologists on how to manage the museum have affected him. Because he seems to be stressed by the opinions of those that he perceives as experts, when asked I tell him that I do not think he needs to follow any standards of museology: the Toy Museum is his personal project and he should do it as it pleases him, without spending time or money in something that does not make him happy. I agree with him that it might be more interesting to write down those stories rather than cataloguing every toy, especially if that is what he really finds a priority. I do not feel comfortable giving my opinion on such issues because it might be taken as advice, but he asked me to do so. I also feel that the minimum I can do for my interviewees is to have an honest conversation with them.

When I leave he buys me a fruit from the street vendor that is now standing in front of his door. They seem to know each other well.

Figure 27: General view of the Toy Museum.

Figure 28: General view of the Toy Museum

Figure 29: Detail of a cabinet in the Toy Museum.

Figure 30: General view of the Toy Museum.

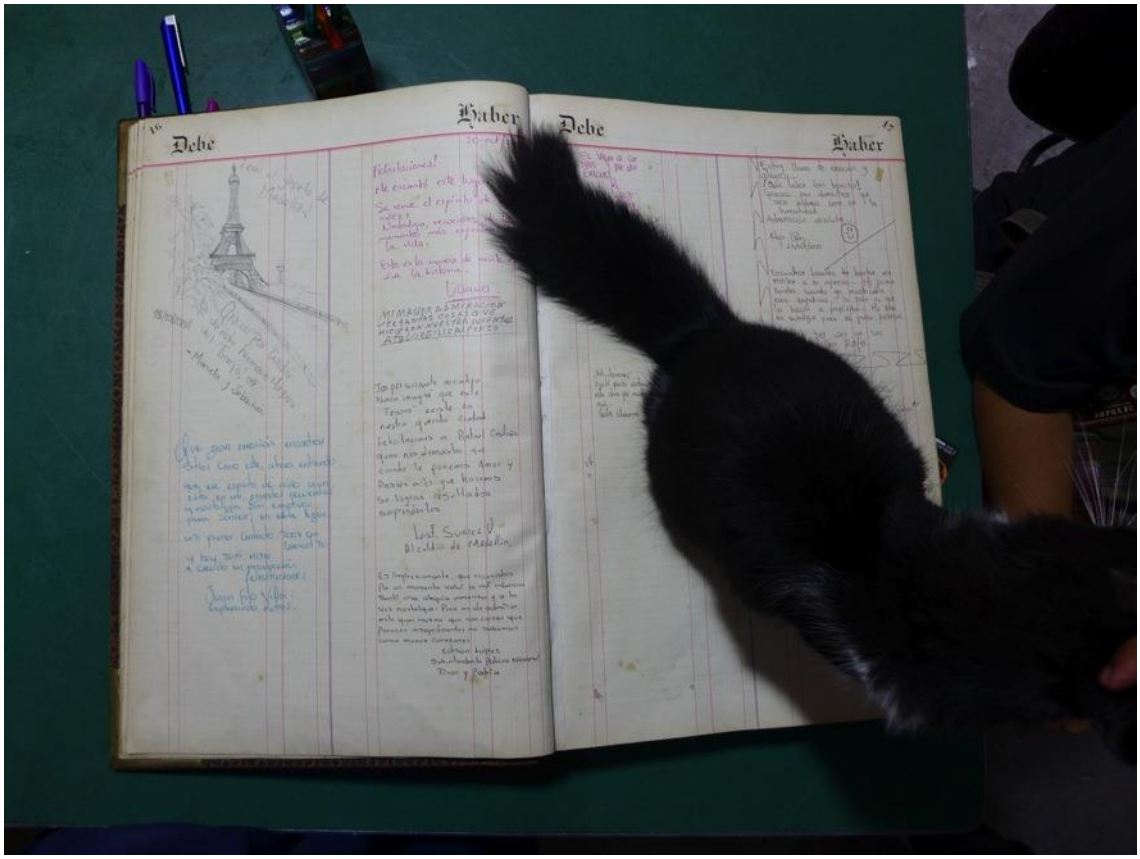


Figure 31: Detail of the visitors' book and Rafael's cat.

Figure 32: Visitors at the Toy Museum playing with Rafael's toys.

Figure 33: General view of the Toy Museum.

Figure 34: Detail of a cabinet of the Toy Museum.

Figure 35: Detail of one of Rafael's sculptures at the ceiling of the Toy Museum.

Figure 36: Detail of the display of the Toy Museum.

Figure 37: Detail of a cabinet at the Toy Museum.

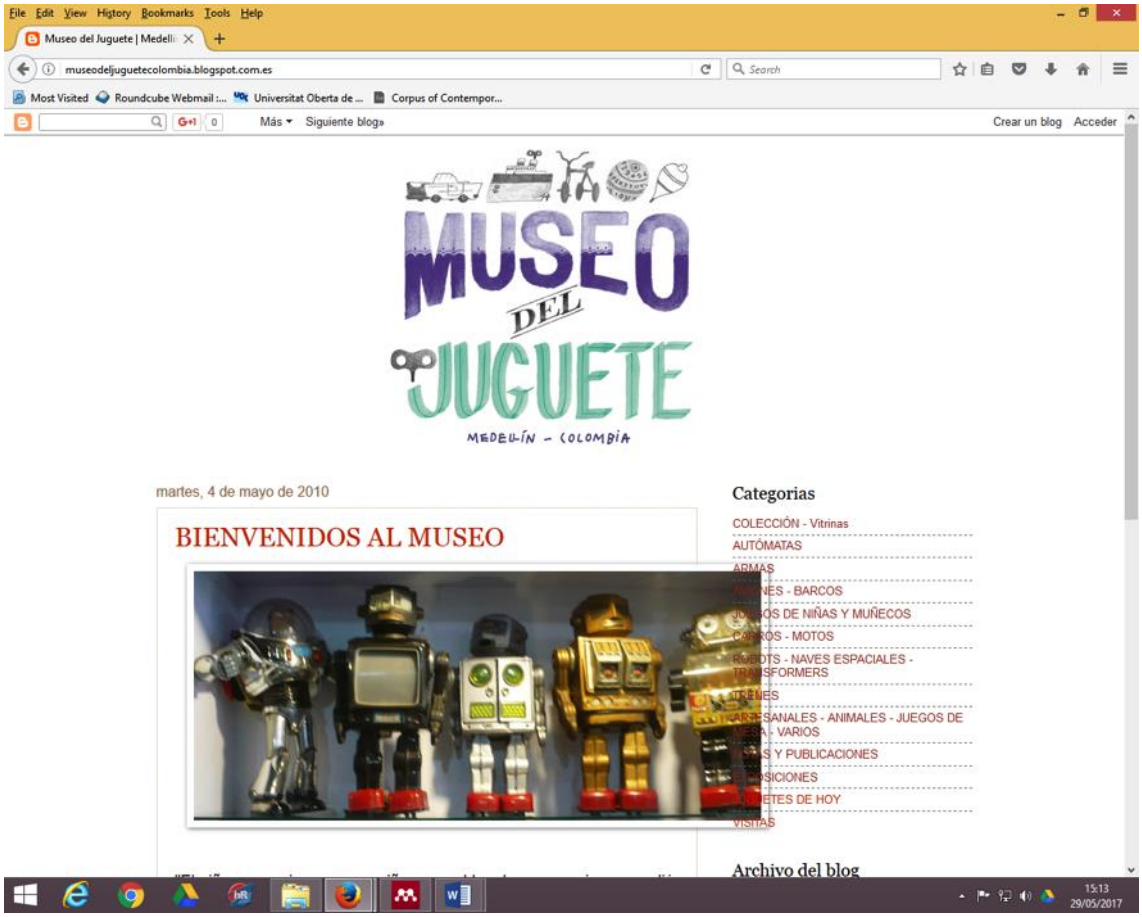


Figure 38: Screenshot of the Toy Museum's blog.

Museu de l'Antoni (Antoni's Museum, "the Coca-Cola Museum")

I found out about Antoni's Museum after watching a TV show on private collectors produced by the public Catalan television in which a Coca-Cola collector appeared in front of his highly museological collection. It was another museum that appeared on the show, but I accidentally found Antoni's Museum when looking for it (and never the other one). Antoni's museum has a very humble website, very old-fashioned and chaotic. It mainly has photographs of the museum and of its opening and contact details.

I called two days before my visit to make sure that it was open and that I did not need an appointment.

The Visit to the Museum

The museum is located in Castellar del Vallès, a small town at about 30 km to the north of Barcelona. I drove there a Friday morning, knowing that I did not need an appointment because the museum has regular opening hours. Nevertheless, when I was ready to enter the museum at 11 a.m. I found its red shutter down. From the outside, the museum is quite visible because it has the metal shutters painted in red and a big wooden sign on top of them (fig. 39). When Antoni opens it, he only opens half of the shutters. Outside, together with some information like opening hours, there was a phone number. I called and Antoni's wife told me that they were arriving in 10 min. It turned out that he had to go to the doctor and it took them longer than expected. I waited at the park in front of the museum until I saw other people waiting in front of it. I approached them to explain that Antoni was late –which they already knew- and we started chatting about each other. They were a group of six adults, and two of them were Coca-Cola collectors. One of them has other collections and he showed me pictures of the museum he is about to open in a small house he owes next to Ponferrada, at the northwest of Spain.

Antoni and his wife finally arrived and rapidly opened the door of the museum.

The museum is composed of one single room that is completely packed with objects (fig. 41, 42). At first sight, Coca-Cola bottles and merchandizing items of any imaginable kind seem to be filling the cabinets, tables, walls and ceiling. I can see mainly bottles, a few old ones and many new ones from different countries. There are

also posters and pins and many merchandizing objects (phones, teddy bears, openers, glasses, clocks, watches, pens, toy cars, reproductions of delivery trucks, fridges, workers' uniforms, signs, chairs and tables, and so on). The objects are mainly grouped by type: glass bottles, plastic bottles, cans, pins, toys, and so on. Only certain kinds of objects like posters and clocks are distributed around the space separately from each other, with a decorative aim. There are also bigger kinds of objects that have a more relevant presence in the space like fridges or dressed up mannequins.

The cabinets are open and Antoni keeps taking objects out of them. None of them are labelled. Only a few bottles have a small label indicating the year of origin of the object. These labels are not meant to be read by visitors but by Antoni.

We spend some time just chatting around, and Antoni is mostly talking to one of the collectors. Antoni – I am surprised about the Catalan name of the museum, because he doesn't seem to speak any Catalan-, starts talking to us quite informally: it seems that he is not going to give us any kind of formal guided tour. He shows us a model of an old delivery car that the Coca-Cola Company gave him as a present when he retired after a life-time working for them. In the meanwhile his wife silently cleans a few objects. I ask her if she helps him with the museum and she says that not much, that she sometimes cleans a bit because he does not do it himself. Later on, though, I find out that she also goes with him to collector fairs during the weekends where they sell some Coca-Cola items. Because of the way she says it, it sounds like a sacrifice, but she says this is what he really likes to do.

Antoni makes us pay attention to the first bottle of Coca-Cola made of glass, one of his favorite objects in his collection (fig.44). He shows us also some other bottles from other countries and some curious bottle designs, as well as some reproductions of old posters and some commemorative bottle and can editions. After another while of chattering around the space, Antoni calls again for our attention and he explains us the story of the origins of Coca-Cola. He seems excited about it, like if he would have a marvelous secret to tell.

One of the visitors wants to buy some items from Antoni and he ends up spending more than two hundred euros in posters (5 euro each), bottles and glasses (2-3 euros each), a commemorative pack of two bottles (25 euros) and a small teddy polar bear for two euros. The posters look like bad photocopies. Nevertheless they never talk about what

kind of reproduction that is, for which I guess that everyone understands that they are not originals. For 5 euros, one can see that is not a valued copy, but it seems to me like a lot of money for a simple photocopy, even if well presented with a carton that holds it straight and a plastic sheet that covers and protects it. I do not want to ask about it because I find that the situation can be quite violent and also because I sense that the museum maker is not very consistent with his explanations. For example, he shows us a collector's book that gives advice on Coca-Cola collection objects, including approximate prices. He picks a poster and tells us that although the recommendation from the book is a price of thousands of dollars for it, he sells it for twenty euros, to which one of the visitors replies: "of course, yours are not originals". Antoni does not reply back, like he was either trying to confuse us or genuinely confused. Because of his advanced age, he reminds me at my grandfather who, at certain point, started to get confused with issues that some years ago he would have clearly understood.

Although Antoni is not explaining many things to us we spend more than an hour in the museum. I wait till everyone leaves only to see how the visit ends.

The Interview

After a few days I call Antoni to meet him for the interview. He agrees to meet in the museum but he asks me to call again in the morning because he does not remember if he has to go to the doctor again. I do so, and her wife answers the phone (he is at the doctor right now) and confirms me the interview.

I am very tired and worried about other issues rather than the interview, but I arrive there and try to concentrate. They are both there. Although his wife tells me that she is never in the museum, she is there again because it coincided with their visits to the doctor, after which she drives him back to the museum and stays with him for a while. They switch all the lights on and explain me that they are very busy because they leave to a gathering of Coca-Cola collectors in Italy tomorrow. Their son is not going with them because he is travelling to more collector gatherings in China and Indonesia the following week. Antoni explains me that his son is now travelling alone to some of this gatherings because he starts being too old and cannot handle that many trips.

I ask him if I can record the conversation and he agrees although he explains me a horror story of an interview to a Sabadell local newspaper (El Diari de Sabadell) in

which the journalist totally twisted his words and provoked a scandal inside the Coca-Cola Company. I promise him to treat our conversation carefully.

We spend the whole time standing, only moving a bit around, but mainly standing on one spot. The interview lasts an hour and a half. At the end of the conversation Antoni's wife, Paqui, also joins the conversation.

It is especially hard for me to make Antoni to talk about his collecting and museum making practices because he is always switching to explaining me curiosities about Coca-Cola and showing me his favorite objects.

Antoni and his Life Commitment to Coca-Cola

Antoni and his wife were born in an industrial colony in Sitges where their parents worked after migrating there from the south of Spain. Both families left the factory when, at fourteen, children were obliged to start working in factory as well in order to be allowed to live there. After many years, both families coincided again in the town of Sabadell, where Antoni and Paqui got married.

Antoni started working for the Coca-Cola Company when he was quite young and where he achieved a good position after some time. I inferred from his manner of talking about the company that he feels grateful for the opportunities that they have given him and the treatment that he has received from them. It was also during all that time that he started collecting the Coca-Cola items that he had permission to keep.

Antoni is an avid collector. Since childhood he has been collecting many kinds of objects, a passion that he has passed to his son – he has also two daughters but those do not seem interested in collecting. Antoni started collecting in the 1970s, but he did not open the museum till 2006, when he retired. It was when a colleague showed him his own collection of Coca-Cola items which he named "museum", that Antoni realized that his collection, much larger than his friend's, could become as well a museum. He bought the commercial premises in which the museum is now located taking advantage of the lower prices during the real state economic crisis, and started working on it with the help of his wife and his son. He got the cabinets made bit by bit, when he had enough money to pay them, and he started installing his collection in them. He has also a storehouse lent by the local government to keep the rest of the collection. The local government also forgives him some of the taxes and they promised him a bigger building for the museum, but Antoni is not confident that this will ever happen.

Antoni is also very involved in the Spanish Coca-Cola collector's club, and he likes to go to gatherings and fairs to sell his own items. His wife always goes with him and helps him in those trips, something that she started doing when their grandchildren grew older and she stopped taking care of them. Their son, who also works for the Coca-Cola Company, is also a collector and is also very involved with his father's collection. He also accompanies them in their trips. Of all the amateur museum makers I met, Antoni is the only one whose offspring are interested to continue, if not with the museum, at least with his collection. Antoni's son in law also helped him doing the museum's website, although Antoni complains that he was supposed to update it long ago.

Antoni spends every morning in the museum and he goes to play domino with his friends in the afternoons. He jokes about the fact that his wife is happy enough that he has such hobby because she always knows where he is. Antoni gives me the impression to be one of the happier amateur museum makers that I have met. He seems to be grateful for what he has and does not talk about negative issues. He is very aware of doing the museum only as a hobby, and although he expects others to enjoy it too, he does not expect anything in return.

Figure 39: Entrance of Antoni's Museum.

Figure 40: Detail of a cabinet at Antoni's Museum.

Figure 41: General view of Antoni's Museum.

Figure 42: Antoni talking to a visitor in the museum.

Figure 43: Detail of a cabinet at Antoni's Museum.

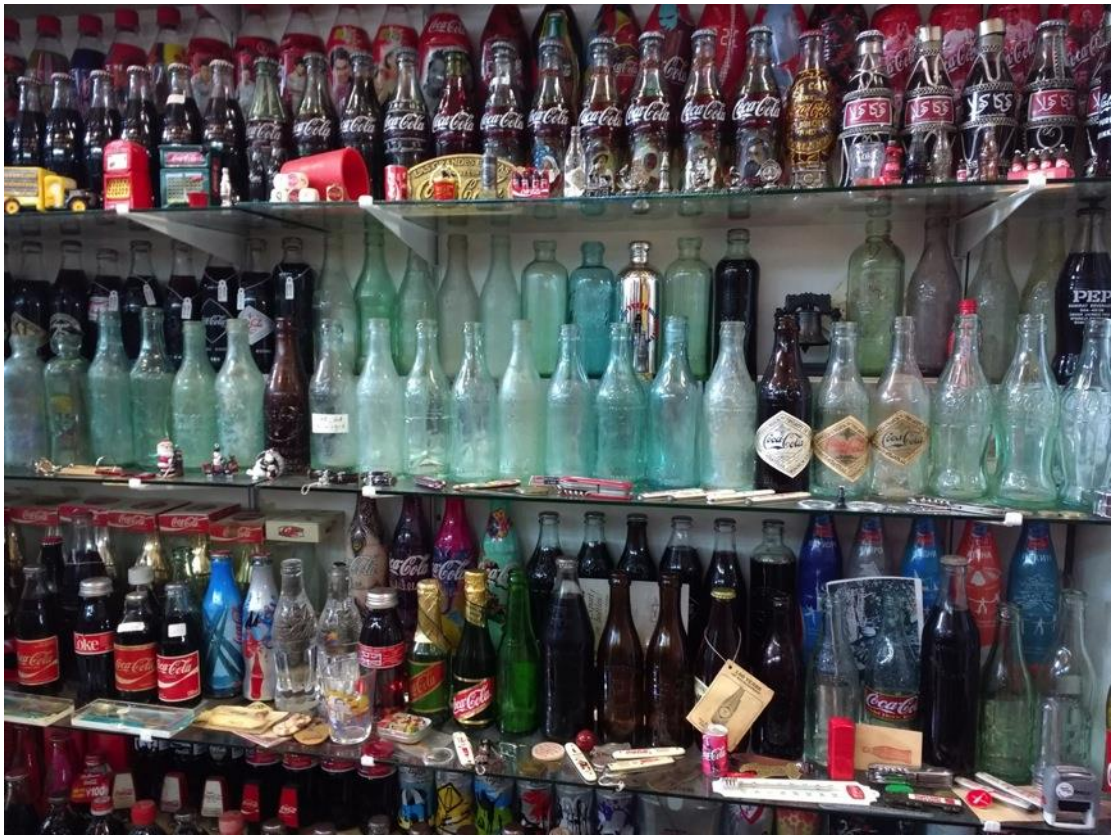


Figure 44: Detail of a cabinet at Antoni's Museum.

Figure 45: Detail of an object inside a cabinet at Antoni's Museum.

Figure 46: View of one of the cabinets at Antoni's Musem.

Figure 47: Detail of the display at Antoni's Museum.

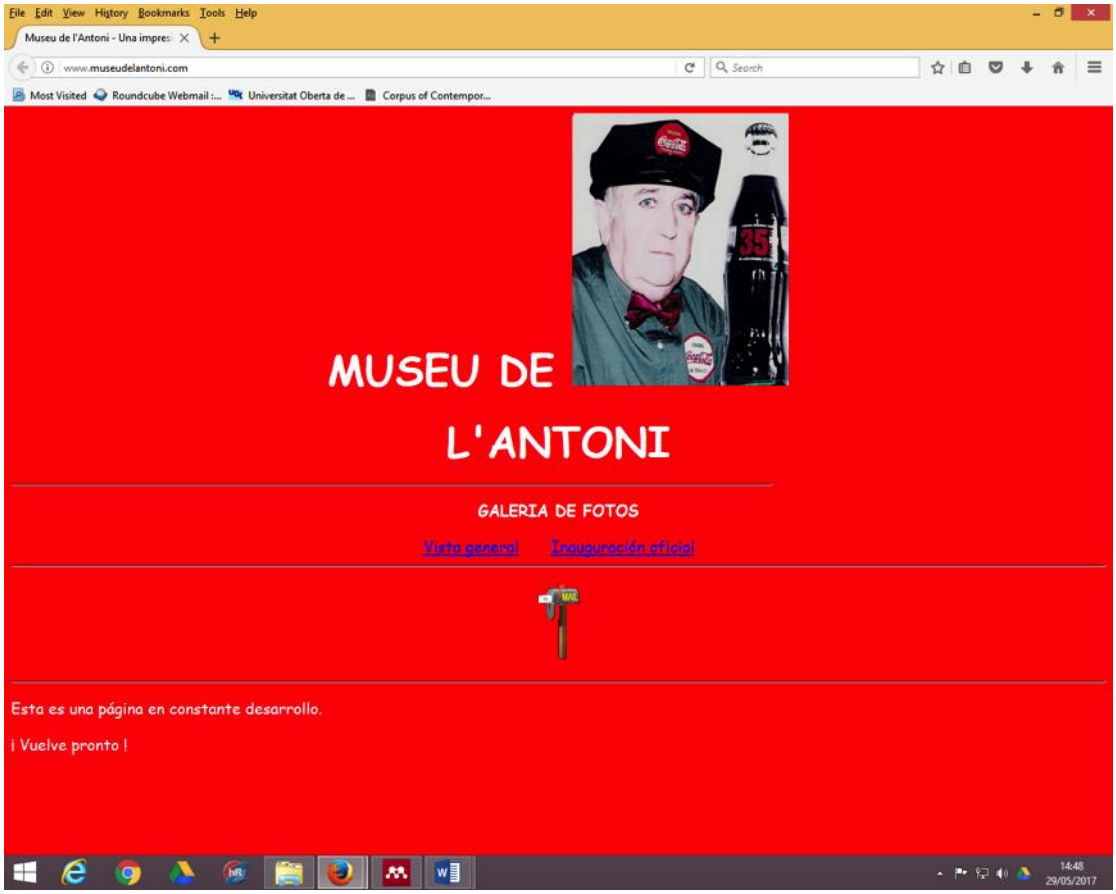


Figure 48: Screenshot of the main page of Antoni's Museum website.

Museu El Cau del Tauró (Museum The Den of the Shark)

I knew about the Den of the Shark thanks to Isaac, a colleague from my research group. Although the museum does not have a website, I could easily find some on-line information about it, like a video clip of the Catalan public television ("Reobre el Museu El Cau del Tauró," 2010), and news on local newspapers (Olària, 2010) as well as several posts on personal blogs. The interest that this museum seems to attract compared to others that I had already visited caught my attention. I was also more eager to visit The Den of the Shark than other museums because it seemed more exciting to me.

I called Joan, the museum founder -whose phone number I had to find in a blog post written by a visitor- in order to arrange a visit, but it was only after a few months that I succeeded in visiting the museum. It took so long because Joan only receives groups and I had to wait for him to invite me to join a group, which he did not do until my last desperate call. Of course, I had to tell him about my research in order to explain my exaggerated interest.

I finally joined a group of eight persons on a Sunday morning. The group was late because they were having breakfast at the bar in front of the museum, so I spent fifteen minutes alone with Joan, standing on the street. So, very differently from my visits to other museums, we started talking about each other and about my interest in his museum.

Joan and the Shark Teeth

Joan, who is now in his fifties, was only seven years old when he started collecting fossils together with the other kids from his village. The area surrounding Arboç -a village of five thousand inhabitants in the Catalan littoral, 45 km north-east of Tarragona and 15 km of the seaside- is very rich in fossils that are a reminder of the sea that covered the area fifteen million years ago. Joan gradually narrowed his interest to only one kind of fossils: those of shark teeth. He learned to study them through self-taught compared anatomy which he complemented with the teeth of the sharks that he also learned to dry, stuff and preserve.

He started studying geology at the university, but the lack of specialization until the last courses of the degree, the uncertain professional future that scientists had in the Spain of the 1970s, and his economic situation convinced him of quitting the university. He is now working in laboratory management and logistics for hospitals, although he sometimes regrets not having been brave enough to quit that job in order to dedicate all his efforts solely to his passion: compared anatomy of shark teeth. The economic risk of such a decision and having to renounce to the comfort that he has achieved, prevent him from taking the step.

Joan has learned to read English from scientific books and journals, he has developed his own methodology to identify and classify shark teeth and, he has become an expert in preparing all the body parts of sharks for their preservation. Although he is basically interested in their teeth, he preserves as many organs and body parts as possible and makes them available to museums and universities for their analysis. Often, his services in this matter are required by more professionalized and institutionalized museums (like the aquariums of Barcelona and Finisterre or the Museum of Natural Sciences of Barcelona) which he exchanges for more pieces for his collection and to whom he has lent some of his material. He is nevertheless critical about this type of museums because he considers that the visitor does not receive the tools and information to understand what they exhibit. His level of expertise makes him valuable also for anthropologist and archaeologists who need to identify fossil shark teeth found in their settlements. He is also required to give courses and conferences on shark dentition by associations and organizations dedicated to sea life.

As far as he knows, he has the most important museum and collection of sharks in Europe, and his collection includes more than a hundred species of shark. He obtains the sharks and other fishes from the aquariums that he collaborates with and that send him specimen when they die. He is also in contact with Mediterranean and Atlantic fishermen who give him the sharks or other species that they might accidentally catch while fishing.

Joan dedicates all his weekends and holidays to sharks: receiving visitors at the museum, doing scuba diving to observe them, processing shark parts for their preservation, and researching them, for which he sacrifices entire nights of sleep.

The Museum

The museum is only the visible tip of the iceberg of Joan's relation to sharks. It is, as he says, the consequence of a growing collection that he stored in boxes, and of his will to transmit his love for sharks, an animal that he considers to be misunderstood.

The museum is located in the center of Arboç. It occupies the commercial premises of a two-story family building that belonged to his uncle. Joan claims that he was able to open the museum only because he did not have to pay for the space.

The process of preparing and opening the museum was long: it started in 1991 and Joan only finished the first room a decade later, in 2001. He opened the second room two years after the first one. His lack of time and resources were the reasons for such slowness. He could only work in the museum when he had some free time during the weekends and when he had enough money to pay for the materials. He sought the collaboration of friends who were welders or carpenters in exchange for "some invitations to lunch and some cases of wine" (Joan, The Den of the Sharks, interview, 2016), and of course, Joan covered the costs of the materials. Yet even when he could not work on the museum he continued working on research and preservation tasks. He explains that from now and then he needed to take a brake from working on the museum for a few months because the difficulties and the dimension of the tasks discouraged him.

The museum is visible from the outside even when it is closed because its shutters are painted like the sea bottom, including, of course, sharks. This was the result of another collaboration, in this case with a young local painter, with whom they became friends. The same painter has collaborated with the decoration of the interior of the museum. When the museum is open, Joan installs, in front of the entrance door, a reproduction of a megalodon jaw and a wooden "place your face here" cutout standee to photograph one's face inside a shark mouth (fig. 49).

The interior of the first room of the museum imitates the sea bottom (fig. 50). The walls imitate rocks, the ceiling is painted as water with fishes and the cabinets are also painted with sea plants, sharks, and other sea life. Most of the pieces exhibited are stuffed sharks or preserved parts of their bodies: jaws, internal organs, tales, eggs, and so on. Most of them are installed inside glass cabinets that look like aquariums. Almost everything is labelled (fig. 52). There are also some sharks and rays with no fix position and that he holds with his hands and passes to the visitors so they can touch them. He has also a

section on fossil teeth, as they are somehow the origin and the heart of his collection (fig. 51). The lighting is dramatic, coming mainly from inside the cabinets.

The impression is that the overall disposition is done with the intention to make it attractive and also instructive. There are, for example, big cabinets of shark jaws that show the differences between them depending on their alimentation (fig. 56). There are signs next to most items, detailing the kind of alimentation of each specie, if they are found in groups or alone, their kind of reproduction, the areas and depth where they live, or their average sizes (fig. 52). There are also a few boards with drawings of sharks and indications about their anatomy (fig. 53).

Joan has almost never changed the display because, as he explained me, there is no more free space and it is difficult to re-arrange things because of the manner in which the displays are attached to the thematic and rigid architectonic decorations.

Although the museum currently occupies the original two rooms, in 2008 Joan closed the museum for two years in order to enlarge it by adding the premises located in front of it. It was a one hundred square meter space that costed him 800 euros per month, and where he installed water tanks with live nurse sharks. This brought many visitors to the museum that came even in large groups and organized trips. Yet although he charged and entrance fee for every visit, he could not cover the costs nor invest enough time to maintain it. Furthermore these “massive” visits did not leave Joan enough time for research, which is what he most enjoys. During that period of time he even hired a student of tourism to help him with the guided tours, but he also found it difficult to transfer all his knowledge to someone else, so when his collaborator quitted he did not look for someone else to help him with the reception of visitors. To maintain the sharks also turned out to be little sustainable because inbreeding made them infertile and weak, and, Joan finally felt guilty for keeping them in captivity. He finally closed this section in 2013 returning to the original two-room space.

Despite having reduced the museum to the first two rooms, Joan still has trouble to maintain it and has received little help to do so. The local government used to pay the insurance to cover the visitor’s safety as well as the regular services of a cleaner, but they stopped doing so three years ago, as Joan says, for no clear reason.

He has sometimes received the help of his parents in receiving visitors, but there are no younger members of the family interested in continuing with the museum, for which he thinks that, at some point, when he gets tired of it, he will simply close it.

My Visit

Three families compose the group I join, and, as Joan has explained to me, they visit the museum every year. Joan tells me that one of the visitors has written a post about the museum on his blog, and I realize that it is one of those that I read when trying to find information on the museum. It seems, for what he tells me, that many visitors repeat the experience. A woman is also standing there and Joan tells her that he will not need her today. I ask her if she is his wife, which she denies, and explains me that she is the wife of a friend of Joan that sometimes helps him with the museum. She tries to go sometimes to help Joan as well because her husband is now ill.

As soon as we enter the museum, Joan starts to give us a guided tour. He encourages us, and especially children, to ask and answer questions and he keeps on passing dried sharks and jaws for us to touch them. He insists on the importance of the sense of the tact in order to understand their characteristics. There is only one thing that he does not let us touch (although he touches himself): a fossil of a megalodon tooth. I assume this one is a rarity, or that it has a special value because it is difficult to find, or because it is very expensive, but he belies my assumptions during the interview: the megalodon tooth is broken and that is the reason why he cannot pass it away until he has it restored.

During the tour Joan focuses on explaining us the basic characteristics of sharks, highlighting differences between species, giving us tips on how to distinguish them, and telling us some curiosities to catch our attention. He also insists on the fact that most sharks are not dangerous for humans and he tries to demystify their image of killers. He also talks about the importance of protecting them. His discourse is quite environmentalist.

Joan keeps the group together and we follow him quite obediently. He allows us to take pictures, but when it takes me too long to follow them to the second room, he asks me to take them later on: he wants to keep us together.

In the second room he introduces us to the star of the museum, “The Miracle”, a shark captured on a beach of Tarragona a few years ago. He explains the story of the shark and its capture in order to help it go back to the sea (and in order to stop frightening

tourists) and of its accidental death. He also shows a video of the broadcast of its capture by a sensationalistic television show. The Miracle is not part of his collection, it was lent by the Catalan government.

Despite he says that he has no script for the guided tour and that all the information is in his mind, I think that his explanations seem quite structured. It is clear nevertheless that he knows much more than what he explains and that he enjoys talking about these topics.

The visit lasts one hour and fifteen minutes, although I think it would have taken longer if we would not have started so late. There is another group after us so Joan has invite us to leave in order to receive them. It might be also because of this that we do not have the opportunity to continue visiting the exhibition by ourselves. At the end of the visit he reminds us its price, of five euros. I have to insist to pay because at first he tells me that I do not have to, implying that I am not a regular visitor.

The Interview

I contact Joan again by e-mail a few weeks after my visit and he answers positively to my interview proposal. It turns out that he lives in Barcelona from Monday to Friday, so we meet at 10 pm, because he works till late in another city and we agree to have our conversation somewhere halfway to his home.

I arrive late because I wrongly noted down the direction and I am sweaty and tired from running. He is also sweaty. He is finishing to eat a sandwich and orders another coke. I order one too. I think of Antoni and his Coca-Cola Museum. Despite being the only clients the bar is noisy because the television is very loud.

Joan is very nice to me and seems very willing to talk although he does not like the idea that I record the interview very much. He has printed out a short article of the newspaper El Periodico from 2014 that talks about small museums, including his.

Joan gives me the impression to be much more reflexive about his museum practices than other amateur museum makers that I have already interviewed, and he seems to be very aware of himself and his own activity within his field of interest. I am surprised to hear how seriously he is taking his research and the specialization of his knowledge. I also realize that I am happy to hear that he has at least certain recognition from experts in the field, especially belonging to private organizations, other museums and universities. I am aware that this is because I believe that achieving certain level of

respect from professionals and experts is difficult without having certified knowledge an without having followed the official paths for accessing it, but I also wander if it is also partly because I might have been underestimating his work.

During the interview, he seems to cover most of the topics I want to talk about without the need of asking him. He seems confident about what he does and about what he tells me. After one hour he starts to show signs of nervousness, and later on I think this made me close the interview too soon.

Figure 49: View of the entrance of The Den of the Shark.

Figure 50: General view of the first room of The Den of the Shark.

Figure 51: Display of fossil shark teeth at The Den of the Shark.

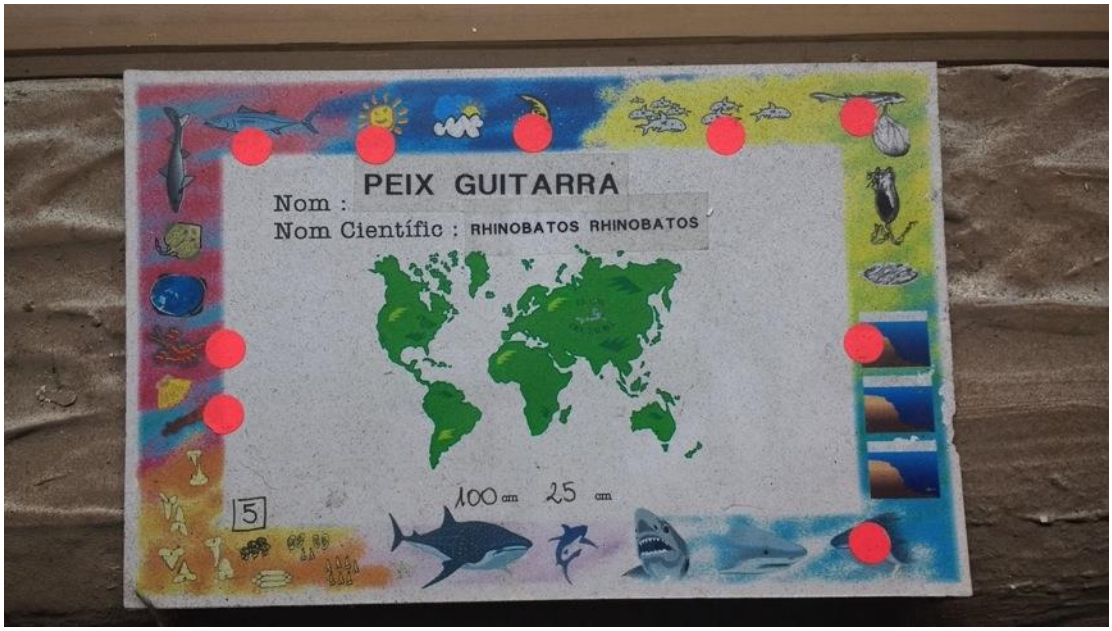


Figure 52: Detail of a label at The Den of the Shark.

Figure 53: Detail of a display on shark anatomy at The Den of the Shark.

Figure 54: Display at the first room of The Den of the Shark.

Figure 55: Detail of the display and of a photograph of Joan swimming with a ray.

Figure 56: Display of shark jaws at The Den of the Shark.

Museu del Vietnam (Vietnam Museum)

I knew about this museum since the beginning of the project because it is registered as a collection open to public by the Catalan government. Yet when I contacted Martí, its founder, he told me that the museum was under a restructuration and that it would be closed for several months. At that time it seemed to me that I should discard it as I could not start the fieldwork at the same time than the other cases. After deciding to include a second group of cases I reconsidered this one. It interests me for several reasons: it seems very active if I judge by the website and it is about a topic – the Vietnam War- that is not contextually rooted or justified.

When I called to see the chances I had to visit the museum, I was surprised to know that I could do so as soon as I wanted to. I talked to Martí's wife on the phone, and she arranged the visit for him.

I visited the website thoroughly before my visit and I remembered how it has changed from the last version I saw, that was much simpler in design and content (Demiquels, n.d.). I also found some information on a local communication website (La Xarxa, 2003) and a couple of blog posts (Hernández, 2007; Marín, 2008). This information already changed the image that I already had of Martí as a man obsessed with war violence and militaria, probably a prejudice derived from movies and from old-fashioned Spanish military museums. On the contrary, in the article in the website of La Xarxa, Martí is quoted twice saying that the intentions of his museum are historical and that he tries to highlight the horrors of war.

My Visit to the Museum

It's Friday morning and I head to Castellfollit de la Roca, a small village next to Olot, at an hour and a half drive from Barcelona.

It takes me a while to find the door of the museum because there is no external sign and the door that coincides with the direction seems that of a regular house. I ring the bell and Martí opens the small metal door of his house. He seems to be in his seventies. He leads me through a patio towards an entrance at the ground floor. I can see that the entrance to his home is somewhere else, at the first floor, following a staircase.

We enter the museum space. I can see that there is a ticket office build right next to the entrance, something that I have never seen in any other amateur museum yet. It is empty nevertheless: there are only a few books displayed behind its glass. Later on, he will explain me that the museum used to have regular visiting hours a while ago and that he charged an entrance fee, but that now he only receives visits by appointment.

From the first sight, I can see a lot of glass cabinets. Almost everything is inside cabinets, big ones, mainly arranged against the room walls and covering from floor to ceiling (fig. 57). The five rooms that compose the museum are visually connected with each other because they do not have doors.

I guess that because of my earlier experiences in other museums, I expect him to lead me through some kind of guided tour. Yet he does not seem to start doing so. He asks me about my interest in the Vietnam War. At that point I remember a telephone conversation that I had with an elderly weapon collector – whose museum closed years ago- that asked me why a young lady like me was interested in weapons. But Martí might not imply any gender issues here. I explain him that I am interested in any kind of private, independent museum, and that I visit as many as I can. I also explain him that his museum especially interested me because of the topic, not usual at all in Catalonia. When I say this he seems to react a bit on the defensive, and he tells me that some people does not understand his interest and that he has sometimes been accused of being a warmonger. He explains me that he became interested in the Vietnam War 26 years ago when the news of the liberation of some USA soldiers many years after the war ended, reached Spain. It was at that moment when he started his collection but he opened it as a museum in 2003.

Bit by bit he starts telling me a few things about the objects in the cabinets, sometimes by his choice and sometimes by mine. Most of the objects are weapons (especially knives, one hand made bomb…), uniforms and parts of uniforms (jackets, pants, handmade pieces of clothing, hats, boots, helmets…), instruments of many kinds (compasses, nursing and medicine instruments), soldier's personal letters (fig. 61), many medals, flags, and maps used in battle. There are many photographs too, but most of them are linked to the objects: when an object is bought or donated, the soldier that used it in the Vietnam War sends a picture of himself using the object in the context of the war. He often displays the authenticity certificate next to the object (fig. 57, 59, 62).

There does not seem to be a specific general order, although some objects are grouped by type like, for example, the nursing material. There are written explanations next to many objects, and they are in English! Martí explains that most information on the Vietnam War is written in that language and that it is much easier for him to also use it rather than translating everything. There is quite a lot of text in the form of such labels, mostly explaining the use of each object. There are also three models of battle fields that he explains me (when asked) that his nephew has done for him but that they do not have historical rigor.

He explains me that it is every time more difficult to do such a collection because there are less available items and more speculation. Furthermore, he needs to buy them from the USA which makes it much more expensive for him than for most collectors who are mainly North American. He has met some of the veterans that gave or sold him items, and he visited the USA and some of its Vietnam War museums only once because he is very afraid of flying. He also tells me that what is really difficult is to find objects of the Vietcong army, but he also has a few.

He does not consider himself a historian but has learned a lot during these years. He shows me a book that he was asked to write. It seems a collector's book because it is based on objects of the Vietnam War, mainly of his own collection but also including items of other collectors, some of which also appear photographed wearing uniforms and using some of the instruments. The book costs 50 euros, it is written in English and it was specially targeted for North American collectors.

There is also a glass cabinet at the entrance with objects to sell, including some that are owned by other collectors who try to take advantage of the visibility of Martí's museum to sell their items. Notwithstanding, he says that he does not sell anything, because most of his visitors are not collectors. He tells me that some press articles about the museum have appeared in the Sapiens magazine and in Pronto, and that especially the second one brought him quite a lot of visitors.

I leave the museum with the impression that Martí is not happy with the way things go in relation to his museum and that he has suffered many disappointments and received less support than he expected. His wife only started having some interest in his collection when he turned into a museum, and helps him sporadically. He knows,

nevertheless that when he finally loses all his interest in the museum he will simply sell his collection because after his death no one in his family will know what to do with it.

We agreed in having the interview by e-mail, because he said that he felt much more comfortable like that. But my communication with Martí was interrupted when he stopped answering my e-mails and phone calls, leaving our e-mail interview only half answered. This is also the reason why I could not come back to the museum to take pictures, as it happened to me with the Maternal Museum as well. The pictures that I offer here are retrieved from his website only with the purpose to help the reader to better understand his display.

Figure 57: View of a cabinet in the Vietnam Museum. Retrieved from www.museodevietnam.com

Figure 58: Display at the Vietnam Museum. Retrieved from www.museodevietnam.com

Figure 59: View of a cabinet in the Vietnam Museum. Retrieved from www.museodevietnam.com

Figure 60: View of a cabinet in the Vietnam Museum. Retrieved from www.museodevietnam.com

Figure 61: View of a cabinet in the Vietnam Museum. Retrieved from www.museodevietnam.com

Figure 62: View of a cabinet in the Vietnam Museum. Retrieved from www.museodevietnam.com

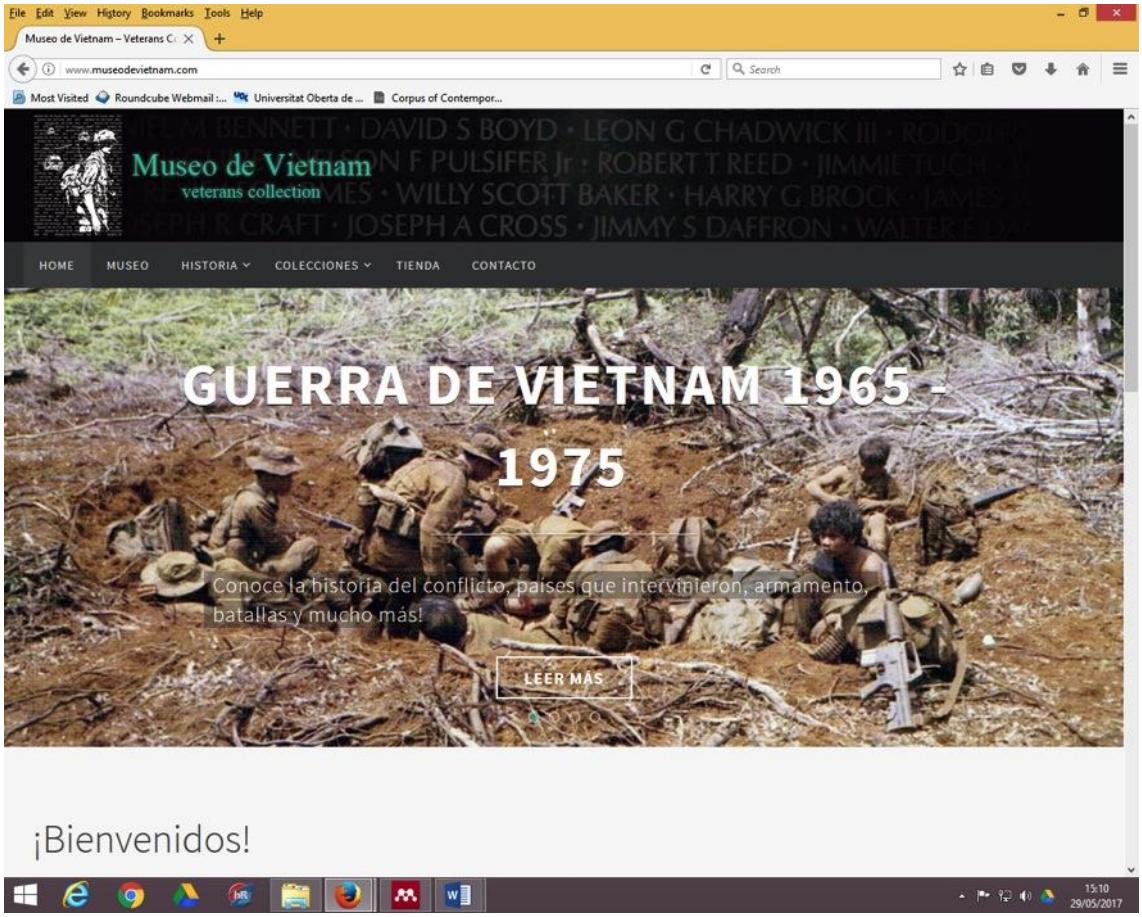


Figure 63: Screenshot of the main page of the Vietnam Museum's website.

Museu de Geologia i del Guix (Geology and Gypsum Museum)

I knew about this museum because Joan, from The Den of the Shark, told me about it. Later on, during my interview with Josep from the Geology and Gypsum Museum, he asked me about Joan's museum, telling me that he has not visited it for a long while but that they have a good relationship. The museums are not far from each other.

Although the Geology and Gypsum Museum is registered as a collection open to the public by the Catalan government, it skipped my attention because I understood it to be a public local museum.

The Geology and Gypsum Museum is dedicated, as its name directly expresses, to the mineral of gypsum and the geology of the area of Vilobí del Penedès, where the museum is located. Vilobí is a village of a bit more than a thousand inhabitants. The biggest city around is Vilafranca del Penedès (7 km away), and it is about 60 km south-west of Barcelona. There is almost no online information about it, a part from a couple of blog posts written by visitors.

My Visit to the Museum

It was easy to arrange a visit to the museum. As soon as I called we already agreed to meet the next Saturday at 10:30 because at 10 o'clock Josep likes to have breakfast.

As usual, I arrive too early so I search for the only bar that can be found in Vilobí in order to have a coffee. The village is amazingly quiet and empty and there are almost no blocks around: I can only see detached houses, some with large gardens. The museum is at the center of the village, next to the pharmacy, that, as I will find out later on, belongs to Josep's family. The museum has a sign outside that says "Museum of Geology" and it seems closed (fig. 64). A woman that passes by tells me that I should go and ask at Josep's home, right next to the museum. I do it because this is anyway what Josep told me to do when arriving.

As I approach the main door of Josep's house, which is open, Josep is already coming out to reach me. He seems to be around his seventies although he could as well be much younger. We shake hands and he takes me to the museum. The first thing he does is asking about my interest in the museum, so I explain him the truth about my interest in amateur museums.

We cross the front garden, which is decorated with an old gypsum millstone, before reaching the front door of the museum. Opening the door and the lights of the small hall, which also has some exhibited items, Josep lets me in. He first leads me to the first room on the right, which holds an exhibition of scale models of old Moorish gypsum ovens. He tells me that this exhibit does not belong to the museum, and I afterwards understand that it was a project that he started later on and that he conceives as a complement but not a part of the collection. The models are put on pedestals and tables. They reproduce a kind of oven of Arabic origin that was common all around Spain but that is no longer in use. These ovens, as he claims, are not being preserved, and they are every time more difficult to find. He makes the models himself, something that he enjoys a lot like he enjoys other kinds of creative manual work like drawing. To build the models he uses the same materials out of which the original ovens were made of. Sometimes he finds these stones on the same spot where the oven is built, and others he needs to ask the local inhabitants for the information of were to get them from. The biggest model, installed at the center of the room, reproduces the old gypsum factory that belonged to his family and that was located exactly where the museum is. After the factory was closed, and seeing that the buildings were in a dangerous state, Josep had to demolish it and he built his house and the museum in its place. It is only then that I pay attention to the framed pictures of the old factory and Josep's family. Nevertheless, he only talks about them when I ask. The conversation takes a melancholic tone when he explains me that the extraction and treatment of gypsum was the main economic activity of the area for centuries until not so long ago a British company bought all the factories and closed them. Since the nineties there is no more activity in relation to the extraction of gypsum in Vilobí and neither in the whole Catalonia. The quarries of Vilobí are since then also closed and can also be visited.

Hanging on one wall of this room there is a copy of the receipt of his current tax payment as some kind of reminder that he does not owe anything to the local government, that everything that he has done, he has done it by himself.

Again at the hall he makes me focus my attention on two geological maps (fig. 65), one of Catalonia and one of Belgium, "an independent country besides its size" (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016), as he tells me referring to the possibility of Catalonia being one day independent too. There are also two more geological maps, which he uses to show the presence of gypsum in the area. But what

surprises me most because of his openly pro Catalan independence ideology, is a picture of the former Spanish queen Sofia standing next to him (fig. 66). They appear having a conversation in front of a glass cabinet filled with minerals during the opening of an exhibition in which many Spanish geological museums participated and in which Josep's was the only independent museum. Josep explains me with pride that the curator of the exhibition specially led the queen to meet him because of that. Under the photograph, the book edited for the occasion lays on a table together with other books, open at the page dedicated to his museum.

We then enter another room were a visitors book is open and ready with a pen on it, which, at the end of the visit and after Josep's request, I will also sign (fig. 71). The room is full of glass cabinets packed with minerals and some fossils and there is also a big model of a geological section of the area of the local quarry made by Josep (fig. 67).

Light comes in from frosted glass windows and from the fluorescent lights installed inside the cabinets. Some smaller cabinets show figures sculpted out of gypsum, but most of them are filled with minerals, mostly gypsum, and fossils found in the area (fig. 69, 70). They do not seem to be displayed in a specific order. They all have a typewritten label (fig. 68) with the mineral's name, place of origin, date of inclusion, and number of catalogue. All the labels also have the name of the museum pre-printed on them, which confers a corporate spirit.

I can sense that Josep will become quieter if I do not ask questions, but it is hard for me to ask questions in relation to minerals and fossils, as I am not very interested in them and my lack of knowledge on the topic is so striking that I do not even know what questions to formulate. Instead, I end up asking about the cabinets, which he tells me that he has also done himself, at nights, with the help of a friend. Some other cabinets belonged to a local museum of another city, Sabadell. A friend of his, a director of another museum and professor at a Catalan university, called him as soon as he knew that they were throwing them away. Josep picked them up with the help of another friend, a carpenter, to dismantle and transport them with his van and to reassemble them again in the museum.

The next room, which has a sign reading "room B", has still more minerals and fossils installed inside glass cabinets (fig. 70). In this room there are a couple of cabinets that are half empty.

When he finally shows me the last room surrounded with cabinets purposely made to its measure, a feeling of sadness and defeat seem to invade him, or maybe these are the feelings that invade me. I guess that he does not usually show this room, which has a closed door, but he has already been telling me about his disappointment and lack of motivation to continue working on the museum. I feel that he shows this room to me as a proof of it. Most of the cabinets of this room are half or totally empty. The floor is full of minerals and fossils waiting to be installed. He explains me that this room has been like that for years although he had the plan to dedicate it only to fossils and thus to redistribute all the display of the museum. He does not work on it anymore because of a lack of motivation that became worse due to a depression that he suffered one year ago. Once recovered, he has continued receiving visits, doing some fieldwork and getting new items for the collection, but these simply accumulate on the floor of this third room. He tells me that his wife tries to encourage him to continue working on it, but that he does not feel like doing so any more and he does not know if he will ever feel like it again.

After all what he has explained to me, the impression that he does not trust public organizations and the fact that he has no offspring, I wonder what will happen when he finally gets tired of the museum. Looking very seriously into my eyes, he just answers me: “the collection stays here”.

Josep, Gypsum, and Melancholy

Josep was born in Vilobí, where his family has been working on the gypsum business for generations, a story that could be tracked back approximately up to the sixteenth century. He has also worked for one of the companies that extracted gypsum from the area, and once this closed, as a consultant for other gypsum companies.

He started his collection because a man that worked for a geology museum in Barcelona (probably the Geological Museum of the Seminary), asked him to keep for him the crystals and other minerals that Josep could find in the quarries. Josep did so, and he gave him other minerals in exchange. He says that the idea of the museum started to take shape only four years after he started the collection. He does not remember or does not want to remember when exactly he started. Every time that I try to obtain some specific data from him, he tells me that he does not know, that he does not count and that he does not pay attention to these things. Nevertheless he tells me that it happened

at the turn of the 1970s, or, as he says with a sarcastic tone and a sad smile, in the beginning of "what they call democracy" (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016). Josep seems disappointed about many things and one of them is politics. He was involved in politics right before starting to plan the museum and he was active in certain cultural issues related to the village, but his distrust in politics and politicians appeared very often in our conversations. In relation to the museum, he feels that the local government not only did not offer him any help, but they even caused him unnecessary trouble. Josep's relation with the local government is full of regret and, as he says, he does not easily forgive. He bitterly recalls how, once the museum was finished, after years of expenses and personal dedication, the local government offered him to share its management. The work that Josep has done to make this museum is in fact titanic, and he understood the offer as a lack of respect after they had denied any kind of help when the tasks were arduous.

Josep build the museum using part of the land were the old factory that belonged to his family was located. Once he realized that the old buildings and specially the ovens of the factory were too dangerous to be kept, he demolished them and started building the one story floor of the museum. With the architectural plan of a local architect and only with the irregular and sporadic help of a builder on some Saturdays, he and his father build the museum during their free time during evenings and weekends, and whenever they had money to do so. Once more he did not count how much time this took them, but it was "time, time, a lot of time… a lot of time and money" (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016). The only external economic contribution that he has ever had was that of one of the associates of the company that he worked for, who sometimes helped him by paying for minerals that Josep chose at the mineral fair Expominer, an annual mineral fair held in Barcelona.

A few but relevant and beloved persons have been central to Josep's development as a collector and museum practitioner. One was his father, with whom he lived until he died and who, as said, helped with the building and supported him with the needs of the museum. He has also had the unconditional support of his wife, who Josep married "only" 15 years ago, who considers that collecting and museum making are beneficial to him and pushes him to keep on working on it. She also accompanies him to Expominer and encourages him to buy new minerals for the collection when Josep hesitates because of their high prices.

He also has friends with whom he shares the passion for geology and with whom he does fieldwork or exchanges some items. Despite his experience in the gypsum industry, Josep claims to be no expert in gypsum and geology, so he has been learning from others who shared the same passion and who have turned into close friends. Among them there are the directors of the Geological Museum of the Seminary of Barcelona and the director of the Valentí Masachs Geology Museum of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya in Manresa. With this last one, he has also organized courses and fieldwork excursions in the Penedès area, which were organized by the public organization Institut d'Estudis Penedesencs. Although Josep likes to share experiences and knowledge with other collectors and amateur geologists he is often very critical about those who speculate with the minerals and who damage mineral deposits when extracting them.

Josep receives visits of school groups from the area and he also used to receive larger groups from organized day trips for retirees. His aim is mainly educational, and his idea was to make something "cultural" that people could enjoy, and this is why he does not want to charge money for it. He insists that he did not make the museum for money. He even explains me how the British company that bought and closed the local factories offered to buy his collection at any price, which he rejected with pride.

The Interview

I called Joan from Germany, where I was temporarily living for a research stay, to ask him about being interviewed only one week before travelling to Catalonia. Luckily he agreed in the only gap left in my agenda during my short and stressful trip home. I did not want to delay it any longer.

The day of the interview I reach Vilobí by car, in a bad mood, and not felling too well either physically or emotionally. Although I really want to get done with what was the last interview, I really do not feel like doing it. I reach the front door of his house and I do not see any bell to ring. The door is open but I do not see anything inside because there is a plastic fly curtain. He salutes me from the inside but I do not dare to cross the curtain: he did not tell me to come in. He finally reaches the door and moving the curtain away, lets me in. He asks me right away if we should go to the museum but I tell him that maybe we can first sit for a while so we can talk, as he had already shown it to me.

We will not go to the museum at all because by the end of the interview he seems anxious to finish with my visit.

We cross the living room and I can see a staircase going to the upper floor (I am not sure if there is one or two more floors). We sit at the kitchen table. Everything seems clean, tidy, and quiet. The lights are off and there is only some light coming though the kitchen window, which is not much because it is really cloudy outside. It is a bit too dark for my taste. We seem to be alone and the kitchen is outstandingly quiet.

As usual, I remind him again the reason of my interest to interview him in relation to my thesis and ask him for permission to record our conversation. He agrees without asking anything else about it.

At first, the conversation is not fluent at all: he is not very talkative and I am not as concentrated as I would like to be. My usual unease about not knowing how to ask things without predetermining an answer, is, today, very pronounced. I also have the feeling of not remembering what I want to know. Bit by bit, though, he starts unfolding some very relevant issues about his understanding of the museum and his practices.

He is kind when he talks to me, and although he laughs quite often, he gives me the impression of being sad. Of course this is also enhanced by the fact that I know that he has recently suffered a depression. Our conversation also confirms the pessimistic view with which he received me during the visit to the museum. And yet, he tells me that he does things for enjoyment, for fun, as he enjoyed doing the models of the old Moorish ovens or as he used to enjoy to ink draw old churches in the evenings.

As far as I see and hear, there are three clocks in the kitchen. When we have been talking for about 40 minutes, he starts looking at one of them very often. He looks at the one behind him, so I cannot pretend that I don't realize it because he has to turn his head almost a hundred and eighty degrees. Nevertheless, I manage to keep him talking twenty more minutes.

When I finally leave he offers me to call him for any other information that I need. I leave with a sad feeling. Although when transcribing the interview I realize he is the one that laughed more often during our conversation, there was a lot of sadness in his words, and also in the manner he expressed them, and probably also in myself.

Figure 64: View of the entrance of the Geology and Gypsum Museum.

Figure 65: View of the entrance hall of the museum with geological maps of Catalonia and Belgium.

Figure 66: Photograph of Josep and the Spanish former queen an the exhibiton opening.

Figure 67: View of the model of the local quarry with two cabinets behind and the visitors' book on the left.

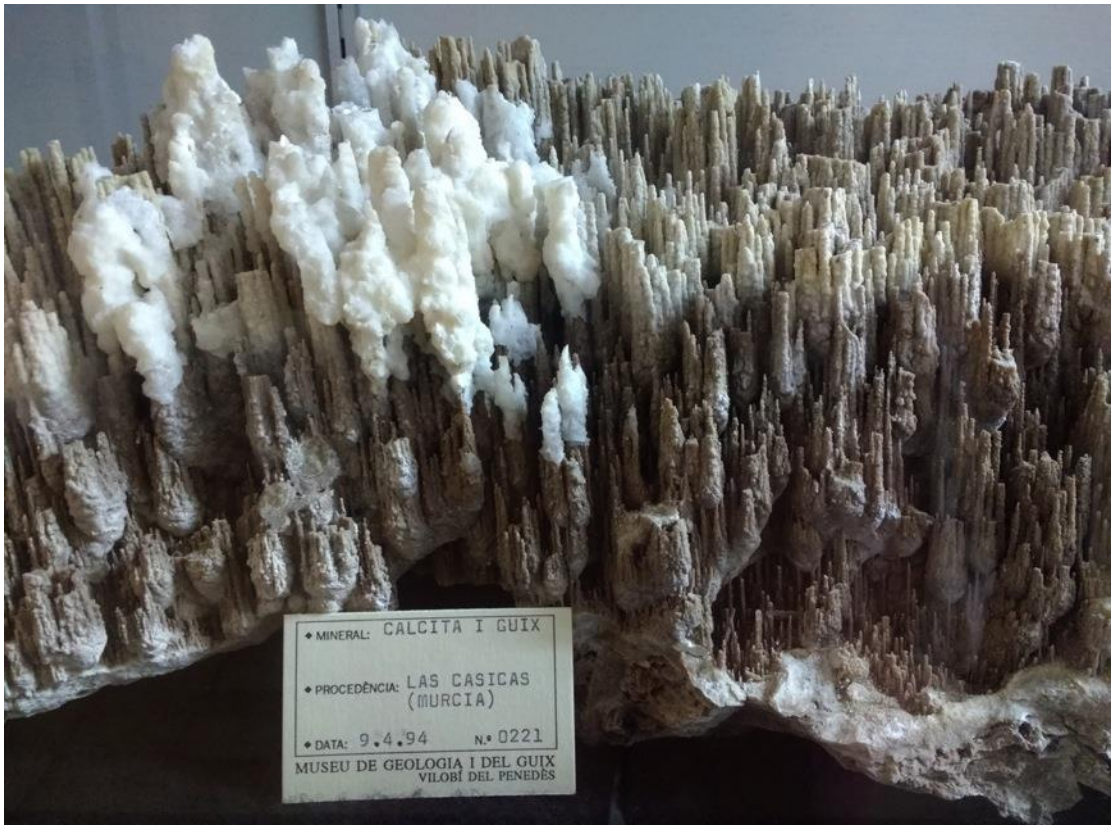


Figure 68: Detail of one of the minerals and its label.

Figure 69: View of the central cabinets of the first room with minerals.

Figure 70: Cabinet with fossils at the Geology and Gypsum Museum.

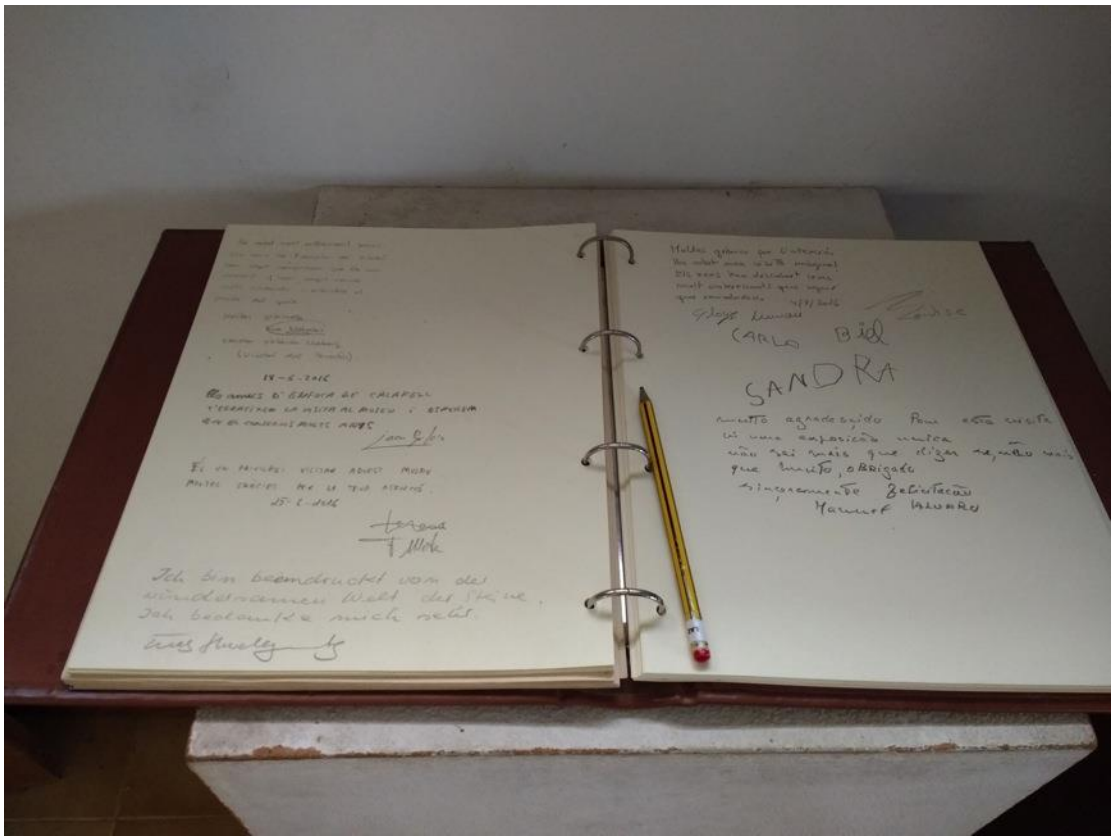


Figure 71: The visitor's book right before I sign it at the Geology and Gyspum Museum.

PART II

Practices, Leisure, Myth and Ritual

Section I

Amateur Museum Practices

I approach museums as sets of practices that are institutionally defined and whose specificities answer to the habitus of each practitioner and their position within the field of museums (among others). As such, the positions that practitioners occupy in the intersecting fields at play, mainly given by their capitals and their value within these fields, shape their museum practices. This first section (I) of my research has the objective of showing that amateur museum practitioners work from positions of disadvantage within their fields of action, and that these positions shape their practices as well as how this happens.

Section I is composed by two chapters in which I approach amateur museum practices: as socially situated practices (chapter 1) and as leisure (chapter 2).

In the first chapter on Amateur Museums as Practices, I analyze in detail some of the museum practices of the amateur practitioners I have interviewed in order to show that their positions of disadvantage are reflected on the manner in which they naturalize, reproduce, modify, resist or reject them. In consequence, it is possible to see from this analysis that the position of the museum practitioners is defining their practices. This approach will also unfold a framework with which the rest of the chapters composing this work will dialogue.

The second chapter, and last one of this first section, concentrates on Museum Practice as Leisure. In this chapter I show how the amateur museum practitioners' positions and thus also their practices are heavily defined by the fact that they perform their practices as leisure. Leisure situates them in a position of disadvantage diminishing their authority and legitimacy in relation to their professional counterparts, and yet it is the space given by leisure (as they understand it) that allows them to make museums without belonging to the institutional in-group of professional museum practitioners. Furthermore leisure helps understanding some of the deepest motivations that push them to carry on with their endeavors.

These two chapters already hint towards the struggle for position-takings of the museum practitioners through their appropriation of museum practices. This will set the basis for Section II, which will show and argue how amateur museum practitioners willingly or unwillingly take advantage of their adherence to the institution of museums, using its symbolic resources to increase their capital and improve their positions.

CHAPTER 1

Amateur Museums as Practices

Introduction

In this chapter I will approach amateur museums as sets of practices conducted from bordering positions within the in-group (Schütz, 1976a, 1976c) of museum practitioners or in de Certeau's terms (1988), as the tactical appropriation of practices originally proposed by and for others. This focus on the position of the museum practitioners within their fields of action as well as on the role of practices in defining such positions will help raising questions that are valuable for the understanding of power struggles in museum practices.

The analysis presented in this chapter allows me to introduce and elaborate on three main axes of this research: 1) that amateur museum practitioners reproduce naturalized and taken-for-granted practices; 2) that despite this fact they also resist and contradict some of these practices overcoming their lack of legitimacy to do so; and 3) that through the appropriation of authoritative and legitimating museum practices they increase their symbolic capital[6] and improve their positions in their fields.

In the first section of this chapter I will review some of the work by authors from the field of museum studies (especially Bennett, 1995; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Pomian, 1990) that have focused on museum practices, most of them from a critical historical approach close to Foucault's perspective, and which unveils the formation and institutionalization of museum practices in their contexts as well as their role in the creation of symbolic capital and its consequent position improvement.

In relation to the theory of practice, I will also explain the complexity behind the understanding of the differences between consumption and production of museum practices in order to highlight how this differentiation conceals power inequalities. Museum practitioners – including visitors- who occupy positions of disadvantage tend to be understood as consumers while museum practitioners occupying advantageous

[6] Symbolic capital is "nothing other than capital, of whatever kind, when it is perceived by an agent endowed with categories of perception arising from the incorporation of the structure of its distribution, i.e. when it is known and recognized as self-evident" (Bourdieu, 1991: 238).

positions tend to be understood as producers. I will highlight the processes of consumption and of production that are present in any museum practices as cultural practices in order to highlight that it is the interpreter who highlights one or the other. Amateur museum practitioners are thus simultaneously producers and consumers of their own museum practice. This apparently ambivalent position is useful in order to understand certain aspects of museum making as a tactical set of practices whose effects return to their makers.

And finally, following Bourdieu's proposal of researching practices through their products and the discourses of their practitioners (Bourdieu, 2013; see introduction), I will analyze a series of practices conducted by the eight amateur museum practitioners that conform the case studies of this research. I have accessed these practices through their observation when this was possible, through their products and through the explanations of the museum practitioners about them. These practices include museum visiting, museum naming, collecting, labelling and cataloguing, giving guided tours, demanding entrance fees, as well as the creation of museographic narratives, catalogues, leaflets and websites and establishing relationships with public organizations.

This analysis will allow me to point at and elaborate on issues of naturalization and taken-for-grantedness in amateur museum practices, as well as on their resistance against the authoritative conventions and their fight for legitimacy. It will finally show in what manners their practices are tactical and strategic and increase their symbolic capital.

Museum Practice

In the following pages I will review how some authors from the field of museum studies have analyzed museum making as a practice or a set of practices. I will mainly rely on the influential work of Hooper-Greenhill (1992) and Bennett (Bennett, 1988, 1995) which derive from Foucault's effective history, but also on that of Pomian (1990) and Pearce (1992), who have similar approaches in understanding the practice of collecting through specific historical events. Through their work we can identify the formation of habitualized practices and the establishment of a practical sense in museum practices as well as the historic definition of subject positions and the role of museum practices

in position-takings through increases of capital (Bordieu, 1993), in which issues of legitimacy and authority are central.

The historic formation of museum practices involves many institutions and is traversed by many other social practices, for which an agreed chronicle of their formation is not available. The origins of museum practices are located in different times and places according to different authors, and yet their accounts are generally not contradictory but they rather complement each other. Furthermore, some authors focus on collecting practices which eventually intersect with museum practices (Pomian, 1990) while others focus on museum practices which include collecting practices (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Despite the fact that collecting and museum practices are not the same, in their past and contemporary forms, they often overlap and one is necessary to understand the other.

Hooper-Greenhill (1992) analyzes in detail the formation of practices that preceded the museum as we know it today. She highlights the contextual specificities that shaped these practices through specific case studies showing how the now taken for granted museum practices answered to specific agendas, power relations and shifting epistemes. Her purpose is to reveal the processes by which some museum practices were shaped and thus to give a critical insight about their meanings and effects.[7]

She distinguishes shifts in museum practices coinciding with the epistemic changes between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries, as identified by Foucault. These are the Renaissance episteme of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with "person centered cabinets" and *studiolos*, followed by the classic episteme of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with its totalizing ordering and the search for a universal language

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[7] In fact, at the moment of writing her book in 1992 she claimed that "museum workers have, until recently, remained unaware of their practices, and uncritical of the processes that they are engaged in every day" (1992: 3). In a similar manner, she criticized museum historians for doing uncritical, narrowly descriptive and encyclopaedic accounts of museums (19992: 19-20).

> The lack of examination and interrogation of the professional, cultural, and ideological practices of museums has meant both a failure to examine the basic underlying principles on which current museum and gallery practices rest, and a failure to construct a critical history of the museum field. The structure of rationality that informs the way in which museums come into being, both at the present time and in the past, is taken as unproblematic, and therefore as a given.
>
> (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992:3-4)

In this sense, Hooper-Greenhill includes the analysis of twentieth century descriptions of older displays and collections neglected the original categories and schemes of classification imposing their own ones like if they were absolutes (144). This analysis shows how naturalized these categories were: up to the point to impose them into the past experiences where they did not yet exist.

by scientific societies and finally the modern episteme of the end of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the museum as a state disciplinary technology and a historical ordering of things. Most authors roughly situate the formation of museums as we know them today in this span that covers four centuries, and thus Hooper-Greenhill shows specific cases of how museum practice was shaped and also how it changed, and has changed, over time. Nevertheless, she insists on the lack of continuity and homogeneity in museum practices, showing that many contradictory museographic proposals coexist (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). This makes it easier to conceive that traces of many different kinds of museum practices can also coexist nowadays and that what is understood by some as the right, proper or institutional museum might not coincide with somebody else's understanding of it.

With her analysis Hooper-Greenhill does not only track the creation and modification of specific practices but also the subject positions that these require. As we have seen in the introduction, subject positions or types of roles are relationally determined and both enable and constrain the actions of individuals defining what they can or cannot do (Fairclough, 1989; Schütz, 1976b). Hooper-Greenhill especially emphasizes how the shifting museum practices enabled new subject positions "with new relations of advantage/disadvantage, and new field(s) of action" (1992: 57). This means that museum practices provided individuals with certain kinds of capital the opportunity to improve their positions, in turn exerting their power over those in more disadvantageous positions (Bourdieu, 2013). Among them she identifies, during the Renaissance, the first distinctions between the figure of the connoisseur -which was mostly the owner/collector- and of the visitor, whose role and practices where a condition for the position-taking of the owner/collector:

> Visitors to the Medici Palace would, willy-nilly, have to partake of the activity of observing, reviewing, interpreting, assessing, evaluating the skill of the artist, estimating the expense of the patron, deciphering the meaning of the messages. In doing so, visitors occupied perforce a specific subject position whose possibilities and limitations had been constructed in advance.
>
> (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 57)

The importance of the gaze and the taste as distinctive features of subjectivities and their social position, as Bourdieu (2006) analyzed them, was also established during the Renaissance (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Wealthy families made this happen in many

ways, but also through the gathering and exhibiting of material culture of different kinds, this is through a combination of patronage and collecting which had to be accessed by a public in order to derive into an increase of symbolic capital for their owners. Hooper-Greenhill account of the Medici Palace shows that what is considered as "the first museum" by some authors was in fact a series of practices related to the accumulation and display of material culture that enabled position-takings:

> The space and its articulations were used to position the family and to construct the position merchant/prince/patron. The structure, although based on feudal characteristics, was new in that the 'prince' was not a hereditary ruler, and he therefore had to use persuasive power, symbol, and propaganda to establish his position of superiority. This was achieved through the emergence of new articulations of the old practices of treasure-gathering and patronage, combined with a new use of the past, largely effected through the collection and reuse of material things.
>
> (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 71)

At the end of the sixteenth century a new subject position appears that further shows the play of capital involved in museum practices: that of the expert or connoisseur who produces cabinets for others. For the first time the gathering and articulation of objects and the design of the spaces and furniture that held them, were done by specialists that were not the owners of the cabinets (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Later on, at the end of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this is at the core of the modern episteme, Hooper-Greenhill identifies the creation of new, much more specialized, subject positions such as conservators, art historians, dealers or specialists in certain kinds of objects. These changes facilitated the path towards the current professionalization of museum work.

These new subject positions were answering to changes in museum practices that depended on the epistemic framework in which they were inscribed but also on the needs that museum practices were used to satisfy. These epistemic changes involved major changes in the habitualized practices that despite not being homogeneous, affected most fields of activity and most social groups. Hooper-Greenhill specifically focuses on conventions such as the ordering of objects, their disposition and display, the purposes of collections, the persons allowed to see them and the way that they were

supposed to apprehend the knowledge enclosed in the organized objects, or the architecture that should keep them[8].

Although many of these conventions have substantially changed till nowadays, we can still identify deeply rooted and taken for granted traces of them in current museum practices. Hooper-Greenhill's historic account allows to see the arbitrariness of museum practices and conventions that we continue to reproduce, and reminds us how museum practices were tools for social position takings in a much more straight forward and explicit way.

Also Bennett (1995), following Foucault, is concerned about similar issues than Hooper-Greenhill. Notwithstanding he proposed to review the history of museums in deeper relation to other organizations and institutions like fairs and international exhibitions – "involved in the practices of 'showing and telling'" (Bennett, 1995: 5)-, libraries and public parks. In this case, he specially focuses on practices of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the period of time in which he considers that the modern disciplinary museum crystalized, and which he approaches through cases from Britain, Australia and the USA.

In order to explain how museums became places of education and surveillance, this is, disciplinary spaces centered on the sense of vision, Bennett needed to track some of the changes in museum practices and how their proponents justified them. Seen in their context, the processes of naturalization of museum practices and the implicit meanings they still carry with them are made visible. One interesting example is the discussion held at the end of the nineteenth century among curators and museum directors on the appropriateness of displaying only part of the museums' collections, keeping the rest stored for research (Bennett, 1995: 41-43). This would allow to design exhibitions in which the displayed objects would be exemplary of their kind, and to condense bigger amounts of information in smaller, more graspable exhibitions. This shift was related to the new scientific emphasis that prioritized the explanation of general laws over the

[8] To give a couple of examples, notions of authenticity – this is of the demonstrable origin of an object- still so relevant in today's Western understanding of museums were unimportant until the eighteenth century, because during the classical episteme what really mattered in collecting was the completion of series. Also, the commonly used format of the temporary exhibition, repositories or reserve collections first appeared in the nineteenth century Louvre, due to the high accumulation of objects from expropriations and plundering, as well as the need to produce specific discourses answering to political, military and social situations (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 180).

rarity, the curiosity or the detail (1995: 41). It was also in that context that the use of informative labels was discussed, and finally established and spread around museums until they even gained more relevance than the objects which they informed about. Bennett is mostly concerned about the discourses, values and effects of museums on the societies that built them –what he calls the politics of museums. For this reason I will come back to his contributions in the third chapter of this work, which focuses on the myths of museums.

Both Pomian (1990) and Pearce (1992) focus on museums through their objects and collections and this includes the practices related to their recollection, interpretation, preservation or display. Pomian (1990) researches the practices of collecting or the institution of collecting by especially focusing on cases from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries in Europe. His approach also helps understanding collecting and museums as a set of practices and how these have been shaped and institutionalized, paying special attention to the relations between these and the creation of symbolic capital.

His analysis is based on the understanding of collected objects as "semiophores," this is as objects that link the visible and the invisible, our reality and the realities that are out of reach: the past, the gods, the dead, and so on. As a series of sacred[9] objects "the collection is a universally widespread institution, though this should come as no surprise, given that the opposition between the visible and the invisible is a universal phenomenon" (Pomian, 1990: 25). In a similar sense, Pearce (1992) considers that objects have "the power [...] to carry the past into the present" (24) whether they are "casts, copies or fakes" (24). The reason why objects are capable of bearing this link with the past or with other kinds of "invisible", is that they operate as signs and as symbols. They operate as signs "when they stand for the whole of which they are an intrinsic part" in a metonymic relationship, and as symbols "when they are brought into an arbitrary association with elements to which they bear no intrinsic relationship" (Pearce, 1992: 27). Thus a museum object is often a sign –a prehistoric tool stands for all the similar kinds of tools produced at the same period of time by the same people-

[9] Sacred objects are those that "connects us with the trascendent" (Mahan, 2007: 52) or the invisible (Pomian, 1990) and which do not any longer belong only to the religious world: "in modern society the sacred existed within an ever shrinking circle. The discovery of the existence of the sacred within the profane world of popular culture challenges that interpretation" (Mahan, 2007: 52).

and a symbol –a proof of the origin of a nation and of its technical progress. Nevertheless, the meanings of objects as signs and symbols are neither stable nor permanent, but they "bear perpetual symbolic reinterpretation, which is the essence of their peculiar and ambiguous power" (27). As we will see in the chapter on ritualization of museum practices, symbols do not have equal meanings for everyone, and thus may answer to different and even contradictory purposes.

Semiophores, sacred objects, or objects as signs and symbols have a relevant role in establishing subject positions and in position-takings, first, because they can be created or obtained, and second, because they infer their owners with their magic, which can be translated into symbolic power, legitimacy and authority.

Sacred objects might exist independently from collections, but collections are a tool for converting mundane objects into sacred ones. This process of increase of the value of an object through its inclusion into a collection is also expressed by Pearce (1992) by saying that any object of natural origin such as stones or butterflies turns "into material culture because through its selection and display it (becomes) a part of the world of human values, a part which, evidently, every visitor wants to bring within his own personal value system" (Pearce, 1992: 5). It is through the practices of collecting and purchasing –and I add of displaying and explaining- and the authority of expertise that museums exercise an influence over the consideration of an object as sacred. Belk and his colleagues (Belk et al., 1991; 1988) found that collectors are able to turn a profane object into a sacred one

> when they remove an item from the secular, profane, undifferentiated realm of the commodity, and ritually transform it into a personally and socially significant object. The sacralized item becomes a vehicle of transcendent experience which exceeds its utilitarian and aesthetic endowment.
>
> (Belk et al., 1988: 550)

A number of practices are involved in the conversion of mundane objects into sacred ones. Gathering them "under the rubric of 'collection'" (550) is one of the most outstanding ones, but also keeping them in specific kinds of spaces or the practices of interaction with collected objects (Belk et al., 1988: 550).

It is in the practices of display that collections turn into tools for position-takings. In the Middle Ages, "the clergy and those in power, monopolized semiophores,

determined the degree of access the public had to them and used them in order to reinforce their position of domination" (Pomian, 1990: 37-38). The collectable objects (semiophores or sacred objects) of that time were relics, offerings and works of art, that were mainly valued for their materials. If once the sacred objects were gathered and surrounded by religiously authorized individuals, to whom they transferred their value, later on their acquisition could be achieved through economic expense. If this was a common practice, it was because the possession of such objects allowed obtaining the power inferred from the invisible. People could show or increase their status

> by abstaining from all utilitarian activities, by distancing himself from those who are forced to carry these out, by surrounding himself with objects which are not things but semiophores and by displaying them. In general, the higher a representative of the invisible is placed in his hierarchy, the greater the number of semiophores he surrounds himself with and the greater their value. In other words, it is the social hierarchy which necessarily leads to the birth of collections, those sets of objects kept out of the economic circuit, afforded special protection and put on display.
>
> (Pomian, 1990: 32)

In consequence exchanges of collectable objects or the possibility to obtain them through economic expense were and still are forms of accessing to better social positions. In this sense, princely collections were a tool for position taking because certain kinds of objects permitted them to be linked to the "invisible" and to build and project their fame into the future.

The notions of what kind of object is sacred have also been changing. New inclusions into what sacred objects or collectable objects are have been added by the influence of some social groups. For example, during the fourteenth century, collectable objects became more varied partly because new fields of knowledge were being established and collectors also became varied in their interests and in the specialization of their knowledge:

> New semiophores, including manuscripts and other sundry remains of antiquity, exotic and natural curios, works of art and scientific instruments, began to come into circulation and were absorbed into collections. To the members of these groups they represented not only objects enabling them to acquire new knowledge or learn new techniques, in the way that artists study the works of their predecessors, but were also emblematic of their social rank. This explains why collections now began to be found

> for the first time in the libraries and studios of those men who were founts of both art and knowledge.
>
> (Pomian, 1990: 38)

Between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the practice of collecting proliferated around Europe due to a new interest for objects from the past that before the fourteenth century were dismissed as rubbish (Pomian, 1990). The spread of scientific academies and scientists fostered the appearance of the first scientific collections in the seventeenth century. Other relevant changes in the kinds of objects that were understood as collectable were due to the pressure of the market and the expensive prices of collectable objects. This provoked a change in the creation of semiophores including cheap and popular objects which, once desired by wealthy collectors, raised their prices as symbolic objects, leading to "the birth of a mechanism encouraging the transformation of despised objects and items of rubbish into semiophores" (Pomian, 1990: 40). Even today's more or less generalized idea that any type of object might be collectable is only reserved for private collectors, while public collections are expected to justify the sacredness of what they safeguard.

To sum up, what these authors show with the analysis of specific practices of museum making is that they are capable of producing changes in the symbolic capital of those that make them, increasing in consequence their symbolic power and becoming a tool to improve their positions. This means that museum practices are a resource for the struggle of position-takings, which, furthermore, are of limited access to those that manage to erect themselves as legitimate museum practitioners.

Symbolic Capital at Play Between Producers and Consumers

Amateur museum practices might seem to occupy a twilight zone between the production and the consumption of museum practices because their production is in the first place a manner of consuming their free time as we will see in the next chapter. Their positions help to make evident that the distinction between museum producers and consumers is a distinction of status given by the position occupied by museum practitioners.

The practice of museums is often seen as double sided, understood as production when the work of professional practitioners is analyzed and as consumption when the role of

visitors is[10]. I want to contribute to downplay the dichotomy between practices of making and practices of visiting museums. The lack of choice in vocabulary does not help to break this dichotomy, no matter if visitors are called costumers, users or participants. It has often been defended that visitors are in their consumption an active part of the production of the museographic product (see for example Bagnall, 2003; Fyfe & Ross, 1996; Fyfe, 1995; Goulding, 2000; Hooper-Greenhill, 2006; Lindauer, 2006; Longhurst et al., 2004; Padró, 2003; Simon, 2010). Many museums are actively changing the role of their visitors, including them in their decision making processes or inviting them to be creative agents in the production of works of art, in exhibition design or educational activities (Simon, 2010). The other manner to do it would be, as I would like to argue in order to complement the work that has already been done, that all museum practices involve production and consumption. Thus both visitors and museum "makers" can be understood as museum practitioners and I will defend that the distinction between consumers and producers is above all, a distinction of authority and legitimacy related to the positions occupied by museum practitioners.

It is not my intention to argue that there is absolutely no difference between production and consumption but rather that practices entail both dimensions (of production and consumption). Furthermore I want to locate the emphasis somewhere else than we are used to, this is not on the practitioners and their practices but on the observers and their relative positions within the field showing that is rather the way we observe these practices from our position and the position of the practitioners that the emphasis is put on their consumptive or productive side (each of which would not be possible without the other from an analytical viewpoint).

I am also aware that my proposal is not far from that of those who have followed de Certeau's work closer than I have done, and consequently have considered any kind of cultural consumption as a form of production. Yet I do consider that in order to understand amateur museum practices it is necessary to question what of them is

[10] The production and consumption of amateur museum practitioners is hardly ever taken into consideration. Nevertheless, in the few works in which it is (Candlin, 2015; Jannelli, 2012; Klimaszewski & Nyce, 2014; Klimaszewski, 2016; Martinez Latre, 2007; Taimre, 2013) it is made evident that such kind of museum practices are done as a craft, for the sake of the museum practitioners and their communities in a manner that is impossible to distinguish either if they are consuming or producing museum products. In all of these works and sometimes in more explicit manners than others, the disadvantageous position of amateur museum practitioners is highlighted.

consumed and what is produced, which will evidence issues of power and legitimacy that are useful to understand museum practices in general.

De Certeau claims that consumption is a specific kind of production, and not it's opposite:

> To a rationalized, expansionist and at the same time centralized, clamorous, and spectacular production corresponds another production, called 'consumption.' The latter is devious, it is dispersed, but it insinuates itself everywhere, silently and almost invisibly, because it does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order.
>
> (de Certeau 1988: xiii).

If we understand that this "rationalized, expansionist and centralized, clamorous and spectacular production" corresponds to highly institutionalized and professionalized museums[11], de Certeau's consumer will probably fit the profile of the visitor of such museums in the act of using the imposed museum product by walking through, seeing, reading, touching, commenting, laughing at, forgetting, imagining the exhibitions, catalogues, guided tours or museum souvenirs.

Yet the visitor of the kind of museum that fits de Certeau's described production – which is an up-down unidirectional museum- are not always performing the role of silent producers through "the ways of using the product", but they also produce their own products like photographs, conversations or the use of the bought souvenirs, to name some of the most conventional practices. This approach to the visitor as an active producer is close to that of relatively recent visitor studies that understand visitors as active producers of meaning. From these approaches, museum visiting is an act of production that can only be explained through the microanalysis of visiting practices that has widely proved that visitors are far from being passive (see for example Bagnall, 2003; Fyfe & Ross, 1996; Lindauer, 2006; Longhurst, Bagnall, & Savage, 2004; Macdonald, 2005). It is thus only left to note that, despite being active, their capacity to effect changes through their visiting practices is so small compared to the capacity

[11] The blurred delimitations between amateur museums and other kinds of more professionalized and institutionalized museums has been developed in the introduction, in the second chapter and in the paper "Museum-making as Serious Leisure" (Moncunill-Piñas, 2015)

of effecting changes of the curating practices –among others- that it is often not even taken into account.

Nevertheless, this is only a matter of power balance. Taking the production of consumption a step further from where de Certeau leaves it, it should be highlighted that not only museum users but museum makers as well are "using the products imposed by a dominant economic order" (1988:xiii). Seen from this point of view, both museum users and museum makers are in fact consumers or users of museum practices. This is true for all museum practitioners no matter how well positioned they are within their field, as it can be partly seen in the struggles of professional museum practitioners to adapt to and to adopt given museum practices (Gray, 2016). Following de Certeau's understanding of the appropriation and consumption of language, museum users in general could be understood as well as users of museographic codes, this is as museum speakers. As such, they are consumers of a language that is external to them and they collect the effects (positive and negative) of doing so. If the pure consumer does not exist, neither the pure producer does: they both need to appropriate a language that does not belong to them, and as such they are all better understood as consumers or users.

I need to elaborate on what is museographic language and how it is consumed in order to continue with this argumentation. We have already seen in the introduction, through de Certeau, Hall, Lefebvre, and Bourdieu, that language has to be appropriated in order to be used because it is proposed by restricted legitimate and authorized groups, something that can be applied to the use of museographic language.

We can consider museography as a linguistic system that can only be used to construct meanings through the application of its own morphology and syntax. Hooper-Greenhill (1992) considers the cabinets of the world to be "a form of language, with a complex relationship to the other languages of the world" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 90). She further adds that "it is likely that the collections were seen as material forms of writing […]. The gathering together of meaningful objects, organised and arranged in specific sequences in a special space, produced a 'script' to be 'read'" (126). Macdonald (2006) considers museums' language to be "spoken through architecture, spatial arrangements, and forms of display as well as in discursive commentary" and adds that it is a language "of fact, objectivity, superior taste, and authoritative knowledge" (Macdonald, 2006b). Museographic language is most evident in the exhibition space, where its traditional morphological elements are the exhibited objects, cabinets, signs, taxonomy, visible

conservation techniques, light, and so on (Moser, 2010). While some authors consider exhibitions to be texts and intertexts, or speech acts (Ferguson, 1996) that construct rhetorics specific to its language (Kratz, 2011), others have proposed specific methods for syntactic analysis of museum space (Hillier & Tzortzi, 2006). They all coincide, nevertheless, in understanding museography as a language. The language of museography also includes other practices surrounding the most visible aspect of the exhibition, such as conservation and cataloguing procedures, security measures and so on. All these practices signify and code messages that museum visitors and the museum makers themselves have to decode. Retaking thus again de Certeau's and Hall's assumption of the appropriation of language by its speakers, I defend that this museographic language needs to be appropriated and adapted in order to be used by museum practitioners, whether professional or amateur. Such users adapt the museographic language –like they would need to do with any other language- in an ongoing *bricolage* process so that, as a tool, it can serve their own needs and interests (de Certeau, 1988: xiv). Therefore, museum makers find themselves in the position of users; this is of consuming museography through its use, having to appropriate it and being able to adapt it to their own purposes. Understanding cultural practices as acts of appropriation, emphasizes their understanding as use and consumption (Warde, 2014: 284).

Returning to the division of consumption and production roles, Hooper-Greenhill detects at the end of the sixteenth century a separation between the producer and the consumer of the "cabinets of the world" when the figure of the expert who designs and builds cabinets for others appears:

> This separation of producer and consumer entails further separations and new practices. The secret correspondences of the Kunstschrank had to be 'demonstrated' to the new owner. [...] This need for expertise and explanation of the objects and their relationships marks the beginning of the emergence of the cultural agent or 'museum' maker as 'expert', or 'connoisseur'.
>
> (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 122)

The appearance of this kind of expert is also the appearance of a position of power over other positions that are defined by their practices, such as the owner or the visitor. Such differentiation is deeply enhanced during the nineteenth century, when the size of

museums and their exploitation by public governments required a series of experts dedicated to specific needs:

> A division was drawn, therefore, between knowing subjects, between the producers and the consumers of knowledge, between expert and layman. This division held within it relations of advantage and disadvantage. In the public museum the producing subject 'works' in the hidden spaces of the museum, while the consuming subject 'works' in the public spaces.
>
> (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 190)

This division of roles that is now generally taken for granted is misleading when we try to understand museum practices, especially if they are not dealt upon from a relational viewpoint and embedded within the field within which these practices take place and gain their specific meaning. Georg Simmel, when he was making a case for his relational standpoint in sociology, addressed the apparent division of passive and active, productive and consumptive roles, dissolving them in a net of reciprocal actions and effects, in a net of interrelations, within which the balances between the degrees of production/consumption in each party involved was much more emphasized:

> Certainly people endlessly deceive themselves regarding the degree of freedom present in any kind of action because, to be sure, the conscious idea with which we account for that inner reality feels so clear and certain to us; however one interprets freedom, one will be able to say that some degree of it, albeit not the amount believed, exists wherever the feeling and conviction of it exist. Yet a more positive activity persists on the part of the ostensibly merely passive elements in relationships such as these: the speaker before the assembly, the teacher before the class—the one at the head of the group here appears solely to be dominant for the present; nevertheless those who find themselves in such a situation understand the influential and controlling feedback from this mass who appear merely docile and controlled by the leader. And this is not only with regard to moments of immediate opposition.
>
> (Simmel, 2009: 132)

Perhaps instead of reducing all practices of museum visiting/making as practices of consumption or as practices of production (after showing that depending on how we place our emphasis they can certainly be seen and analyzed from both viewpoints) we should understand them as practices of culture, as Georg Simmel viewed the circle of culture, which involves in all cases a subjective and an objective dimension (and if one

of them is missing, we cannot speak of culture). As museum visitors and as museum makers we have to incorporate codes, knowledge, and experiences into ourselves before we can make something out of them, something which we exteriorize in diverse ways and which becomes part of the objective culture. And perhaps here lies the difference in the valuation of these processes that leads to a biased perception of the practices of visitors and makers (all of them practitioners), highlighting the subjective (consumptive, passive) dimension of the cultural experience of the visitors, and highlighting the objective (productive, active) dimension of the same experience of professional museum practitioners (Simmel, 1997).

And yet, where does this deep difference in perception and evaluation come from? My hypothesis is that this difference cannot be found in the practices themselves, but rather in the position-takings of their practitioners within the specific field. An example of this can be found in the practice of collecting. Many scholars coincide in stating that when collecting was conducted by women, it was generally understood as frivolous consumption, and when it was conducted by men, as intellectual production (Gere & Vaizey, 1999). The difference cannot be found in their practices but in the different positions that these practitioners occupied in their fields. Being defined as a consumer is to lose legitimacy in a given field and shrinks one's symbolic capital.

Thus, to ascribe the practices of professionals to the side of production and the practices of the visitors to the side of consumption has little to do with the actual proportion of consumption/production involved in these practices. Instead, museum practitioners are considered consumers or producers depending on the position that they occupy within the field. Usually the power balance between museum makers and visitors is acutely inclined in favour of makers, leaving to visitors the most passive role not because they are passive in their practices of visiting but because no matter how active they are, they have little chances of affecting the museum products, practices and worldviews.

There is also another important difference: visitors do not need to certify their knowledge, but this lack of certification situates them in inferior positions in relation to those that do have certified knowledge as professional museum workers do. As Bourdieu argues in relation to autodidacts who are seen as inferior to those possessing certified academic titles even if their knowledge and experience would be the same:

> In his symbolic class struggle with the certified holders of cultural competence, the 'pretentious' challenger [...] is likely to see his knowledge and techniques devalued as

> too narrowly subordinated to practical goals, too 'selfinterested', too marked, in their style, by the haste of their acquisition, in favour of more 'fundamental' and also more 'gratuitous' knowledge
>
> (Bourdieu, 1984: 330)

Furthermore, if a visitor has a strong position and symbolic capital within a field, given for example by certified knowledge, his practice of visiting will probably be seen as production. That would be the case of renowned artists visiting art exhibitions or, more strikingly museum directors visiting other museums, which are often purposely invited because their presence contributes to legitimizing and giving value to the museum product they are visiting and thus paying attention to. The practice of commenting and discussing the exhibition, common in different degrees in all kinds of visitors, will be taken into account in this case, listened to by the curators and directors of the institution that produced the exhibition, and they will probably have an effect on their future practices.

The Return to the Self and the Strategic Use of Museography

As language users, we do not only consume others' products but we are often the main consumers of our own products -like when we cook for ourselves, when we paint for enjoyment, when we fix our own bicycle, when we use the professional benefits of publishing an academic paper. This is a property of cultural production in general and it can be easily detected in amateur museums to a relevant extent. In Simmel's point of view, the cultural act involves a round trip in what he calls "the path of the soul to itself" (Simmel, 1997: 62) in which we produce cultural objects from our subjectivity – "objectively intellectual constructs" (57)- which we need to include back to ourselves in order to fulfil the process of cultivation. This means that cultural processes are not complete unless they return to their producers transforming their subjectivity. This is nevertheless a generally underrated or overlooked part of the process (Cantó-Milà, 2005) and this is why it might need more of our attention. Any cultural production is somehow returning to ourselves thus turning us into our own recipients.

This is evident in Witcomb's (2010) touching analysis about the highly detailed wooden model that a Holocaust survivor did of the concentration camp where he was imprisoned and where his wife and daughter were killed. Witcomb suggests that, like

many other Holocaust memorials that are made by survivors, this one is built achieving a double effect. First, it informs others about the Holocaust horrors and its historical facts, and second, it helps themselves to remember and to canalize grief (Witcomb, 2010). They become "a part of everyday life both for (their) makers and (their) audiences precisely because of (their) insistence on the personal" (Witcomb, 2010: 48). Amateur museum practice is, in a similar manner, pursued for its sharing with others but primarily for one's own use and benefit.

This return to oneself or oneself as the main recipient of one's product is especially visible in leisure. Research on leisure has paid a lot of attention to the personal benefits and rewards of leisure activities, which are in turn a motivation for their continuity (I shall examine this issue in detail in the second chapter of this work). Although amateur museum practitioners work with a receiver or visitor in mind, and despite the effects that they might have on their communities, they acknowledge that they mainly engage in museum practice for themselves, that they are the main recipients of the benefits of their museum practices, as they bring enjoyment and meaning to their lives. Pleasure, satisfaction, identity formation, increasing self-esteem, a sense of personal accomplishment and emotional involvement among others have been found to be relevant motivations for leisure in general and also for collecting (Belk et al., 1991; Bloch & Bruce, 1984; Cohen-Gewerc & Stebbins, 2013; Danet & Katriel, 1994; Formanek, 1994; Mullins, 2014), and it also appears to be not only relevant but the main reason for their activity, as revealed in the analysis of my interviews with the museum practitioners. As Pearce (1992) and also Belk and his colleagues (Belk et al., 1988) notice, collections are felt as an extension of the self (of them-selves) because they constitute part of the self-image of the collector being "reminders and confirmers of our identities" (Pearce, 1992: 55). But furthermore, the objects of a collection and the collection as a whole, are often perceived as central to the self because a lot of energy and effort have been invested in them. Giving value to the object is to give value to one's own time, effort and economic sacrifices (Pearce, 1992) and the collection serves as a mirror of the self. It is as well for this self-identification that many collectors expect their collections to survive them and to be an extension of themselves into the future or even a form of immortality (Belk et al., 1988).

Thus, despite the fact that the consideration of certain practices as consumption or certain subjects as consumers is a manner to devaluate their legitimacy and authority,

it is also true that through practice, one can improve the position held within a field until one becomes recognized as a producer. It is by insisting on (the value of) their practices that disadvantageous museum practitioners can acquire knowledge on the practices of distinction that used to identify them as consumers. These practices become incorporated in their habitus which eventually becomes institutionally validated and recompensed. It might happen as well that individuals that are well positioned and have certain symbolic capital in another field can use it to improve their position within the field of museum practices.

Critical Museology has long researched how museum practice is used to construct discourses that defy or maintain opinions, values and visions of the world and therefore positions of power within it. This is obvious in highly ideological state museums and their role in establishing and maintaining national identity (Bennett, 1988; Duncan, 1995; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Kaplan, 2006), but it is also the case for community museums that are built in order to serve the same community that produces them, which recapitalizes its own values and worldviews through the selection, preservation and activation of their own heritage (Butinx & Karp, 2006; Klimaszewski & Nyce, 2014; Klimaszewski, 2016). Nevertheless, as we have already seen, all museums and collections are tools for position-takings. Furthermore, museum practice is also a tool for the struggle between producers and the groups from whom the institution of museum derives. We have already seen how Hooper-Greenhill identifies how the "cabinets of the world" of the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries constituted subject positions, especially that of the owner/collector, who was situated at the centre of the worldview that was being presented. Cabinets were "technologies of power" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 103):

> The relational sequences of the discourse of the *Kunstkammer* articulated various positions of the subject. Thus the visiting subject became incorporated within the articulated network by occupying a subjected position not only through the exercise of the gaze, as in the earlier case study, but also through the symbolic depositing of material things. In colluding and assisting in the accumulation of material that represented not only the world, but also the place within it of the prince, so the subject colluded and concurred with the power the prince laid claim to. This, in turn, partly constituted the subject position of prince.
>
> (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 103)

This kind of position-takings described by Hooper-Greenhill, are very similar to those of amateur museum practitioners, whose practice is conducted through the appropriation of the museographic language as a resource within a field in which they occupy in disadvantageous positions.

This could be compared to the "popular use" of religion with which de Certeau explains the subversion of the established order through the frames of reference of more powerful groups (1988: 17). This kind of use, quite directly translatable into a popular[12] use of museography, re-employs a system constructed and spread by others. Under this light, de Certeau's and Hall's appropriation of language shifts toward the more politicized shade of Lefebvre's proposal (see introduction). This kind of appropriation relies on the belief in the legitimacy of the language or frame of reference that is being appropriated and it is not in opposition to the perception of the inequalities that are intrinsic of it (Certeau, 1988). Understood as a re-use or appropriation of museography, amateur museums are at least slightly subverting the established order through the modification of its usual directionality, historically coming from the authorized and legitimated with a generalized absence of negotiation.

In this appropriation, museographic language and the way to practice it are also naturalized. If the naturalization of museographic language would be complete, it would be reproducing the implicit values and worldviews encoded in it by the mere fact of using it. Nevertheless it could still serve one's own interest if the use of that language brought the enjoyment that amateur museum practitioners express they have, even if this enjoyment would take place in unaware contradiction with their own values. Furthermore, the use of museum practices can benefit their positions even if it is through the use of naturalized practices. In these situations the effect of such messages on the communities where they are communicated, returns to influence the producers' capital, making them the main beneficiaries of their own practice also in this other sense.

[12] I allow myself to momentary use the term "popular" here to be able to draw a parallelism with de Certeau's proposal, and by that, I am temporarily adopting his use of "popular culture" as that that presents itself "essentially as 'arts of making' this or that, i.e., as combinatory or utilizing modes of consumption. These practices bring into play a 'popular' ratio, a way of thinking invested in a way of acting, an art of combination which cannot be dissociated from an art of using" (xv). Nevertheless, I think that the term is still problematic and misleading when trying to apply it to specific activities and that it perpetuates implicit relations of power structuring cultural productions as Bourdieu criticizes in "Did You Say 'Popular'?"(Bourdieu, 1991).

The local ethnographic museums in Romania analyzed by Klimaszewski (2016) and Klimaszewski and Nyce (2014) show these effects. Individuals, families or collectives that belong to minority ethnic groups transform part of their own houses into museums where they store, show and explain tools, clothes and customs that they consider to be part of their heritage. In this practice they have a sense of working for the community, whether with or without the community's support, and, although this is not explicitly stated in their research, they seem to apply taken for granted or naturalized museum practices such as the guided tour and the display of objects. It should be interesting to see on what concept of museum these local museums are based on, as it is suggested by one of Klimaszeski's informants who wonders about herself if she "took this habit of understanding luxury as old things from when I went to Italy and saw it there" (quoted in Klimaszewsky, 2016: 3). This quote shows how naturalization –of old things as luxury- and questioning of the origin of the practice can coexist in the use of museum practices which are always strategic or tactical.

Amateur Museum Practices

The museological proposals that conform the case studies of this research are built from a relatively powerless position within their fields. They perform what de Certeau has called a struggle of unequal forces, by redistributing a space constructed by others similar to that detected in community museums such as those analyzed by Klimaszewsky and others (Butinx & Karp, 2006). Amateur museum practitioners are in relatively disadvantageous positions because none of them have formal (objectified and certified) education on museology or museography, they are self-made experts also in their fields of toys, entomology, and bread baking, history, geology, and so on– although Joaquim's bakery has the legitimacy given by the experience of a 100 year old business, they make important economic sacrifices to keep their projects going, and although they rely on the relations with their peers, family and friends, they do not hold strong social and political positions. They are all economically comfortable enough to be able to invest time and money in their endeavor, but in all the cases this possibility comes from the work done in other fields and the cheaper space of low populated areas. This means that they cannot strongly rely on the kind of economic, cultural, political and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), which has historically been behind the making of museums.

In this section I will analyze how the researched amateur museum practitioners relate to some of the most common museum practices, including museum visiting, museum naming, collecting, labelling and cataloguing, giving guided tours, building museographic narratives, defining entrance fees, publishing catalogues, leaflets and websites and relating with public organizations. I will pay attention to their practices through their products as Bourdieu proposes (2013) but especially through their explanations about them.

As we will see, most evidence shows that these amateur museum practitioners sincerely believe in the qualities and legitimacy of the institutional practices of the museum. This can be inferred from the taken for granted or naturalized use of certain museographic practices and conventions detected through the way they use them and especially how they refer to them during the interviews and guided tours. Nevertheless, despite this attachment to the field, they resist, question, and modify certain practices and they stand for their decisions. Because our practices are shaped by our habitus, their practices and their struggles in relation to them informs us about their habitus, their positions within the field (or within several intersecting fields) and their capitals. Furthermore it will inform us about their movement within the fields through museum practice.

Museum Visiting

Although it might not seem a practice that has directly to do with the production of their museums, visiting other museums should be considered a central museum practice. It is central in the formation of the habitus that shapes and naturalizes our understanding of museums - especially when we consider that museum visiting is used by families and schools as a tool for early socialization of children. Their experiences as visitors also shape what they expect from their museums' visitors[13].

The researched amateur museum practitioners are in fact visitors or receptors of similar discourse types, although not especially of museographic discourse. They are more interested in the production of peers (both amateur and professional) in the fields of

[13] We already saw in the introduction that as language users we are often consumers of our same or similar discourse types through the consumption of similar kind of products produced by others. This consumption is often converted into inputs for further practices, which gives a sense of circularity to the consumption-production cycle.

their interests (bread baking history, toy history and toy collecting, geology, zoology, compared anatomy…) than of consuming museum products in general.

When asked about the museums that served as reference for making them, the first reaction of most of the interviewed amateur museum practitioners is an absolute denial: they do not have any museum as their referent and they had the feeling that they had to invent everything from scratch. Josep, from the Geology and Gypsum museum, first stated:

> Josep: I have done it in my way, I was not inspired by anything specific, other museums or anyone, this was my… my idea. I mean, there is no other…
>
> Me: There is no museum that served you as a reference or that you liked when you were little, or…?
>
> Josep: No, no, no, no, it was just as I made it.
>
> (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

But then, when asked if he had to learn by himself on the go, he specifies:

> Yes, well, of course. For example I had a really nice relationship with the (director) of the seminary museum (Geological Museum of the Barcelona Seminary), when Lluís Via was there (as a director)… Other museums… it is very technical but the one in Manresa, the one devoted to the school of mines (Museu de Geologia Valentí Masachs) directed by Mata-Perelló… but nobody else, I mean, I did not have a base. I helped to start a museum in Cadaqués, I think they told me that it was closed now… I had some friends there with whom I went searching for minerals and fossils, and also fishing there because they had a boat…
>
> (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

So, at least two small but highly specialized museums belonging to two higher educational institutions (Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya and the Seminary of the Archbishopric of Barcelona) shaped his perception of the practice of museums of mineralogy. He was not only their visitor, but he enjoyed a close friendship with their directors. Nevertheless, the fact that he first denies or seems to ignore that such relationships had an influence in his understanding of museum practice shows either that the processes of learning museum practices are naturalized in him or that he chooses to hide by denial any external influence as if museum practices originating in himself could be possible and desirable. Josep is very critical with the museums that

many local governments have been doing in Catalonia during the last years, most of them being interpretation centers which he finds empty of content and not interesting at all.

Agustí and Agustí Jr from The House of Butterflies do not deny having had some museums as references or at least as strong influences. These are in general private collections similar to theirs and never highly institutionalized museums. Thus, when they talk about their collections of reference, names of friends and of several generations of families come to the conversation. Their consumption of similar products is in consequence quite narrow and tied to personal bonds which are often constructed through the sharing of a passion which is entomology and not museum practice.

> Me: And the Museu Blau (Museum of Natural Sciences of Barcelona)…?
>
> Agustí: No, we have never been there.
>
> Agustí Jr: I have been into the one of the seminary.
>
> Agustí: We don't have time. Well, we would have time on Sunday afternoons but everything is closed, the museum of Granollers is closed, in Barcelona, too, everything is closed.
>
> Me: Well, you could have seen it when you were little…
>
> Agustí Jr: I was at the museum of the seminary, with the priests… a couple of times. They are there, behind the university.
>
> Agustí: There was also these people from Olot, we were also friends [...] but we lost contact. He had daytime butterflies but especially nighttime butterflies, he did a lot of exchanges. He knew a lot of foreigners and with those exchanges he managed to have an impressive collection of beetles and butterflies. He had it in Olot. He was lucky to have a patio and he had everything there quite nicely put. I was once there and I would go again now, but of course it is not there anymore.

And:

> Agustí: The museum of Torrellebreta and that one from Balanyà always excited us, but they already died. Now they took everything away and they have pottery now.
>
> (Agustí and Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2016)

Joan from The Den of the Shark, knows other museums especially because he has worked with them exchanging knowledge, services and collection items. He,

nevertheless, is very critical about their work. When asked about some of the public natural history museums of Barcelona, he answers:

> I have lent them pieces, also to the Aquarium of Barcelona. They even came here, we made some exchanges, but…they don't have even a fourth part of the material that I have. And the Museu Blau (Museum of Natural Sciences of Barcelona) is very nice, they have spent a lot of money there, but "there you go". It is not… As I told you, I did the museum thinking of telling what I am not told when I go to a museum.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

And he adds:

> Here in Catalonia there was a man called Barrull, a couple in fact, and they dedicated themselves to sharks, but they had to quit and now they only deal with scavenger birds. There was also that one called Moreno, and Andalusian who lived in Madrid and who died. A fantastic scientist but he died. Here in Spain the shark is not…there are no specialists. If they come here from the university I have to explain (many things) to them.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

I will delve in the next chapter into the relation of the amateur museum practitioners with the professionals of their sector. By now, I would like to emphasize how their direct referents, as in the case of Joan, are often scientists and other amateurs like themselves, never highly institutionalized museums. Thus, although they have done it, they do not actively consume, as it could be expected, similar museographic experiences. Joan in fact, when asked whether he has visited other interesting museums, he answers that in his free time he prefers to do research on the sharks, to search for fossils or to do scuba diving, which he understands as part of the same shark interest. This preference for the practices related to field work and research is also common in Agustí and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies) and Josep (Geology and Gypsum museum).

This is also enhanced by their perception that there are no other museums like theirs in Catalonia. Joaquim, from the Bread Museum coincides with all the others in this matter, and he has been informed about European museums on bread making through baking and history magazines:

> Joaquim: When I was very young my family and I received a magazine… do you see those boxes up there? This is a very technical magazine on bread that started being edited in the forties… or even before that! And this magazine was very advanced because there were texts from Germany, France, Britain… from everywhere.[...] You could see things about the German bread museum, the museum of Ulm, and you could see how they faced it, how they installed it, and you were gathering ideas. And then I just started it.
>
> Me: So your referents were these more than museums from your surroundings?
>
> Joaquim: Of course! There is none here! The referents are from abroad. Then what I did, and this has to be said, when I had already started it, I went to see small museums from the area. There is a religious museum in Estany, and I also went to the museum of Ripoll, to the museum of Montserrat… small museums, but I did not like the manner in which they had structured them.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

The case of Joaquim is thus different from the former three interviewees in that he did actively engage in visiting small museums before opening his own in order to inform himself, thus reflecting on the things that he wanted to do differently. The museums that he admired, even if he only knew them through magazine articles –he has had only the chance of visiting one of them, located in Switzerland-, were those of central Europe, which were also more directly linked to his. Notwithstanding, he is still more interested in visiting other museums than Josep (Geology and Gypsum Museum), Joan (The Den of the Shark) or Agustí and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies) are.

Also Martí from the Vietnam Museum has museums of reference, military museums in general and specifically Vietnam War museums as well. Nevertheless, because most of them are in the USA and he is afraid of flying, he has only travelled there once.

> All the military museums are my referents but maybe specially the Musem of Forgoten Warriors (USA). Do visit their website, it is spectacular.
>
> (Martí, the Vietnam Museum, e-mail interview, 2016)

Rafael from the Toy Museum of Medellin has an approach to his referents similar to that of Joaquim and Martí:

> I see a lot through the Internet, I thus visit museums from Japan, some are wonderful. He (the founder of that concrete museum) also started like that. When he was young he went to a friend's house and he saw a toy from the 1960s there, and he said "I had

> this car when I was a kid" and the friend gave it to him. Now he has a huge collection of toys. The museum of Edinburgh in Scotland received a doll that had belonged to Queen Anne and because of their statutes they had to send it to a museum in London. Yet one of them said "no… let's do a toy museum ourselves", [...] they announced it to the press and people started bringing them their toys. This is the Museum of Childhood of Edinburgh.
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

Furthermore, Rafael studied Fine Arts, which has taken him to visit many art museums and exhibitions mainly as visitor but also as an artist.

Antoni from the Coca-Cola Museum does not seem interested in other museums at all, and he dismisses the question just by saying that "this is Europe's bigger collection!" (Antoni, Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016). In a similar manner, Joan from the Vietnam War museum says that there are only similar museums in the United States of America.

The most important exception is that of the founder of the Maternal Museum; visiting museums was the trigger of Magda's museum. In her practice of museum visiting during the 60's around Spain she realized that there was an absolute lack of museums about women, and thus she decided to do her own proposal against that tendency. As I could not interview her, I do not know if she has nevertheless had any positive referents for the realization of her museum. It is however obvious that all these museums that she visited in her youth affected her, not only arousing her interest, but also as practical examples of museum practices. During my visit to the museum she openly criticized the gender bias in museums, but she was not critical about any other museum practices.

To sum up, most of the museum practitioners I interviewed were/are not very active museum consumers, at least in quantitative terms. Only Joaquim (the Bread museum), Martí (the Vietnam Museum) and Rafael (The Toy Museum) have shown a special interest in museums, which were similar to theirs, and with the purpose of learning from them. The other interviewed museum practitioners did not deliver a clear narrative regarding the sources of their tacit knowledge on museum practices. What is striking about these cases is that they have never been passionate museum visitors either, and yet they have chosen museography as one of their languages. Finally, Magda's case is outstanding in relation to the rest of the analyzed cases because she reported that museum visiting was the origin of her interest in museum practices.

Museum Naming

One of the most relevant practices (because of its high symbolic effects) is that of naming a museum "museum". The word museum originally referred to the temples of the muses which were places of worship in ancient Greece or to the libraries like the Museum of Alexandria (Pomian, 1990). Many of the practices that we understand today as museums and that many authors situate within the history of the institution of museums were not called museums but cabinets, *Wunderkammern, Kunstkammern, studiolos* among others. The word museum as a building where objects are kept and displayed did not appear until the seventeenth century (Pomian, 1990).

We have already seen that objects become sacred, change their meanings and value, when they enter a collection or a museum, becoming intermediaries of the invisible (Belk et al., 1988; Pomian, 1990). Naming a set of objects "collection" is one of the main processes by which objects become sacred (Belk et al., 1988). In a similar kind of conversion, naming a space "museum" is a practice of legitimation which turns mundane spaces into places of production, management and exploitation of sacred objects. This is also the reason why definitions of "museum" are highly contested, and the access to the decision-making over what museums are is limited through legislations and/or organizations like the ICOM.

In the introduction, we have already worked upon some definitions of museums, which sometimes are even in contradiction with one and other. Most of these definitions include a list of conditions that museums have to fulfil in order to be considered museums. These kind of exclusionary definitions usually proposed by legitimized professionals, associations or scholars are, intentionally or not, a limitation of access to the sacralising use of the word "museum".

As it has also been argued in the introduction, all the selected cases label themselves as "museums". However, the manners in which their makers explain this decision reveal their awareness of the position from which they are doing so, especially showing a certain lack of confidence regarding their right to do so. This also hints at the importance that they bestow upon such naming and upon the diverse implicit and naturalized meanings behind it.

The House of Butterflies has also a subtitle in its name: "Small Museum of Natural History". Agustí Jr seems to have been especially worried about the name of the museum:

> Then we decided to add 'Small Natural History Museum' after 'The House of Butterflies'. Because it is true, isn't it? We could have put it bigger or whatever, but we wrote it small because in this way people could… I didn't like it much but we put it because of this. Right? Because otherwise it seems that we have something very valuable or that we have something other than butterflies or whatever…
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, inteview, 2015)

And again:

> Now we have this thing of the museum, well, this that we call museum, right?
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, inteview, 2015)

By expressing his reaffirmation to naming The House of Butterflies a Museum of Natural History, Agustí Jr is also expressing some doubt about it, at least by having the need to justify this decision, which becomes more explicit in the second excerpt. He also shows his preoccupation about what people might understand by The House of Butterflies and by Small Museum of Natural History, being especially concerned about the value that such expressions infer to the contents of his home and therefore about possible burglaries. Joaquim (the Bread Museum) and Rafael (the Toy Museums) expressed similar doubts during our conversations:

> Joaquim: It isn't an official museum, but I run it like a museum.
>
> Mariona: Why do you say that is not an official museum?
>
> Joaquim: Well of course, because it's private...
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)
>
> Well, I call it museum, I have it on the Internet as Museo del Juguete (Toy Museum).
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

As we can see in the first excerpt, Joaquim names his project "museum", but when he talks about it he seems to feel obliged to devalue the use of the word. He works on it as it *were* a museum and by that, he seems to insinuate that it is actually not a museum or that he does not totally dare to make such a statement. He also seems to assume that a proper museum should be public, although it is difficult to distinguish from his words

if that means run by public institutions or that he considers his project somewhat of private interest.

In contrast Rafael often says that "he calls it a museum" as implying that this is different from it really being a museum as we can see in the second excerpt. This perceived distance, between what the reality of museums is and what his museum actually is, often forces him to say that he personally chooses to call it that way, regardless whether it is a museum or not.

Such doubts about the right of naming their projects "museum" show that these museum practitioners have some specific implicit conceptions of what a museum is. Furthermore they perceive the effect of the performative utterance of this naming, which constitutes what it names, if (and only if) it is "pronounced by a person who has the 'power' to pronounce it […], the authority to emit the words that he utters" (Bourdieu, 1991: 111).

In consequence, their use of the word "museum" (despite their perception that they do not have the authority to do so) turns museum naming into a tactical practice. Even if the interviewees do not feel legitimate enough to stop justifying their choice and their right to consider their projects as museums, they are still making the decision of thinking and communicating them as such –after all, there are many other private collections with similar permanent museographic displays open to the public that are not named "museums" by their owners. They seem to perceive the symbolic power[14] linked to that naming, and they dare to both appropriate it and defy their own conception of what museums ought to be. On one side, this means that they are taking advantage of the symbolic power and legitimacy inscribed in that naming. On the other, their doubts and uncertainty about the use of the word are a proof of the distance between them and the convention in which the noun "museum" is inscribed.

> When the 'observer' is sufficiently enclosed within (an) institution, and thus sufficiently blind, everything goes fine. The discourse he produces has every appearance of holding together.
>
> (De Certeau 1988, 60).

[14] Symbolic power is therefore "a power of making people see - *theorein* – and believe, of producing and imposing the legitimate or legal classification" (Bourdieu, 1998: 243). Very importantly, it "exists because the person who submits to it believes that it exists" (192).

The amateur museum practitioners' constant expressions of doubt show that things do not totally hold together in their understanding of their own practice, thus pointing at their struggle in the field.

But this is not so in all cases. Josep, from the Geology and Gypsum museum, does not show any doubt about the decision of naming his display a "museum":

> Me: There are some museums that are not called museums but collections, and others are called museums… why did you…?
>
> Josep: Because I decided to call it museum and that is all!
>
> Me: You were sure about it.
>
> Josep: Totally sure. Because, let's see, what is the difference between a collection and a museum? There is none!
>
> Me: But then you could as well have called it "collection".
>
> Josep: Well, yes! But I decided to call it museum. I am tough, I am very clear about everything and they can't… they can't make me change my mind.
>
> (Josep, Geology and Gypsum museum, interview, 2016)

Josep seems totally confident about the fact that he can take the decisions that he wants in relation to his museum, because it is a private endeavor and because he has no commitments to anyone else in relation to it. The name of the museum is nothing but another example of his position, showing that he has the right to call it museum or anything else if he wants to. Nevertheless he also claims that there is no difference between a collection and a museum which is true depending on the definition of museum and collection that we use. Despite not directly stating it, through his pragmatism Josep seems to be aware of the arbitrariness of the conventions of museum naming, thus being less preoccupied with their wrong use. Despite this lack of reverence for the implicit meanings of the convention and the symbolic power of the word "museum", he still receives its legitimating effects which depend on the perception of the others.

The case of Magda (the Maternal Museum) deserves, once again, our special attention as her decisions in relation to museum naming seem to answer to different kinds of needs. On the historical timeline, which can be found on the website of the museum, she explains how in the 1960s the name of the museum was Museum of Exceptional

Mothers, wanting "to follow with diplomacy the (Spanish) political times" (Sanrama, n.d., my transaltion from the Catalan version). Although I didn't have the chance to discuss with her the use of the word "museum", it is clear that hers is a quite conscious and tactical use, as tactical as her adaptation to the political discourses of the last decades of Franco's dictatorship, whose limits she slowly pushed, and for which she was occasionally censored.

The case of the Coca-Cola Museum is also an especial one as the museum is in fact called Museu de l'Antoni, this is Antoni's Museum. As said in the introduction, I am only calling it Coca-Cola Museum in order to help the reader to easily identify it. The reason why the name Coca-Cola has not been used is because Coca-Cola is a registered brand:

> Why can't I call it Coca-Cola Museum? They cannot forbid me to call it Antoni's Museum. They (the Coca-Cola Company) have put the two signs (on the façade), but it was them who did it. As an exchange for all the years that I have been working with them, they allow me to have it
>
> (Antoni, the Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016)

Nevertheless he was totally confident with the choice of the word museum, so confident that he did not even respond to my attempts to question it so that I could hear his position about it. From our conversation I got the impression that his use of the word reflected a totally taken for granted understanding of his museum as a museum, as if there existed a perfect match between word and object. Antoni explains the origin of his museum through a visit that he made to a collection of a friend. The friend told him that he had a museum of Coca-Cola items and when Antoni saw the few shelves displaying a collection much smaller than his, he could not believe that his friend called that a museum.

> I saw a corridor with four or five things there, and then a room with some shelves with some other things… but "where is the museum?", "this is the museum!"…And I thought, "If he has a museum, what do I have?" Because I already had boxes (full of Coca-Cola items)!
>
> (Antoni, the Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016)

According to Antoni, it was the quantity of items contained in his collection what constituted it as a museum. Also, the use of the word museum by his friend seems to have opened the possibility for him to think of his collection as a museum as well.

To sum up, the practice of naming a museum "museum" has different implications for the different museum practitioners. Some of them seem insecure about the decision, others defy the authority to do so with the confidence of understanding the arbitrariness of the convention, others use it in an aware and tactical manner, and finally others seem to be using it in an absolute taken for granted manner, with neither hints of doubt nor of apparent tactics. In any case the effects of such practice is the same: they infuse their projects with the legitimacy and the authority of the name "museum".

Collecting

Collecting is a central practice in most definitions of museums although there has been an ongoing debate about the necessity of a museum to have collections (see for example the ICOM debates as in Donahue, 2004). The fact that museum-like spaces without collections are often given other names (such as interpretation centers, cultural centers or art centers) is in part due to this debate. Nevertheless it is the case of all the researched amateur museums that they are articulated through a collection.

Pomian defines a collection as "a set of natural or artificial objects, kept temporarily or permanently out of the economic circuit, afforded special protection in enclosed places adapted specifically for that purpose and put on display" (Pomian, 1990: 9). He explains how the practice of collecting has been answering to different needs at least since the Upper Palaeolithic (although Pearce (1992) situates them in the Neolithic). Many civilizations have accumulated and displayed important amounts of inventoried offerings that were permanently kept out of the commercial circulation and practical use especially in religious worship buildings. But practices of collecting have been changing, including the possible forms of acquisition, the objects that could be collected and the effects that collections had on their owners and visitors. Pomian as well as Pearce and Belk show how mundane objects turn into sacred objects when entering a collection and how this conversion is a tool for position-takings.

The researched museum practitioners have different approaches to the practices of collecting. I have described their collections in the specific sections of each museum and I will continue delving into their practices of collecting in the next chapters. The

practice of collecting is formed by a series of other practices such as acquiring objects, ordering and cataloguing them, displaying them and preserving them. In this section I will concentrate only on the practices of acquisition, this is of object gathering, which is the first condition for collecting. The gathering of objects for a collection can be done through purchase, exchanges, fieldwork or selection from found materials – we could also consider immaterial practices, although they are always transferred into some kind of material format in order to be collected and preserved. Relying on Pomian's definition, such acquisitions need to be done in order to put the objects temporally or permanently out of the economic circuit (1990).

Although all the researched amateur museum practitioners are collectors, collecting is not equally important for all of them. For some the practice of collecting is what originated the museum, the museum depends on the collection and not the other way round. In these cases, the museum practitioners tend to define themselves more as collectors and/or to justify their museums through the existence of the collection. In fact, some of the practitioners I interviewed were introduced to collecting at a very early age, facilitating the naturalization of collecting practices as an activity that was shared with friends or family members. These are the cases of Joan (The Den of the Shark), Agustí and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies), Antoni (The Coca-Cola Museum) and Rafael (The Toy Museum). But while Rafael and Antoni have several collections beyond the one exhibited in their museums, thus becoming "collectors of collections" (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015), the others are specialized only in the one they exhibit. Other museum practitioners like Magda (the Maternal Museum) or Joaquim (the Bread Museum) only started collecting in order to make their museums. I will continue delving into the centrality of collecting for each of them in the chapter that deals with museum practice as leisure.

Antoni from the Coca-Cola Museum, Joaquim from the Bread Museum and Josep from the Geology and Gypsum museum, started gathering their collections through their professional lives. Thus, the basis of their collections had a small economic cost in their cases. Antoni took and kept merchandizing material from the Coca-Cola Company; Joaquim kept the old tools of his family's hundred-year-old bakery; and Josep could take some of the minerals that came out from the quarries of the company that he worked for. Nevertheless, after a first period of this kind of gathering, they all started to expand their collections by purchasing other objects. Antoni bought and specially

exchanged many items in Coca-Cola collector's fairs and markets. Joaquim also bought some items in antiques shops, yet he also received many donations from neighboring bakeries as well as from friends. Josep (Geology and Gypsum museum) has sometimes bought some minerals in mineral collector fairs, but he prefers to do fieldwork to extract them by himself.

The collections of the other museum practitioners do not have a direct link with their working life, but they also share the practices of fieldwork, purchasing or receiving donations. Rafael from the Toy Museum has also purchased most of his objects, but neither in collector fairs nor in antique shops but from the recyclers of Medellin. In the cases of the amateur museum practitioners who do not purchase objects that are already sold as collectables –sacred objects or semiophores-, it is in the process of including them in their collections that they are transformed into sacred objects. In this process Rafael was the one to transform the specific toys into sacred objects by taking the toys out from the useful and commercial circuit. Furthermore, he did most of his acquisitions in a period of time and a place (Medellin in the 1980s and 1990s) when and where old toys were not yet popular as collectables. Rafael is aware that it is because they were not yet sacred objects, but only cheap recycled rubbish, that he had the chance to gather his collection with a minimum economic expense. At the moment of our interview in 2015, the pace of inclusion of new toys in his collections had dramatically slowed down because of the higher prices both in Colombia and internationally.

This process of conversion into sacredness happens also in the rest of the collections that include mundane objects: the merchandize Coca-Cola objects –not those of special editions already produced to be collected, this is as sacred because of their limited editions-, the minerals extracted by Josep, the old baking tools of Joaquim's family or shark body parts in the case of The Den of the Shark.

Magda from the Maternal Museum has gathered most of her collection through donations. In her case, the donations were also an opportunity to meet well-known personalities to whom she asked for information about their mothers and for items belonging to them. Thus, she has visited many people around the world in order to receive donations. The stories of these trips become included in her explanations about the museum and its collection. This is a special case because some of the objects that she gathered could already be considered semiophores in Pomian's terms: they already were midwives between the visible and the invisible in that they already connected the

owners of the objects with their mothers, especially if they were already dead. In other cases such as medical tools or sexual education posters, the object was perceived by their former owners as mundane, and they only changed status when they became included in the collection.

An interesting issue about donations is that the act of donating allows also the donor to enter the symbolic realm of the semiophore despite not owning it any more. As if they were votive offerings in Christian churches (Pomian, 1990) the object becomes permanently linked to the person who donated it, thus linking both the donor and the owner with the invisible. The practice of acknowledging the donors in labels, as we will see in the next section, is part of this system of relations between donors, objects and collections, objectifying that relation through text. Rafael from the Toy Museum has also received many donations, especially since the museum opened to the public. In his case many donors gave their own old toys making their own childhood or the past of their families become part of a collection, this is enhancing the powers of their toys as intermediaries with the invisible. While giving their toys to Rafael most donors expect him to preserve them and keep them permanently, this is the donors try to ensure the permanence of those objects beyond their own lives, linking them, once they are dead, with the living. This is something that Rafael feels as a strong pressure, because he cannot ensure such preservation beyond his own life (Rafael, the Toy Museu, interview, 2016).

The practices of collecting of Martí from the Vietnam museum are close to those of Magda from the Maternal Museum despite not being achieved through donations. In his case, he buys many of his objects from former soldiers who participated in the Vietnam War, especially from the USA army. He often asks them to send a picture of the object being used during the war, which he displays next to the object. This picture enhances the capacity of the object of accessing the invisible, in this case the past and the horrors or the honors of war, depending on the visitors' point of view. Seeing these pictures helps the visitor to accept that object as a valid (authentic) link to that sphere of life that is not accessible otherwise.

As already said, another form of acquisition shared by the Geology and Gypsum museum, The Den of the Shark and The House of Butterflies is fieldwork. Agustí and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies) have obtained most items of their collection through this practice. During decades they have spent all their free Sundays and

holydays catching butterflies, beetles and finding fossils. They describe it as a hard work as it does not only mean to catch and identify the specimen[15] but to prepare it for its conservation right away:

> It is a lot of work for us, and of course, it is more tiring because we have to do it on Sunday, we don't have Saturdays (because they work at their furniture business). We have to do everything on Sunday and if it rains, that's bad. Sunday is the only day to do things. We stopped gathering butterflies more than 20 years ago because we already have them all. But when you go to catch butterflies, you do it in the morning. When the sun raises and all that. Then at midday, you arrive home almost at lunch time. Then you have lunch, you never have a nap, and then you prepare the butterflies with patience, because if you leave them in the fridge… the small ones get damaged easily, and they give much more work. The big ones not so much… but if you can get them done the same day, it is much better.
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

The origin of their collection and the practice of collecting were inherited by Agustí's father. Again in this case, the practices of collecting were part of their early socialization within their family. Nevertheless in their explanations about such practices, they seem to be aware of the manners in which the practice of acquiring new specimen through fieldwork have changed since then:

> Agustí: Before, in order to gather these minerals they had to go on foot, or… I don't know how they did it, by bicycle, or whatever, by train. Torre i Llebreda also went to catch butterflies to Collada de Tosses by train, didn't he? He took his lunch and a bottle, and… And with the minerals and stones, the same. So if one went to Papiol or to Tarragona or to Girona, they had to plan all their movements. That is why we have such a valuable collection of minerals.
>
> Agustí Jr: The grandparents already started with the minerals…
>
> Agustí: And rocks, which is all this from the 1900 to the 1910…
>
> (Agustí and Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

Joan (The Den of the Shark) also does field work in order to find fossil shark teeth, but he mainly acquires the items of his collection by buying dead sharks –that he converts

[15] The concept of specimen is part of an understanding of one specific animal or plant as "an example selected from a group" (Pearce, 1992: 5). Understanding collected objects as specimen is a practice originated in the epistemic shift of the classic modernity as we will see in the third chapter.

into semiophores after his work of preservation and identification-, or through exchanges with other collectors and institutions like the Aquarium of Barcelona or the Museum of Natural Sciences of Barcelona for whom he does preserving jobs in exchange for material.

> It all started when I was seven or eight years old. Everything around Arboç was an interior sea fifteen million years ago. And I started collecting fossils… shells, winkles, fish teeth… and from there I started accumulating, first with the intention of collecting, my friends from the village helped me… well, everybody wanted to gather fossils "this one for me, this one for you" and then when I started to grow older I met other people while gathering fossils, people from Barcelona, from Terrassa, Vilafranca, from different places, and you keep in touch with these people.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Again, we can see that collecting, and specifically collecting fossils, was a common and habitualized activity in his village into which children were soon socialized, becoming part of their habitus.

Relations of power and position takings can be detected in these practices of collecting. Firstly, through the objects collected, as the researched amateur museum practitioners have limited economic resources and cannot afford to collect expensive items or items that would have high maintenance costs. Nevertheless, their positions are comfortable enough to have storage and display space. Furthermore, certain kinds of capital are needed to receive donations, because donors need to be convinced to donate as it is proved by the fact that most museum practitioners start receiving donations only once the museum is established.

Secondly, as we have seen through Pomian, collections of sacred objects (semiophores) infuse their owners with power. Their sacredness is given by being removed from their practical use and their economic circulation, even if it was through an economic expense, in which case the higher the sacrifice the better. This can easily be reflected in the experience of Josep (the Geology and Gypsum museum) and Rafael (the Toy Museum) as they both received very lucrative offers for their collections. Nevertheless both of them had a similar reaction preferring to keep their collections and renouncing to really high sums of money for them.

> Me: Didn't you tell me that you were offered to sell the collection?

> Josep: Yes, the British Gypsum Company. Because they bought the quarries and then the CEO came and he took a cheque, he signed it and told me "you put the price".
>
> Me: You could have retired with that.
>
> Josep: Of course, I would live like a king now. Because if I ask him 150 million of pesetas, I am sure that (he would have given them to me). But no, Josep is not like that. [...] I didn't have to think of it at all. He said "put the price" and I said "no!" He was like…It was that period of time when they bought all the old gypsum factories. It came like that out from my heart. Something that I have enjoyed, that I have fought for… and for what? For money?
>
> (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

And Rafael:

> They have come here to buy me the whole thing, as a block, including me! They saw that it could have been a… and to put a restaurant… Because in Bogotá there is a restaurant that is called La Juguetería (the toy store) and people go to eat, to have lunch and they see the toys. But they had their idea and I said "no! This does not go this way!" Upset, because I did not want to sell: "everything has a price, everything can be sold!". "This is a collection, don't you know how a collection is made? This has been done one by one, there have never arrived ten toys at once here. These are years of researching, of finding, of learning…" They ended up understanding, but after a long time! [...] They came four of five times. I don't do anything with a box full of money. What do I do with a box full of notes?
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

In spite of the many reasons behind their denial to sell their collections (which gives them a perception of their collections having a priceless value), these situations show an inversion of power relations between wealthy potential buyers and the collectors who could only gather their collections after years of hard work and small, although accumulative, economic investments. The high sums of money that they are offered show how their work in turning such objects into semiophores has multiplied their value, a value that increases when the objects are kept together as a collection. Nevertheless, they exercise their position of power given by the collection to deny a very lucrative offer, something which in other areas of life would seem a nonsense. This is clear in Rafael's quote, when he expresses how valueless a box full of money is when compared to his collection. By not selling their collections they are depriving

their wealthy potential buyers from the benefits of owning them, this is, from the objectual access to the invisible.

The third way in which issues of power and position-takings can be detected is that, once established as collectors, they have the power to give or deny access to the gathering of sacred objects by others. Such is the case of Josep from the Geology and Gypsum museum, who shows the best spots for extracting minerals only to the collectors that he considers to be responsible enough, keeping speculators and those who employ aggressive techniques that damage the environment away from them. Also Joan from The Den of the Shark explains how collectors can buy forbidden items (like the jaws of white sharks) taking advantage of the lack of knowledge of the customs controllers, or how in tropical countries some people take advantage of the high prices paid for pieces from protected species and try to trick collectors with sharks from other species:

> The American sends jaws of white shark and writes "grey shark" and they don't even realise it. If you go to certain countries, they tell you "this is a white shark's jaw!", "Really? This is a jaw of grey shark", "they told me that this is white shark" (he laughs). In these tropical countries they try to trick you…
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

The desire to possess the sacred objects raises their price, but it also unfolds a series of tricks that show how both the possession of the objects but also the knowledge about them are sources of power that can complement and contradict each other.

To summarize, the acquisition of objects as a practice of collecting is very different in each case, but it easily denotes practices of position takings and power struggles. Although a certain amount of resources and capital is needed to start and maintain their collections, these amateur museum practitioners are able to create value and increase their symbolic capital and improve their positions by converting mundane objects into sacred ones something that is shown by their relations with donors and interested buyers. Furthermore, their long term practices of collecting has given them both the material capital (the possessed objects) and the knowledge to control, even if in a small degree, the access of others to the field.

Labelling and Cataloguing

Two other common museum practices are the use of labels and the cataloguing of objects. Although they are two different practices they are tightly related to each other because the label has traditionally put some of the cataloguing information to public view next or in relation to the objects. Of course, the practice of cataloguing is in turn related to that of identifying and classifying, which involves typifying.

Pomian identifies the origin of the use of classifying data as public information in the first printed auction catalogues which used "a type of discourse which, till then, had been reserved for inventories, but which now began to infiltrate the language, as objects now had to be classified and named with accuracy" (Pomian, 1990: 40). Labels, instead, were spread as a common museum practice by the end of the nineteenth century (Bennett, 1995) due to

> a new distinctive emphasis being placed on the need to arrange and label museum displays in ways calculated to enhance their public legibility by making their meaning instantly readable for the new mass public which the museum increasingly saw as its most important target audience.
>
> (Bennett, 1995: 29)

Labels gained such an importance that some writers of the time demoted the specimen or the object in display to the status of "illustration of certain general laws" (1995: 42) accompanying instructive labels. The practices of labelling and the uses given to labels have been contested and many alternatives have been proposed, but their use is still generalized today, and it carries with it the naturalization of the arbitrariness of its origins.

Not all the amateur museum practitioners label the objects in their displays nor they all catalogue the items of their collections. Among the ones who do not label them are the Maternal Museum, the Toy Museum and the Coca-Cola Museum. Rafael from the Toy Museum does not label nor keep a record of his objects because he does not enjoy doing so. It is his wife who inventories some of the toys when Rafael lends some of them to other museums.

Josep from Geology and Gypsum Museum labels every item displayed in his museum but he does not keep a catalogue or inventory of the whole collection. The reason why he does not do so is because he does not like it and, it is implicit, he does not need it.

Me: I remember that you have labelled all the pieces…

Josep: Yes, but there's a lot of work left to do and it is not something that I… (he shakes his head)

Me: And do you have some kind of register?

Josep: No, this is bureaucracy and I have never liked it.

And he adds:

Josep: …what bothers me most is to classify everything and all that stuff.

Me: That is why you don't do it

Josep: Exactly, I put the piece there and that's all.

Me: I don't know the specific terminology of geology… but the manner that you label each piece, is it a system that…

Josep: No, it's mine. I haven't done it scientifically at all.

(Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

Notwithstanding the labels show the name of the mineral, the place of origin, and the year and number of inclusion in the collection (fig. 68). Although he considers that his manner of labelling is "his own", it is obvious that he has a strong influence of the labelling that is traditionally used in museums of similar disciplines. What is most striking about his labelling practice is that the information that he includes seems to answer to an inventory that does not exist, at least through the number of inclusion which is usually an information that helps museum practitioners to find a specific item in the inventory or to relate the item to its entry.

Differently, the labels and cataloguing conventions used in The House of Butterflies, are strict applications of the taxonomy of natural history. As their collection includes the collection of the grandfather and other collections dating back to the last decades of the 19th century, and hence different scientific classification conventions are reflected in it. They take into consideration the significant differences between the conventions that the grandfather used and the ones they use:

Agustí: This… this is the old classification system…

Agustí Jr: ... it has changed, it has changed a little.

[...]

> Agustí: We have kept the old classification… but the rest, till now, we have used the new one […]. They used to do it very well before, you know what I mean? They dedicated so many hours to it…it was their thing, you know?
>
> Agustí Jr: ...it smells like naphthalene now...
>
> (Agustí and Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

There does not seem to be a doubt about the choice of such conventions: the grandfather used the proper ones for his time and they use the proper ones in their time, as if no other choices were possible. They never distinguish between the scientific classification and the museographic labelling, which can also be observed in the display: they are one and the same thing. They seem confident when dealing with the conventions of taxonomy and labelling maybe because they do not link them to museography but to natural history and entomology, disciplines in which they have had a lifetime commitment and thus much more experience.[16]

In the case of The Den of the Shark, the labels have a more pedagogic aim, including a code that visually gives more information on the sharks that are being labelled (fig. 52) like the area of the world where they can be found, the depth in which they live or their kind of alimentation. Joan's classification system answers to practical needs as he has a huge amount of items stored outside the museum display and he wants to have them available for the use of scientists, for which he has to be able to easily find them.

Another case is that of Joaquim (the Bread Museum) who talks about labelling as part of the museography, showing also how the practices of labelling and cataloguing are totally intertwined:

> They are all donations. Sometimes I think that I should… I have written down everything that I have to do, but I have to do so many things… I should detail it in a little label next to the piece: "donated by this, donated by that". I have to do this. But, you know what? The museum is small, if I put a label I have to remove another thing. But I do have to put a little label somewhere that could look fine. But not glued, because the number is already glued, there is the piece too… all the archaeological pieces have the file number and all the numbers. Because it has to be well done. I have a lot of them marked, others not, others have a glued paper. Sometimes the paper falls down and

[16] It is important to consider as well the influence of the perception that they have about my knowledge on museology, certainly much deeper than on natural history and how it might affect their answers showing much more confidence in the field in which I am more ignorant.

> then you don't know anymore… and you say to yourself 'what now? Who gave you this one? Who lend it to you?' And then you have to look for the file and go through all of it again.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

He emphasizes the formal and practical consequences of labelling: the lack of space in relation to the amount of information, the difficulties in managing the collection without having all that information under control, the aesthetic result... He does not seem to consider the meanings of such labelling beyond the appreciation to the donors or the practicalities of cataloguing. From this excerpt we can also infer some sense of obligation, a sense of how things have to be done, which is also the manner in which Joaquim wants to do things. This sense of how well he is doing his work in the museum is very present in his explanations hinting that he has a clear idea of the right way to do them:

> Joaquim: The breads are filed but not like the tools. Not that well filed. The breads have a file but… look these are the bread files, see? All these are the breads that people has brought to me from the first day, from the first one in 1982.
>
> Mariona: What do you write here?
>
> Joaquim: The date, a small comment of what I consider appropriate. But they are not filed like these ones. The collection files… are not like these ones, this is something else.
>
> Mariona: These are the forms of the Generalitat (Catalan government)?
>
> Joaquim: Yes. They don't do it like that anymore, now they are… (He points at a computer). See? Generic classification, name of the object, material, chronology, description, use, size, adornments, author, well, [...]…. I was taught to use this form.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

The catalogue forms that he uses are the ones that the Catalan Government used to use for their public collections (in the 1980s) (fig. 13-14). He takes them as the right manner to catalogue trusting their legitimacy and the way in which his friend, under the legitimating umbrella of his academic belonging, helped him to know and fill. Referring to the accidental loss of all his catalogue files years ago, he adds:

> Now after some time I have done it again, I have taken this tool and as I already knew how it had to be done I have filed them all again. See here? Adornments, for example,

> restorations: none. Entry: acquisition, see? This I bought myself, 'antiquity fair of Vic'. Yes, this one I bought, it's a tool that I bought, because this is new. See, the drawing or the photograph is still lacking. And now I am thinking about what to do, whether I should use a drawing or a photograph, and I think I will take a photograph, although I could draw it because I also like to draw…
>
> (Joaquim, interview, Tona, 2015)

He seems to mimic the manner in which public institutions in his country did the cataloguing, taking for granted that there is one right way to do it and his freedom of choice is limited to the graphic representation of the object: either with a photograph or a drawing.

Institutional mimicry can be found not only between amateurs and professionals, but also between more institutionalized organizations as a reaction to political influence and legitimacy, to uncertainty and to the pressures of professionalization (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). [17] Although amateur museum practitioners are sensitive to cultural expectations and to some governmental mandates and legal issues –for instance if they would want to be registered as museums under the Catalan legislation they would have to meet some standards set by the administration-, I believe that their isomorphic processes are mainly due to uncertainty, modelling themselves "on other organizations […] in their fields that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 151). Uncertainty could be easily expected in the studied amateur museographic projects and is often expressed by their makers: they lack formal museographic training and despite relating to peers of similar profiles they do not have much relation with professionals or more institutionalized organizations with which to exchange knowledge. These processes of mimicry facilitate taking conventions for granted and vice versa: when conventions are taken for granted, naturalized and seen as legitimate, mimicry is facilitated because there is a lack of criticism about their use and suitability for one's own organization.

To sum up, while some of the museum practitioners seem to feel some pressure for properly labelling and cataloguing, others simply choose not do to so if they do not feel

[17] DiMaggio and Powell call them coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism respectively. Through these processes of isomorphism, organizations become "increasingly homogeneous within given domains and increasingly organized around rituals of conformity to wider institutions" (1983: 150).

like it. In their practices we can see examples of how cataloguing can have a more or less practical purpose (The Den of the Shark), be a disciplinary imperative (The House of Butterflies), an avoidable annoyance (Geology and Gypsum museum, the Toy Museum) or an obligation for museum practice (the Bread Museum). Although there is some degree of naturalization of the practices of labelling and cataloguing, some resist them till the point of declining to do them.

Guided Tours

There are many practices involved in receiving visitors, but that of the guided tour is one of the most revealing. All the researched museum practitioners share the practice of personally accompanying the visitor through their museums although some do it with a structured guided tour and others with an apparently more informal conversation. The guided tour has the effects of positioning the amateur museum practitioners at the center of the symbolic world of his museum.

Hooper-Greenhill (1992) identifies the origin of informative texts and organized on-site teaching at the nineteenth century Louvre (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 180), and in the beginning of the twentieth century guided tours became a common practice in museums (Bennett, 1998). Nevertheless in the earlier *studiolos* and *Wunderkammern*, the owners or collectors tended to explain the objects and their relations to their visitors who were usually friends and distinguished visitors. The main difference between these two kinds of accompaniment to exhibited objects is the subject that performs these explanations. In one case the "guide" is the owner who gives access to a story that somehow revolves around him. In the other, it is an individual, sometimes a professional, to whom the task has been delegated. In these cases, the discourses become detached from specific persons although they answer to institutional purposes.

In the case of amateur museums, whether the museum practitioner chooses to do a guided tour or just an accompaniment, the visitor is always received by the owner, collector and museum practitioner[18]. In more institutionalized museums this only happens in special occasions when a curator (usually never a collector) gives especial

[18] I have described the visit of each museum in their correspondent chapters and I will also delve further into them in the fourth chapter on ritualization.

guided tours which tend to be limited to specific publics (journalists or important patrons).

Joaquim leads his visitors around the Bread Museum with a very structured guided tour. He receives both individual visitors and groups, including very large school groups which he has to divide in order to fit them in the museum space.

> Me: Do you always receive the visitors? Do they ever walk in by themselves?
>
> Joaquim: No, never. I have been always confident about this, because I saw all these experiences… like the museum of Montserrat. It's very nice but nobody accompanies you! You have to read. If there was a person that would spice it up… sometimes it is only a matter of spicing it up!
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

Joaquim is very critical about the museums where nobody accompanies the visitor in any way. As a visitor to other museums, he always chooses to be guided when the service is available or to use an audio guide as an alternative. His choice to always give a guided tour is a decision consciously made resulting from his experience as a visitor and it is related to his educational understanding of museums.

The guided tour of Agustí and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies) is similar to that of Joaquim in that it is very structured. Nevertheless, they only receive groups of around 10 to 15 persons. They keep the group all the time together, closing the rooms that have already been visited, and in consequence not allowing people to freely move around the museum. They prefer to keep the questions for the end of the visit and they show nervousness when they seem to lose control of the groups' order.

Joan (The Den of the Shark) also conducts quite a structured guided tour. He is nevertheless more open and even interested to be interrupted for questions. Joan, like Joaquim, is very critical about how museums transfer information to their visitors:

> I did a museum thinking that I don't like to do what museums do: you go there, you see a few things, you read a label, and that's it. Thus this museum is designed for the guided tour, you have seen the guided tour, you come in, I explain to you what the dentitions are, the bones, the biological parts, and then, everything is in relation, all the display is made in a way so the visit would be guided. You come in (alone) and it will happen the same than in any museum. (You see) many things but you come out from here (thinking) "nice, dried fishes", but if they don't explain it to you, you won't

> understand it. I wanted to give life to the museum, if you make a place of culture, people has to leave it knowing more…
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Joan is also a special case because he attempted to receive large amounts of visitors and also during weekdays for which he needed to hire someone to do the guided tours for him. Nevertheless, he found many difficulties in maintaining a worker and also in transferring all his knowledge to another person. Although the guided tour appeared to me to be quite structured, he claims that

> It has a general structure, but from there, depending on the group, it just comes out from me. I know what the route is, but I might explain different things.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Receiving visitors is not the favorite part of museum making for Joan, as he admits to be a bit tired of it, especially when he has to receive school groups.

> Sometimes I feel lazy about it… I have been doing it since 2001, it has been fifteen years of explanations. At some point… although there are still new things. But… when a visitor makes questions and so, even if they are silly comments, it is the only way to learn, and then it is a bit more entertaining. I try to break with monotony, I ask questions like "do you think this is a male or a female? Why? Did you touch the skin?"
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Although Josep, from the Geology and Gypsum museum seemed to informally accompany me rather than to give me a guided tour, this was influenced by our previous conversation about the reasons for my interest in his museum and by the fact that I was visiting it alone. As it might happen in the other cases, when they receive larger groups, especially if they are school groups, they guide them in a more formal manner.

> I guide them, I tell them about the process, all this, and then sometimes some prefer to stop at one place or another one, and then I leave them a bit on their own… I also learn a lot from people, also from children.

And

> Me: How do you choose what to explain to them? Is it usually the same?
>
> Josep: No, I guide them through the three rooms, that of the models, the one of the gypsum, and the one with the other kinds of materials and the fossils. And then I tell

them: “questions, I want questions, anyone who does not ask me any questions is silly” (he laughs).

(Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

So both Josep and Joan would like to be asked many questions, something that does not happen too often. So, although they have a tour in mind, they would prefer it if they could trigger an animated conversation.

Magda (the Maternal Museum), Rafael (the Toy Museum), Antoni (the Coca-Cola Museum), and Martí (Vietnam Museum) accompany their visitors introducing their museums and giving scattered short explanations about specific objects, especially in relation to the interests shown by visitors.

The reception of visitors is a problem for some of the museum practitioners as it requires an important time investment. For those that are not retired like Agustí and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies) and Joan (The Den of the Shark), the reception of visitors needs to be limited and properly managed, and this is why they only open for groups during summer Sundays in the first case, and during weekends in the second. They have the added difficulty, as in the case of the Maternal Museum, of the remote location of their museum, this is far from where they live and work so that they cannot improvise visits during weekdays.

Being more or less naturalized, the practice of the guided tour or the accompaniment of the visitor situates the museum practitioners clearly as the makers and owners of the museum. As we have seen, this shows them as the owners of sacred objects and as the authorized transmitters of their values. There are differences between those who perform a guided tour and those who offer an informal conversation to the visitor. In the first case, the traditional format of the guided tour, formally quite strict and conservative in all the cases, infers them with an appearance of authority. This appearance is enhanced in the case of school groups which are taken there by the authority of the schools and teachers.

In any case, it is through the guided tour or the informal accompaniment that the visitor enters the realm of the museum practitioner, a place where everything revolves around the museum practitioner who has the key (physical and symbolic) to its meanings. During the guided tour the museum and its objects seem to be activated with the

presence and performance of the museum practitioners, as if they had the key to their magical effects.

Museographic Narratives

Museographic narratives are some of the most naturalized practices in museums, especially by visitors who often do not question the point of view of the curators or the possible narratives that are left behind. This is why in the last decades many curators have been including explanations on their decision-making in their narratives. The idea of a changing museographic script, this is of collected objects as being able to explain different stories depending on their arrangement and rearrangement, has its origins at the nineteenth century Louvre (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992) when the lack of space and the need of sending specific messages to the population derived into temporary and changing exhibits. Nevertheless museums and collections always involve narratives, which derive from and transmit specific visions of the world written through the selection of objects, their disposition, displays and other indexical objects (see the fourth chapter on ritualization), written information, and so on. If the narrative of a museum or exhibition is naturalized, it means that the worldviews that originate them and to which they contribute are perceived not only as natural, but also as the only available possibility.

None of the amateur museum practitioners seem to be fully aware of constructing a narrative, which can be seen only in the manner in which they talk about the contents of their exhibitions and what they explain when they receive visitors. Joaquim and Agustí and Agustí Jr seem to try to do their best to explain the most important issues about their exhibitions, without realizing how much of what they present as the only way of doing things is in fact a matter of choice and how many different scripts could be written with their objects, displays and guided tours. They also have very strict scripts for their guided tours, and they are disturbed when visitors divert the course of the explanation with too many questions or comments. Rafael instead is much more open to a dialogue, even asking to visitors what they want to know. Despite that, most of the times, he tends to explain the same stories about the collection and the museum, probably also answering to commonalities in the questions of his visitors.

When asked whether he has ever changed the museographic narrative, Joaquim answered:

> No, no, the narration is quite… I don't have time to explain all that should be explained. There is no time. Because of course, if you explain the tools in detail… and you have to because it's the basis, the tools, the Catalan things, it's the basis. Then you almost don't have any time left for history. And if you take too long with history… then there's no time left for the rest. Because one hour, hour and a half, two max, you can't have a person here for three hours. With one hour, an hour and a half, work can be well done. And if the person is interested then of course, it takes longer…the historical part or even the details of the profession, of course it takes longer.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

What seems to concern him about the museographic narrative are the difficulties in managing all the information, the time, and the availability of the visitors. Despite his wide knowledge on bread baking and history Joaquim does not seem to be aware of how meaningful his discursive choices are in the exhibition, in the selection and order of the collection and in his guided tours, and again he takes for granted that some specific information is essential and mandatory.

Instead, Rafael's relation to his museographic narrative shows how he has naturalized the convention till the point of not realizing that his "non rational organization" is a specific chosen narrative:

> [The order] is very random, very… I don't have topics… I think that is like the cabinet of a kid's bedroom, the kid puts the toys there, what he was given, what he wants… no… […] I don't rationalize much to organize them.
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

But at the same time he holds a critical position towards some expert's opinion on the museographic narrative and other conventions, refusing to follow their advice:

> It's more like I take something out, I put something else… it's more for fun, something that I don't have to…no, I would go crazy. Here sometimes people that know about museums and know about… they tell me "you have to do a museological script, then an inventory, the data sheet, the photograph…" No, I don't do anything! I would have to spend 30 years to do this.
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

Antoni from the Coca-Cola Museum and Josep from the Geology and Gypsum museum have sometimes changed the disposition of the objects, but this was due to a

rearrangement of the available space in relation to the objects of the collection than to an attempt to rethink their narratives.

> Right now the problem is that as I do not have more room left, I choose the new things, what I like most, and I put the rest aside. I keep it, I do not throw anything away [...]. Here (pointing at some shelves) we had the papers and folders and… now I have put all the bottles, the last ones that have been made. These are from China, these too… Down there from Argentina… one for each province, there are more than thirty bottles. And then there are these smaller ones, or those tall ones… they are uglier so that's why I do not put them on display. And if they are very common I don't put them either. I look for the ones that are commemorative.
>
> (Antoni, the Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2015)

And:

> Me: Do you change the arrangement of the pieces in the space?
>
> Josep: No. I have filled the whole space but when it was time to change I stopped working on the museum. I have now one whole room that is unfinished.
>
> Me: That last one?
>
> Josep: Exactly, it will be a room for fossils. Only fossils. I will move fossils from one place to the other and all. But… maybe when I can do it I am already dead (he laughs). We do not know what will happen to us tomorrow. These are just ways of philosophizing. Of saying, lets do it like that and we will see…
>
> (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

The one who has had a critical thought about museum narratives is Magda from the Maternal Museum because before starting her museum, she realized how gendered the narratives of Spanish museums were. In fact her most important contribution is the proposal of an alternative narrative to compensate this bias.

Museums are a tool to legitimate and naturalize narratives. The practices of these amateur museum practitioners, proposed from less advantageous positions, are thus a chance to reflect other worldviews. And although most of them are not aware of it, with their museum practices they are contributing in spreading and legitimizing their worldviews. The contrast between this chances of position-taking that museum narrative offer and their lack of criticism towards the practice itself as well as their lack

of awareness about the importance of museum narratives for position-taking is most striking than in any other analyzed museum practices.

Entrance fees

As Pomian exposes, the entrance fees of museums should be understood "not so much in return for a service but rather as a sort of donation" (Pomian, 1990: 42), because entrance fees rarely cover museum costs. This would explain why some museums are free of charge, some are not, and others ask for a voluntary contribution. It also partly justifies free days once a week or in special occasions and the reduced fees for those who, for different reasons, might have higher difficulties covering the entrance fees. Nevertheless entrance fees together with opening hours or dress codes originally had also the purpose of filtering the kinds of visitors that could come to the museums as well as to fairs and other similar events (Bennett, 1988).

The establishment of entrance fees is different in each amateur museum and so are the reasons of the museum practitioners to charge them, or rather not to charge them. The Coca-Cola Museum, the Maternal Museum, the Bread Museum, The House of Butterflies, the Geology and Gypsum museum and the Toy Museum are free of charge. The Vietnam museum is also free now, but it used to charge an entrance fee when it had regular opening hours: it even has a ticket window at the entrance.

These museum practitioners sometimes receive some kind of tip or voluntary contribution by visitors as it is explained by Joaquim:

> Me: How do you finance it?
>
> Joaquim: From my own pocket (he laughs). If someone gives me something when they come to visit the museum, fine. But no, I don't want them to give me anything, this is private, it's a room that… it is difficult to go up here. Well, not difficult, but God keep us from someone falling and getting hurt…that would be very complicated. So I don't make anyone pay. And schools either. But sometimes there is someone that gives you something, of course. Then I go to have a coffee.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

While Joaquim seems more concerned with the fact that charging an entrance fee would force him to have to guarantee the visitors' safety, Josep, from the Geology and Gypsum museum, is of the opinion that all museums should be "public and for free:

this would make more culture" (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

Antoni's position for giving free entrance to his Coca-Cola museum is related to the fact that he can afford it, that he got a lot of help from the Coca-Cola Company, and that he is retired and therefore he does not want to make money out of his work anymore:

> The director of a school asked me: "How is it possible that a coach with fifty children comes to you, and you spend all morning with them here without charging anything and you even give them a present for everyone? How is this possible?" And I told him: "I am retired from Coca-Cola. A time ago, when I asked for presents for children, the Coca-Cola Company gave them to me. I am retired, I do not charge anything for my work and I can give them a present because they gave it to me".
>
> (Antoni, Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016)

We have to remember that his museum is also a platform from which to sell many Coca-Cola items, out from which he does make some money.

Agustí and Agustí Jr from The House of Butterflies do not charge entrance fees but are active in asking for voluntary contributions. At the end of the visit they offer a booklet about the museum and their collection for five euros which many visitors of the group that I joined for my visit bought. This booklet turns into a voluntary contribution to the museum. Of course, the fact that the museum practitioners are the ones asking for the contribution puts the visitor in a stronger pressure to contribute than in other museums where the invitation is much more impersonal or is left to the initiative of the visitor.

The only museum that has an entrance fee of five euros is The Den of the Shark, which he charges at the end of the visit and not at the beginning of it. During a period of time, when he had expanded the museum and he received dozens of visitors from organized trips, the organizers always tried to negotiate the price and he accepted prices of 1,5 Euros per visitor, something that he felt like an unfair pressure and an underestimation of his work.

The reasons to charge entrance fees are different in each case. Some perceive issues of access limitations (and thus of power relations) through economic filters, and they decide in consequence to allow the visits for free. Others relate it to the fact that they want to keep it as a hobby and that in order to do so they should not charge entrance

fees. Others feel a pressure of having to guarantee certain aspects (security, mobility) if they charge a fee, and finally, others understand the entrance fee as a fair compensation for their work, even if it does not cover even a small proportion of their costs.

But entrance fees also infuse museums with meaning. Something that is for free can be perceived as being of little value. Furthermore, when visitors pay for their visit, they might be more willing to take the most out of it.

Catalogues, Booklets and Websites

There are different kinds of communication supports and formats that museums use with two main purposes: to reach a wider audience and to document their work. Nevertheless, what the researched amateur museum practitioners use are basically websites (including blogs and social networks), booklets and catalogues or book-like publications.

Only Josep from Geology and Gypsum Museum and Joan from The Den of the Shark do not produce any kind of communication support as the ones listed. Others, like Joaquim from the Bread Museum, only use one of them. In his case, he made a small booklet (fig. 11-12) in which he drew some selected items of his collection and which he grouped by type. Joaquim does not have a website for the Bread Museum. In fact he has quite a critical opinion about the uses of Internet, especially social networks.

> I do not have anything on Facebook because I do not like it… it is something… it seems foolish to me. I mean, it is there to upload your things… If I want something from somebody else it is easier for me to use the phone.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

He uses Internet mainly to send e-mails, to look for new objects for the collection and to find certain information, never to widely spread his own messages or to share information with peers. He is aware that there is some information about the museum in blogs and websites, which he finds appropriate and he considers that this somehow substitutes his need for a website. When asked if he has thought of making a website, he answered:

> No. I don't have one. But anyway, people know about it. Because if you put "bread museum" (on online search engines) it appears. So there is no problem.

(Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

He does not seem to consider any other advantages of uploading and designing his own contents on the Internet.

Standing on almost the opposite position, Agustí and Agustí Jr have a website (Gabaldà & Gabaldà, n.d.) and have edited a booklet (fig. 20-21) which they sell at the end of the visits and which may also be are downloaded from their website. They have invested considerable resources in the design of their website, for which they hired a professional website designer, an English translator and for which they pay host space and a web domain. They relied on professionals or persons who they perceived to be more skilled or experienced than themselves in order to improve the quality of their website. Despite that, their attitude is not that of an amateur submitted to a professional. When talking about the process of the design of the website, they explain how they changed most of the visual characteristics of the designers' proposal, being confident about their own skills because of their long experience in interior and furniture design:

> Agustí Jr: … of course, you have to get this done by a technician, right? We asked a technician to make our website, but we didn't like his proposals [...] and we told him the colours that we wanted because he was doing green colors and we told him "use these reddish colors", and we told him all the colors we wanted, and we basically told him how he had to do it. As we like all these things we always have something to say…
>
> Agustí: …and as we come from the decoration field… we have a lot to say.
>
> (Agustí and Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

In this excerpt we can also see how they take for granted that they need a "technician" to design at least the technical part of the website. At the moment that they did the website, around 2006-7, free and easy to learn platforms to build websites were already very popular, and they have proved that they can easily learn and use new skills and languages (like photography or video realization). They have such an ambitious and specific sense of quality –often expressed in the interview- that takes them to collaborate with professionals more than other amateur museum practitioners.

Their website includes contact information, images of the building, the displays and some details of the collection, and especially a lot of information about butterflies. Like the booklet, it has a strong educational approach.

They have perceived several consequences of having a website: they receive foreign interest due to its translation into English, they are able to better manage their visits since visitors can reach the information of opening hours and appointments, and it has helped increasing the interest from their local communities, including the local government.

> When we did the website it was very nice because the next Sunday we went to Planoles (where the museum is located) and people from there that know us… they said "wow, what have you done?" They saw the website and they were amazed [...]. And they …at the restaurant where we go to have the coffee, they said that they had told the mayor, and then she called and said "wow, what have you done?", and she said "we saw the website, it's impressive, very beautiful". So they knew (about the museum) when we did the website.
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

Although they show pride for the results of the website, they seem to be also upset because it seems to have much more visibility and positive reactions than the museum itself. This proves that they understand the website in a traditional and limited manner, because it mirrors the museum and makes sense because of it.

The case of the Maternal Museum is once more an especial one because Magda has published many books in relation to it. Not all of them could be said to be catalogues or books about the museum, but they are all in relation to the topic of motherhood. We shall remember that she is a journalist and thus she has much easier access to this kind of format. The last book is quite close to a traditional museum catalogue, and it includes an introduction about the book and photographs of many of the items of the collection accompanied by short descriptive texts.

The Maternal Museum also has a website in Catalan, Spanish and English (Sanrama, n.d.). Differently from the website of The House of Butterflies, the design and the texts are not taken care of. There are quite a lot of grammatical mistakes in all the languages and the translations into English are a bit forced, maybe done with an automatic on-line translator. The design copyright is from 2006 but judging by its aesthetics and navigation it seems from the 90's (fig. 24). It hasn't been updated for years but it is still under construction, with an evident lack of content and inactive links. In the short introduction to the museum, there is a reference to the website itself, which includes the purpose to promote participation in the forum –a tool that is currently active but that

has very few contributions. Most of the information on the website is under the History section that is a written text that covers from its origins in 1967 to 1995, that means that there have been no updates for the last 20 years. Its content is clearly determined by the acquisitions of the collection with special attention to the people –through their names and sometimes their professional positions- who donated or facilitated the acquisition of the exhibited pieces, through the appearances in the media, through the activities such as exhibitions and conferences that were the only activity of the museum when it did not have yet a physical permanent exhibiting space and the contacts and collaborations of private and public organizations. The references and links with well-known personalities have also an outstanding and recurrent presence in the text.

The website of the Coca-Cola Museum (Martínez, n.d.) is similar to that of the Maternal Museum regarding the very old-fashioned graphic style and the lack of actualization (fig. 48). Nevertheless, it is only a gallery of images of the museum displays, and of the opening hours of the museum. The presence of directive members of the Coca-Cola Company in the opening of the museum is shown in many of the photographs. In the interview, Antoni also showed his delight with their presence, which meant also their conformity with the museum (I will further talk about this relation in the next chapters). The website functions as a place to gather, show and preserve this legitimizing information.

The Vietnam museum also has a website (Demiquels, n.d.) that has recently been renewed and that uses a WordPress template. It offers information about the museum, with a short introduction and some photographs about its displays and many photographs of items of the collection in the same arrangement than in the museum, accompanied with the photographs of the items in use during the war. The website also has an online shop in which Martí sells collection items and a section about the history of the Vietnam War. In his case, the website seems to articulate and show all his work and interest in the war, and the museum appears as only one part of it.

Finally, the Toy Museum is present on the Internet through a blog and in social networks. The blog (Castaño Correa, n.d.-b) has not been updated since May 2010. Although it uses a blog structure, the site is thought like a static website. It includes a thematically grouped selection of photographs of different items of the collection. It also has a section of “notes and publications” that includes links to press notes about the museum, videos and interviews to Rafael in relation to the museum. And finally a

section that displays pictures of the exhibitions of the collection outside the museum between 2003 and 2013. On the side menu there are also three links to the professional projects of Rafael and his brother –also a sculptor that has often worked with him. They are both freelance workers, and this shows that they understand that they can use the visibility of their amateur activity for their professional life. Although Rafael takes advantage of an already made tool (Blogger) to construct his website by himself, he seems to miss many of the communication opportunities that the format of the blog could offer him and ends up building a unidirectional information centered website. The information that he uploads is highly focused on the objectual facet of the museum –the items of its collection-. This is also something outstanding of his use of his Facebook page (Castaño Correa, n.d.-a), in which he is much more active. Especially since January 2016 he has been posting a photograph of a toy accompanied by short explanations once or twice per day. He also posts links to interviews, articles and videos by others about the museum. He effectively offers basic information about the museum to whoever looks for it. He also actively tries to "make the museum more well-known" (Rafael, Facebook page, 22 May 2016) through his Facebook account, trying to take advantage of the viral spreading of information and the participation of his friends and followers.

Although the information that they upload shows a mostly naturalized manner of understanding their museum practices, centered on the collection and on the aesthetic and nostalgic observation of objects, some manage to get certain involvement of his followers or to reach potential visitors and collaborators.

Catalogues, booklets, websites or any other kind of graphic communication support help amateur museum practitioners to create and show a corporative brand. Intentionally or unintentionally, when they produce such products they have to think of a graphic image which includes photographs, logos, typographies, colors and organization of information that will represent them. Some of them achieve a more professional image than others, mainly because they hired the services of professional designers, and text translation and correction (The House of Butterflies). But a professional image is nothing more than the use of certain kinds of visual and material resources applied in specific manners, which are usually shared by most professionals in a field. If the neighbors and mayor of Planoles were so amazed about the museum of Agustí and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies) when they saw the website, it was at

least in part due to the professional style of their website, which infuses the museum with an important doses of authority: it resembles an official site of a highly institutionalized museum. The same happens with their booklet.

The cheap means available today for producing websites are also an advantage that can be taken by the amateur museum practitioners in order to reach wider audiences and document their work. Documenting their work is also a form of objectifying it and leaving traces of it that can last longer than the museums. So, in a similar manner than collections and museums project their owners into the future, the documentation that those leave behind is projecting both the museums and their owners into the future. Some of them control the production of such documentation and others leave it at the hands of other Internet content producers. Again, only Magda is very aware of the relevance of writing and printing motherhood stories.

Public Relations and Collaboration with Other Organizations

In highly institutionalized museums the activity of relating an organization to other organizations and stakeholders is highly professionalized and specialized. Although public relations is not a practice understood as such in amateur museums, it is nevertheless informally conducted and it evidences the fragile and struggling position of the museum practitioners as well as their positions in the field. There is ambivalence in their relations with public administrations and organizations as well as with private museums or potential investors because they express that they need and hope to get their support, that they are very critical about them, and that they fear losing control of their projects if they finally involve other partners. Martinez Latre (2007) detected a lack of trust between public governments and small private museums. She even found that people preferred to donate their objects to these kind of local, independent and rooted in the community museums (Martinez Latre, 2007: 199).

This can be seen in different tones and degrees in the conversations with the Catalan museum practitioners. Yet despite all their fears and criticism, they seek different kinds of collaborations that would economically help them run their projects without compromising their independence. All of them hold a permanent tension and dialogue with public administration and other cultural and museographic agents that is shaped by their positions of disadvantage and their struggle for position taking.

There is a generalized distrust and negative view of public organizations in many of the museum practitioners. This is the case of Agustí and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies), who consider that their local government does not help them enough, and that they do not even show interest in them:

> They don't take care of it in the local government, we don't know anything, and they haven't told us anything. Few people from the village have visited us, and from the local government even less. And when they come it's because somebody else told them that we have such a nice website, and then they called me to congratulate me for the website, but they had to be told by the owner of the bar. When we did the website they found out [...] but besides that, they never show any interest in anything, you know? I think it's a big problem.
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterfleis, interview, 2015)

On the one side they criticize the lack of interest and involvement of the local government, and on the other, they suspect of many bad practices conducted by public museums, especially in relation to private collections that have been donated to them (Agustí and Agustí Jr, The House of Butterfleis, interview, 2015). Nevertheless they have managed to obtain the money to print some leaflets from the local government. In my conversations with them they often asked me if the local government should take them more into account as if my opinion could help them to negotiate.

Also Martí from the Vietnam Museum, Joan from The Den of the Shark and Josep from the Geology and Gypsum museum show disappointment in their relations with public organizations, especially with local governments.

Joan from The Den of the Shark managed to get some help from the local government who paid for the insurance and the cleaning of the museum. Nevertheless, it was an informal agreement and they did not maintain it for long:

> They all show interest but when they arrive to the government they forget about it, it does not matter who it is. When my cousin entered the local government, because the other parties from the opposition did not say anything against it, we made an agreement so they came to clean the museum two or three days a week, which was what I mostly (disliked) and they paid the insurance of civil liability. They do not come any more to clean and they haven't paid the insurance for three years now. The insurance for the other premises cost me five hundred euros per year. Plus the fire extinguishers…
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

He basically complains about their lack of commitment. Nevertheless, Joan managed to build a strong network with other public and private organizations like the Aquarium of Barcelona or the Museum of Natural Sciences of Barcelona with whom he collaborates exchanging services for material. He has also participated with university research groups and with private foundations like CRAM, a foundation for the recovery and protection of sea animals, or the private consulting organization Submón giving courses on shark dentition.

Josep, from the Geology and Gypsum museum, is one the most critical practitioners regarding politicians, especially local ones and their public policies. This is related to his own participation in local political life years ago, but also to the lack of help that he received from the local government when he was initiating his project. He even has the current receipt of the tax payment hanging on one of the walls of the museum as a proof of his absolute independence from the local government. Furthermore, although the museum is registered as a private collection open to the public in the register of the Catalan government, he despises it and their yearly survey. When asked about it, he laughs and gestures as if he was burning it at the fireplace:

> Bureaucracy. They even called me once: "how many visitors do you have? I said "I don't count the quantity but only the quality"
>
> (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016).

Even when he talks positively about other organizations with which he has had beneficial relations – like the case of the Museum of the Seminar of Barcelona or the Geology Museum of Manresa, he understands them not as organizations but only in relation to their directors, individuals who have helped him because of their good will. It seems that Josep has become bitter and suspicious with time and after some disappointments. He has rejected the participation of the local government in the management of the museum because their interest came too late after all the hardest work of building the museum was done. Partly also because of his character -he says not to forgive nor to change his mind easily- his attitude corresponds to someone who considers himself to be in the powerful position of the negotiation and this is because he owes the museum.

Martí, from the Vietnam Museum expresses also his loneliness in his endeavor, something that is enhanced by the topic of his museum, which does not have any

relation with the local context and, as he explains, is wrongly seen for some as a praise of war and violence:

> They have shown no interest, in this country there is no interest for culture, and military topics have been a taboo till nowadays.
>
> (Martí, Vietnam Museum, e-mail interview, 2016)

Magda from the Maternal Museum might be the one that managed to get more involvement of public and private organizations. Nevertheless, this was especially so during the first decades of her project, and, judging by the historical timeline on her website, the economic support gradually diminished and finally stopped. It has to be said that the amounts given were tiny even at that time (1960s-1970s):

> For this exhibition we received 5.000 pesetas from "La Caixa", 2000 pesetas from the bank Banesto, 2000 ptas from Banc Condal, 7000 pesetas from Banco Sabadell, 2500 pesetas from La Caixa del Penedès, together with what the Diputació (provincial government) and the Generalitat (Catalan government) gave. Furthermore we still received a yearly subsidy from the local government of 12000ptas for cleaning and preservation tasks. [...]
>
> (Sanrama, n.d., my translation from the Catalan version)

I cannot know why this happened, but my hypothesis is that it does not have so much to do with changes in Magda's project but with changes in the understanding of the directionality of cultural proposals by both public and private agents. If between the 1960s and 1980s it was celebrated that private initiatives generated cultural proposals such as museums, during the 1980s the public effort and investment was placed at producing their own cultural infrastructures. Also, the kind of private sponsorship from banks' social welfare that Magda used to receive has been changing in its methods and objectives, being every time more directed to bigger projects which also have more visibility and to their own foundations and social work. During a time, Magda also had the support and the interest of the local government of Sant Vicenç dels Horts, the original location of the museum, with whom she was in negotiations for a space to finally settle the museum. These negotiations ended with negative results in 1992. Still in 1978, Magda writes:

> For the 5th Maternal Week we got 5000 pesetas from Sant Vicenç dels Horts local government, but the year 1978 the subsidy of 12000 pesetas per year was reduced to

> 5000 pesetas and this was the last economic help received from the local government of Sant Vicenç dels Horts.
>
> (Sanrama, n.d., my translation from the Catalan version)

Furthermore, she organized exhibitions and talks in highly institutional places like the Palace of Congresses of Barcelona (1981) or the public exhibition hall Palau de la Virreina (Barcelona, 1971). Despite the evolution that all these collaborations had, it is outstanding how Magda managed to involve, even if it was in small economic amounts, a diversity of public and private agents, as well as individuals like artists who donated their work and, most strikingly, the media to write and talk about the museum and her other activities. This is related to her career as a journalist that did not only give her the contacts (social capital) but also the habitus that served her to communicate and negotiate with people in better social positions.

Joaquim from the Bread museum is not as critical as others about the involvement of public organizations. He says that although they show interest, they do not offer economic help. Nevertheless, Joaquim often collaborates with local schools and a local archaeological interpretation center (El Camp de les Lloses). This kind of collaborations are also a manner of gaining legitimacy: Joaquim's knowledge on historical techniques of bread baking is legitimated by the local archaeological interpretation centre with which he co-organizes several activities per year, or by the local schools that visit him and invite him to give workshops as well as by the public acknowledgement that he has received from his local government for his contribution to Tona's culture. Agustí and Agustí Jr feel legitimated when international entomology experts visit them, when they are suggested in tourism websites and magazines as a place to visit, or when the mayor of the village finally visits them and admires their website. Rafael knows that without the first legitimating push that he received from a local private foundation –thanks to the influence of his wife- showing his collection of toys for the first time, his toys would have not been known and maybe his museum would not exist.

The relation with public and private organizations is one of the areas in which the context seems most relevant because it also depends on public policies and the habitus of politicians and other agents involved in cultural production. This can be seen in Rafael's fear of Colombian public administrations or potential private organizations:

> We are very afraid of politicians. And one has built this with a huge effort and cannot give it away. No… Once a rich man, a local old man for whom I did a few jobs, a very serious man, he told me 'tell me how you want it and where you want it, let's do it, I'm doing it, I'm doing your museum'. And I said 'No! You are too powerful and at some point you will forget that we are partners'. One has this like tied to oneself.
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

Nevertheless, there is something on this excerpt that can be found in almost all the researched museums: they wish to have more support from public or private organizations but at the same time they fear to lose their independence. It seems that all of them perceive that their positions are of obvious disadvantage in front of a potential partner as powerful as a local government or a private investor and they protect themselves not letting anyone in.

Their generalized complaint about the lack of commitment of public governments, local or more central, is justified by their certainty of doing something valuable for the community. The only museum practitioner that seems most relaxed and grateful to his local government is the Coca-Cola Museum. He does not seem to have demands and, nevertheless, he managed to receive an important help from the local government: a warehouse to store the collection that is not displayed.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have analyzed a selection of specific practices conducted by amateur museum practitioners through the observation of their products and through the analysis of their explanations about them. In order to do so, I have framed my analysis within the theory of practice and the effective histories of museum practices as developed from the field of museum studies and the sociology of museums.

I have first tried to question the division of roles between the consumption and the production of museum practices defending that it is based on the positions of advantage and disadvantage that museum practitioners of any kind occupy within the field of museum practice and which is determined by the situated point of view of the observer. This reflection has also allowed me to highlight that production and consumption are always part of practices, including museum practices, putting special attention to the circular manner in which the effects of museum practices return to museum

practitioners as their main recipients. This is obvious in relation to benefits such as enjoyment, fulfilment or enhancement of the self, but also in a more strategic use of museum practice, which I argue to be behind amateur museum practices as well. Amateur museum practitioners are visitors of other museums –even if not enthusiastic ones-, they are "speakers" of museographic language, and they are the main recipients of their own museum practices and products both through enjoyment and fulfilment and by tactical position-takings. They produce and consume museum practices such as collecting, cataloguing, conserving and preserving, researching, displaying, or explaining. They produce and consume the goods and services needed for their museums. Importantly enough, they also produce and consume the ideological possibilities of the museographic language which happens in a complex struggle with the fields in which they act and their own habitus.

Amateur museum practitioners could be regarded as illegitimate or unauthorized museum practitioners in the sense that they lack the objectified qualifications as collectors, conservators, museum educators and many other museum roles that they perform (I will specify this distinction between amateur and professional positions in the next chapter and continue digging on issues about authority and legitimacy in the chapter on the ritualization of amateur museum practices). In Schütz's terms amateur museum practitioners could be situated at specific positions within the in-group of museum practitioners or in Bourdieu's terms, within the field of museum practice. Although in many senses the researched museum practitioners are part of the in-group of museum practitioners –they definitely share an habitus-, they do not totally fit the in-group typifications (Schütz, 1976a). We could understand that although they are part of the museum practitioners' in-group, their disadvantageous positions situate them in the margins of the field or they could be considered as out-group by some in-group individuals or as marginal sub-groups within the in-group. Consciously or unconsciously learning and using the socially derived knowledge of another group is a strategy for becoming part of it. Furthermore, the outsider of an in-group can also affect the group's system of relevancies and typifications creating changes in such system (Schütz, 1976a). We have as well already seen that de Certeau explains the operations performed by consumers and cultural re-users as "clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of the 'discipline'" (1988: xiv). I do not claim that amateur museums function

clandestinely, in the sense of behind-the-scenes, and I do not think either that de Certeau uses the expression in this sense, which seems quite clear when he writes about television viewers or city walkers. What is important in relation to amateur museums is especially that they are caught in the nets of the museographic discipline. "Caught" is an important term because it denotes that the position within the discipline is neither voluntary nor fully powerful and that taking a critical distance from it is at least difficult if even possible. It is in this struggling position that their museum practices are developed.

The analysis of specific practices conducted by the amateur museum practitioners confirm this relation with institutionalized museum practices. Of course, they do not relate to every practice and every convention in the same manner. Some are very insecure about one specific practice while others are not because they totally take it for granted and others are very critical and consciously avoiding or contesting it. These attitudes might totally change in relation to another practice, and the museum practitioners that was very critical about one practice, might be using another one in a totally naturalized manner. Nevertheless, this analysis has also allowed a detailed understanding of such practices which show several relevant issues, 1) that many of their museum practices are taken for granted and naturalized, 2) that despite this they resist their own naturalization even if it is in a somewhat contradictory struggle, and 3) that they consciously or unconsciously tactically use museum practices for improving their positions.

1) In many different levels and manners, all the museum practitioners show how their practices are often naturalized and taken for granted. This is not because they are amateurs and lack professional training or critical knowledge about them, as it is often found that professional museum practitioners are also acritical with their naturalized practices (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). As all the theories of practice coincide in, any activity is driven by the habitus and a practical sense that facilitates our decision making and our daily functioning.

   In their discourses about their practices, museum practitioners often show insecurity on what they understand as a proper way of performing them. The typification of roles conceptualized by Schütz might be useful to explain the role-position behaviour of museum practitioners as such, and their taken for granted conceptions of such role in relation to which they evaluate if they properly fulfil

their tasks. Some of them appear to have a strong perception of not having the authority and legitimacy to be full right museum practitioners. This is most remarkably shown by the justifications of the use of the word "museum" to name their projects. When talking about certain conventions such as labelling, cataloguing, or the museum script, they do not only seem to take for granted how these have to be used and performed, but they seem strict with themselves in relation to the quality of their practice and sometimes they seem to need to give excuses to justify their "failures". As I will continue to delve into in the chapter about ritualization of museum practices, it might be because of this perceived lack of authority that they are especially strict in the formal performance of the practices and the way they perceive that things should ideally be done in their museums. The lack of security that they often express in relation to the way in which they perform their museum practices can also be explained as a lack of comfort given by their attempts to adapt to another habitus that is not theirs or, more precisely, of finding themselves entangled with incompatible museum practices that derive from different habitus.

2) Nevertheless, they also show resistance to such naturalization. In many different degrees, they sometimes show themselves uncomfortable because they feel pushed to perform certain practices that they would prefer not to do or that they would prefer to perform in a different manner. This pressure sometimes comes from external agents, mostly professionals that give them their opinions and advises, but also from their own naturalized understanding of the practices. In some cases, this leads them to decide not to do something or to do it in a different manner, which does not necessarily imply that the understanding of that practice has been denaturalized. Yet this resistance is part of a struggle for the legitimation of their museum practices.

3) Finally, in their appropriation and use of language that does not belong to them, amateur museum practitioners take advantage of its authoritative and legitimating effects. Although they seem to perceive their own lack of authority and legitimacy, or a disadvantageous position within the field, they all have decided to appropriate and use museum practices for their purposes. Despite mimicking other institutions perceived as more legitimate, despite taking conventions for granted, amateur museum practitioners are performing microscopic modifications in the historical

functioning of the institutionalized practice. With this appropriation they redistribute some of the symbolic capital available in the field by creating de Certeau's "space for manoeuvres": they are partially subverting the established order of the museum institution and facilitating the observation of some of its struggles and inequalities, as well as the arbitrariness of its conventions. Further research would be necessary to know if their museum practices change their social positions or increase their capital, especially after a long struggle in the appropriation of the museographic institution and its symbolic capital. Some hints point this way, as it is their advantageous positions when negotiating with interested and very wealthy buyers or, as we will see in the chapter on ritualization, through their relation with school groups that identify them as authorities in their fields.

As we are about to see in the next chapter, part of the definition of their positions within the field is determined by the fact that they carry their museum practices as leisure activities. And yet, it is exactly this that gives them some of the space for resistance and position takings within their fields of action. They consume leisure time through museum practices and collect the benefits of such consumptions in that return to the self which is the fuel for their long term commitment.

CHAPTER 2

Museum Practice as Leisure

Introduction

Amateur museums are museums made as leisure. Situating them in relation to professional museums allows understanding some structural features of their practices. Although some museum scholars try to blur the boundaries between professional and amateur practitioners in order to avoid degrading the second, my aim here is almost the opposite. By looking in detail into what makes these museum practices specifically amateur and how leisure shapes such practices, I intend to show how their value and the specificities of their practices are due in part to their link to the leisure sphere. Denying that certain museum practices are amateur only hides the value that they have specifically for being so. It also conceals issues of authority and legitimacy that are a struggle between amateurs and their professional peers. I understand that this denial comes as a practice of condescension from professionals and scholars (Bourdieu, 1991) while amateurs tend to acknowledge the amateur nature of their activities. Nevertheless, because I am aware of the negative connotations that amateurism has, I also analyze in this chapter what causes this negative bias and the consequences this has on the practices of amateur museum practitioners.

Consequently, in this chapter I will first briefly review certain aspects of the work of authors of leisure studies that I consider relevant for the understanding of museum practice as a leisure activity. To do so I will specially rely on Rojek (2001, 2005) and Kelly (1996, 2009) among others (Critcher, 2006; Freysinger & Harris, 2006; Roberts, 2006; Rybczynski, 1991; Shaw, 2001; 1985; Stebbins, 1992).

Secondly, I will justify that the distinction between amateurism and professionalism is often a manner of degrading and upgrading certain activities, legitimizing or delegitimizing them, and subjecting them to issues of social distinction through taste (Bourdieu, 2006).

Yet thirdly I will defend the validity of amateur museum practices through a review of their origins and their relation with more professionalized museum making. In this case I will also rely on research on collecting (Belk et al., 1988; Macdonald, 2006a; Martin,

1999) and museum practice (Candlin, 2015; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Jannelli, 2012; Pearce, 1992). I will highlight the interest of considering the researched museum practices from the point of view of leisure because some of their specificities can only be explained through leisure, like the position of disadvantage from which they act or their motivations and benefits.

Afterwards I will inspect the consideration of amateur museums as Do-It-Yourself museums in order to explain why I dismiss this label but also to show what it offers as an approach to amateur museum making.

Finally, I will analyze amateur museum practices as leisure through the data gathered from the eight case studies. I will focus on the awareness of the museum makers as amateurs; their strong self-identification with their leisure practices of museum making; the freedom of choice perceived by them in relation to such practices; the relation between the different leisure practices of collecting, museum making and the research on their fields of interest; the processes of self-learning and their expertise on their fields of interest; the costs of their leisure pursuits; their motivations and durable benefits; and the relations with other amateurs, professionals and public.

Leisure

Different approaches to leisure have been given from the field of leisure studies. Rojeck summarizes these views under three approaches. First, one that considers leisure as the kind of activity conducted with the time left over after necessities are fulfilled[19]. This view has the problem of determining what we understand as a necessity, failing to give the proper importance to the social functions, and personal benefits and harms of leisure, as well as situating leisure in lesser importance than work and other activities. Secondly, there are the approaches that consider leisure as the time consciously used for self-enrichment and enjoyment. This tends to be a highly psychological approach, and by its own, it can isolate leisure activities to the perception of their makers, neglecting the social determinants that explain them. And third, there are those views that consider leisure under a structural approach, this is that leisure is a "functional activity" with "socially determined ends" and causes (Rojek, 2005: 30). These views are often seen

[19] The concept of discretionary time instead of that of free time, is often chosen to highlight that the amount of freedom is limited and we only exert some choice over it.

as contradictory but some authors try to overlap them in order to apprehend a more complex and holistic view of leisure.

Many authors coincide in that the origins of leisure as we understand it today in western societies have to be found in the industrial societies of the end of 19th century, when the work week became shorter and therefore workers had the chance to choose in what to spend their spare time (Kelly, 1996). On this line, Caillois has proposed a very spread understanding of the origin of leisure:

> Industrial civilization has given birth to a special form of *ludus,* the hobby, a secondary and gratuitous activity, undertaken and pursued for pleasure, e.g. collecting, unique accomplishments, the pleasure in billiards or inventing gadgets, in a word any occupation that is primarily a compensation for the injury to personality caused by bondage to work of an automatic and picayune character.
>
> (Caillois, 2001: 32)

Nevertheless this proposal presents leisure as an unproblematic parcel of life, highly psychological that has the role of compensating and healing. This view forgets the social constraints, effects and social interests behind leisure. Instead, Rojek proposes to consider that leisure has four central functions, those of representation, identity, control and resistance:

> Through *representation* leisure practice *themes* behaviour and constructs *markers* of action and belonging. Through *identity formation* leisure practice functions to establish boundaries of inclusion and exclusion that support recognition and relations of belonging. Through *control* leisure practice functions to regulate conduct and lifestyle options. Finally, through *resistance* leisure practice mobilizes resources against agents of control and their associated power regimes.
>
> (Rojek, 2005: 83)

Kelly (2009, 1996), who focuses on an explicitly western and specially north American history of leisure, shows how governments, educational organizations, religious power and economic interests have been shaping and forging leisure in which mass media play a very relevant part. Class and gender have also determined the available kinds of leisure in different periods of time and places, and also technologies have performed important changes in it. Roberts and Critcher claim for a bigger attention to class differences and constraints in leisure (Critcher, 2006; Roberts, 2006), and other authors

do also in relation to gender (Herridge, Shaw, & Mannell, 2003; S. M. Shaw, 2001, 2006) and race (Freysinger & Harris, 2006).

Empirical research on women's leisure has shown how their roles within romantic heterosexual relationships, within the family and behind certain ideologies of femininity (Herridge et al., 2003) have been constraining and determining women's leisure activities. For example, those engaged in heterosexual romantic relationships tend to adapt to the leisure preferences of their partners and to dedicate more time to the maintenance of the intimate aspects of the relationship. Furthermore, the ethic of care in which women are socialized into since their youth pushes them to dedicate all their "free" time to their families, and even in order to give the others, specially husbands and children, leisure time (Herridge et al., 2003). Women's leisure is sometimes also controlled by their male partners, especially when this takes place outside home. The lower incomes of women also leave them with narrower economic possibilities for leisure, and their role as housewives has also increased this difference as those do not have an income of money of their own(Green et al., 1990). Women and men are also socialized into leisure activities in a gendered manner by their families and schools but also by the media, which transmit the idea that some activities are more adequate for men than for women and vice versa (Green et al., 1990).

Race –based on physical appearance- and ethnicity –based on country of origin, religion, language and cultural practices- (Gramann & Allison, 1999) are seen also as central to leisure in several manners. First, leisure is a manner of constructing group identity and belonging, which minority groups often use as a tool for resistance and self-determination. Although this view has been criticized for assuming that the affiliation to a subculture is mainly based on ethnicity, it has nevertheless proved that ethnicity might change the meanings and the motivations behind one same leisure pursuit (Gramann & Allison, 1999). Other views highlight economic disadvantage, social and racial discriminations as also determining leisure activities of ethnic groups. Some authors have overlapped race, gender, age and class determinants to give a more complex view on structural determinants and effects of leisure. For example, it is found that in some ethnic groups, women are less exposed to racist discriminations because their leisure is much more restricted than that of men, and more limited to the private space (Carrington, Chivers, & Williams, 1987). Thus, something that could seem an advantage is in fact the consequence of another discrimination. Leisure has been often

proposed as a contact zone that would improve communication and understanding between ethnic groups, and this has justified public investment on infrastructure and leisure programs. Nevertheless, these kinds of proposals often conceal that power unbalance between groups is still present in such activities and that they require the adaptation of one group to the habitus of the other (Freysinger & Harris, 2006).

Age is of course another common variable in the understanding of leisure determinants, opportunities and constrains, as well as the effects and uses that leisure has in certain social groups. Common leisure practices and interests, as well as their benefits and costs change during life course for many reasons, including legal constrains –drinking and gambling being forbidden to children-, economic constrains –youngsters tend to have less money that adults for their leisure activities-, group belonging and self-determination–specially seen in youngsters (Willis, Jones, Canaan, & Hurd, 1990) but present in all stages of life-, amount of discretionary time –greater in youngsters and retirees-, feeling of accomplishment and inclusion –relevant for unemployed and retirees-, and so on. The changes in the understanding of social groups determined by ages such as youth, adulthood and old age go hand in hand with changes in their leisure pursuits (Roberts, 2006).

Bourdieu (2006) highlighted how class habitus is highly reflected in leisure practices, which he detailed through the analysis of cultural consumption. While some authors consider that nowadays class is mainly relevant to leisure only in relation to the economic inequalities that affect it in terms of quantity (Roberts, 2006), others insist that class habitus is still a relevant determinant for the choice of leisure activities and the manners in which the specific practices of leisure are undertaken (Critcher, 2006). And yet, despite the inequalities and dispositions that derive class, "reducing leisure to a simple reflection of class ignores the really interesting questions about leisure as cultural play, where identities are secured and realized by transgressing the borders of conformity" (Critcher, 2006: 285).

Leisure is a learned behavior into which we are socialized, and thus we learn "culture-specific values and orientations" for and through it (Kelly, 1996: 42). Life course, changing role identities, gender or ethnicity determine our leisure choices and how we perform them, which leads to differences of social distinction through leisure. Because of these structural implications, leisure has been seen in a functionalist manner as a tool for maintaining order and creating or keeping social integration but also as a tool for

resistance and social change. Kelly (1996) is concerned on how economic interests determine governmental decision making and mechanisms of control in relation to what kind of leisure or what behaviors within leisure are acceptable. He also takes into account the huge effect of the internationalization of leisure and the influence of the media on the normalization of certain practices over others for specific social groups. Free time behavior has been controlled through sexual behavior regulations, drinking regulations, fighting shows and so on (Kelly, 1996), but people have been creative in finding new leisure activities to resist and escape such regulations. The lack of space in cities has also determined the kind of leisure children and adults could have. Religious interests also determined the kind of activities and behavior for certain days and occasions, like the case of Sundays in Christian societies. Yet resistance and contestation is also facilitated by leisure through disobedience, illegality and tacit permissions to certain activities, as with sexual commerce, drug consumption and gambling. Options in the limits or beyond legality have always been also available as people have been needing them, but people have also resisted and contested the given leisure options and even used them in order to resist and contest other social determinants by fighting to practice those activities that are understood as not adequate to one's gender, class, or ethnicity (Freysinger & Flannery, 1992; Shaw, 2006).

Leisure is also a field of struggles over scarce resources, especially money and space, becoming a space of domination among groups and of surveillance and control of behavior (Kelly, 1996: 88). This struggle for the resources that make leisure opportunities available and the opinion that recreation and leisure bring benefits to society are the reason why many authors and policy makers understand that public organizations should invest in public recreation (Kelly, 1996: 304-307).

Some authors have also contested the understanding of leisure and work as opposed to each other (Roberts, 2006). In this dichotomy, work is usually understood as paid for and obligatory, when leisure is unnecessary and unpaid. This differentiation is dissolved when we take into consideration the many different ways in which people relate to work, which might be unpaid like in the case of house work, or enjoyed and done at will beyond paid working hours. It has also been defended that these activities should be all considered work, the difference between them not having to do with professionalization nor economic necessity: "for many people weekend free time has become not a chance to escape work but a chance to create work that is more

meaningful -to work at recreation- in order to realize the personal satisfactions that the workplace no longer offers" (Rybczynski, 1991: 50-51).

Differentiating Between Professionals and Amateurs

This dichotomy between work and leisure leads to a dichotomy between professionals and amateurs. Yet this difference does not depend only on the economic compensation of work nor on its mostly obligatory nature. One of the main differences between the consideration of a practice as being amateur or professional is similar to the consideration discussed in the first chapter between consumption and production: this is, a difference of legitimacy and of the positions that practitioners occupy in their fields. Rybczynski introduces the issue of how practices are upgraded or degraded -legitimized and delegitimized- through their consideration as professional or amateur, which attaches valuations of quality into each category:

> "Professional" used to be a word that distinguished someone who was paid for an activity from the sportsman; today the word has come to denote anyone with a high degree of proficiency; "professional-quality" equipment is available to -and desired by- all. Conversely, "amateur," a wonderful word literally meaning "lover," has been degraded to mean a rank beginner or anyone without a certain level of skill.
>
> (Rybczynski, 1991: 37)

Being considered professional or amateur depends on following and completing certain paths which validate and legitimize one's practices as professional. In this sense, Hudson understands that a professional "might perhaps be defined as a person who has followed a recognized course of specialized training and who accepts a recognized pattern of working practices and agreed ethical standards" (Hudson, 2014: 141). Although he does not directly state it, his definition highlights issues of legitimacy through certified education and certified professional affiliations, which turn into a handicap for those who do not possess them, like Bourdieu detects in the case of autodidacts (Bourdieu, 2006).

Thus, an activity is often considered amateur when its practitioner does not hold certified education or professional affiliations. Yet considering an activity as amateur has the effect of devaluating its quality or relevance in a specific field. In consequence amateur practitioners often assume a double disadvantage: first, they occupy a

disadvantageous position within a field –for example having little resources available, with no certified knowledge and so on-, and second, being understood as amateur indicates for many a lack of quality and of relevance of the activity.

Yet what it is often used to distinguish amateur from professional practices is not really quality standards but issues of style that depend only on taste and that, as Bourdieu has shown us, are a matter of social distinction (Bourdieu, 2006). Rojek (2005) is concerned about the centrality of leisure in the acquisition and internalization of taste. Furthermore, the entanglement between leisure and taste is behind "identity formation and the recognition of social membership" (Rojek, 2005: 58).

The origins of taste as we understand it today have been located between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when it "became an important term in European criticism" (Campbell, 2005:154) linked to a search of a universal standard of beauty. Against this attempt to reach consensus on a universal standard of beauty the idea of taste being subjective and tight to oneself and one's sensibility was gaining terrain among the public opinion. "This populist current clearly reflected a growing individualism as well as the greater influence of the middle classes [...]. It is therefore understandable that a new emphasis should be placed upon self-determination in matters of taste" (Campbell, 2005: 156). Nevertheless, good taste required training and judgement, something that was only mastered by the elites. Taste, thus, became a sign of social distinction, and is closely related to cultural literacy also in museum visiting (Bourdieu et al., 1991; Bourdieu, 2006) and in museum practice.

Of course the aesthetic criteria behind contemporary museology cannot be reduced only to fashion patterns that are in turn a result of changes in taste as Campbell identified in relation to fashion. It would be the goal of further research to find out exactly what of museum practice is subject to issues of taste and fashion and what other choices are at play. For the sake of my argument, I hope that the reader will accept that taste and distinction are a fundamental part of the changes in museum fashion and of the judgement of a museum product. The relation between taste and goodness that Campbell detects appearing in the turn of the eighteenth century is in many senses still valid today in all areas of social life and also in museum practice. Aesthetic judgement "revealed one's sense of taste, and hence one's essential quality of self" (169) and, as we can further add though Bourdieu, it disguises a distinction between social groups.

In museum practice taste affects not only a predisposition to visit and appreciate museums like Bourdieu (Bourdieu et al., 1991; Bourdieu, 2006) and revisions of his work so well showed (Bennett et al., 2009), but also a predisposition to make them and finally the manners in which these are made. Museum making is subjected to choices of taste and distinction just as photography was shown by Bourdieu to be used in different manners and with different aesthetic intentions by different social classes (Bourdieu, 2003). Just as Bourdieu's informants in "Photography: a middle-brow art" preferred certain kinds of topics, compositions and manners of photographing, museum makers also choose their topics, displays and narrative elements following their tastes that are linked to a sense of social belonging, to their habitus and to the positions that they occupy in relation to the museographic field.

Such taste dispositions are not neutral, and they reflect "hierarchies of taste" (Couldry, 2005: 13) which validate and legitimate certain choices such as the objects that are expected to be collected and preserved or their aesthetic evaluation. Hierarchies of taste could also partially explain the lack of interest and the paternalism of museum professionals towards their amateur colleagues[20]. I propose that distinction through taste is what mostly differentiates and distances some museum practitioners form others in the same manner that Bourdieu shows us that taste differentiates persons from different social classes. Taste is shown in the choice of languages (museography), topics (sharks, butterflies, toys) and the chosen forms of application (exhibition design, guided tours, classification…), and it is one of the visible results of differences of the positions that museum makers occupy. A professional museum maker can probably know through the evaluation of the museographic taste of another museum maker what his levels of formal specific education are. Universities and specialized training as well as the information that flows among professionals in the shape of journals and conferences are central in defining the taste of museum practitioners. Those that have not access to such kind of training and information or that have it in a limited manner are less likely to reproduce it. What we might perceive as old fashioned and traditional displays partly derives from a different information, education and dispositions that result in different taste choices. All the researched museum makers have been and know

[20] We have already seen in the introduction how the few authors that have shown an interest for amateur museum practices criticize the lack of interest of both scholars and practitioners and also how the attempts of including amateur practices tend to be paternalistic and over directed.

many contemporary, interdisciplinary, participatory, high tech museums and most of them are also very critical about them as we have seen in the first chapter (see the sections on the guided tours and museum visiting).

Fiona Candlin (2015) has detected that British micromuseums, most of which are amateur, have old-fashioned displays, often chaotic which have very little to do with the current state of the art in museographic and curatorial techniques. Nevertheless, she finds that they do not transmit narrow minded and unidirectional world-views, but that their displays are perceived by visitors as personal and playful proposals attracting their attention and interest.

Also Levin (2007) considers that local amateur museums in the USA sometimes "undercut the orderly categories and tasteful displays commonly found in contemporary museums, throwing into question the very definition of a museum" (Levin, 2007: 22). Embry and Nelson (2007) consider that the Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museums are obviously not following recent curatorial trends and exhibit all the objects without a clear selection and offering very little information to the visitor. Nevertheless, they find that what they achieve by that is something eagerly chased by professional museum makers: that visitors construct their own narrative, adapting the objects in display to their own needs (Embry & Nelson, 2007).

Yet, all this said, some museum makers consider themselves to be amateur and to do their museums as leisure. Although this, as I am trying to show, could be given by their own perceived lack of legitimacy, it is something that we have to pay attention to. Omitting that certain practices are conducted by individuals as leisure is to erase an important amount of data that explains why and how they do them. Furthermore, as it has been said in the first chapter, they do their museums from positions of disadvantage partly derived from their positions as amateurs, which should not be concealed by diluting them among more professionalized museum practices. To understand certain kinds of work as leisure allows also to focus on structural issues and the habitus involved in leisure practices. Even if the dichotomy between work and leisure has negative connotations for leisure, we shall remember that individuals have been socialized in that dichotomy which in turn shapes their practices. Furthermore, resistance through leisure practices as understood by Rojek (Chris Rojek, 2001) and Shaw (Shaw, 2001, 2006), has specific characteristics because it is done through leisure,

including the advantages and disadvantages of it, and against the naturalized manners in which work and leisure are understood and performed.

We should thus not be afraid of considering them amateur, but, on the contrary, we should highlight how museum practices have specific constraints, possibilities and effects when they are made as leisure. We must understand amateur museum practices as valid as the practices performed in other conditions and yet be aware that they are different from them. In museum practices, like in other fields, the boundaries between professionalism and amateurism are not well defined, but tracking them and identifying their formation surfaces relevant information for the understanding of museum practices beyond the center of the institution.

Amateur-Professional Museum Practices

Professional categories within museums have been specially developing since the decade of the 1950s with specifications in the legislations and new educative programs, increasing diversification and division of labor (Boylan, 2006), a tendency that reached its peak in the 1980s and 1990s (Hudson, 2014).

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has had a relevant role in this process of professionalization specially by defining codes of ethics of museum professionals. They describe museum professionals as including:

> all the personnel of museums, or institutions qualifying as museums in accordance with the definition in Article 3, Section 1 & 2[21], and training and research institutions which are beneficial to museum activities, having received specialized training, or possessing an equivalent practical experience, in any field relevant to the management and activities of a museum, as well International Council of Museums Statutes (approved in 2007) as independent persons respecting the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums and working for and with museums, but not involved in promoting or dealing with any commercial products and equipment required for museums and their services.
>
> (ICOM, 2007: article 3.3)

[21]ICOM's definition for museum being: "a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment." (ICOM, 2007, article 3.1)

It seems a quite inclusive definition as it includes all museum workers (as we saw in the introduction the researched amateur museums fit ICOM's definition of museum), as well as independent persons "having received specialized training or possessing an equivalent practical experience". The definition is so open that it is almost useless: how is practical experience to be evaluated? Have the researched amateur museum practitioners enough practical experience after decades of work to be considered museum professionals?

Pearce (1992) adds another variable to the definition of museum professionals, which is that of a sense of belonging to what in Schütz (1976a,1976c) terms could be considered a profession in-group:

> What is clear is that the idea of belonging to a profession, modified certainly by discipline loyalties, is important to many curators, however differently they may interpret it as individuals. As various modes of audit and assessment gain ground, this feeling is likely to grow rather than lessen.
>
> (Pearce, 1992: 122)

Thus, museum practitioners that do not have access to such modes of audit and assessment as well as all to the other means by which a feeling of belonging is built (workers' associations and unions, professional networks and gatherings, university alumni and so on) have little chances to see themselves and to be seen as part of the group.

Although, as we could see in the first chapter, amateur museums sometimes seem to be mirroring and mimicking professional museums, they cannot be simplified as a copy of them. Museum practices could be considered to be amateur in most of their preceding forms. At a time when the formation of modern museography walked hand in hand with the birth of modern science and its professions (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992), wonder-rooms and cabinets could not be said to be professional practices. Museum makers as well as scientists were, by then, all hobbyists: "the early history of many contemporary professions was made up exclusively of amateurs, the only people practicing the professions in their day. [...] Clearly, however, they were experts, by the standards of the day, in their respective areas of leisure" (Stebbins, 1992: 42).

Cabinet makers displayed their collections to a restricted public due to a mix of motivations that had little to do with their professional life and more with the

dispositions and motivations that we still find for leisure activities (belonging, identity formation, enjoyment, distinction, and so on). As we already saw in the first chapter, wonder cabinets were demonstrations of wealth and private ownership, a tool for position takings, as well as a socially appropriate pastime for princes and the male children of the wealthy. Their benefits were related to social status and to the construction of the self.

Such cabinets existed as a consequence of and in tight relation with private collecting. They were the medium by which private collections were displayed by collectors and usually at the private spaces of their homes for the enjoyment of friends and other selected visitors. Hooper-Greenhill (1992) identifies this kind of exhibition of private collections as a turning point that modified the manner in which material culture was thought and shown in the western world and as an important contribution to the institutionalization of museography.

But it was already in the sixteenth century when the figure of the cabinet maker-owner gave way to that of the expert who builds cabinets for others (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992) as we have seen in the first chapter. This might be considered one of the first rifts from the united figure of the individual owner-maker towards a differentiated figure of the owner and of the maker.

Two centuries later the first guides with advice for collectors and cabinet makers appeared:

> In 1727, for example, Caspar Neickel, a dealer from Hamburg, produced *Museographica*, written in Latin for distribution across Europe. This offered guidance on locations for acquisition of material suitable for collections, problems of classification, and techniques of caring for things in what would now be known as a controlled environment. Neickel discusses 'old curio cabinets' as well as 'cabinets of art'. In relation to display, he suggests a table in the middle of each space where things brought from the repository could be studied. Things are divided into groups of *naturalia*, *curiosa*, and *artificialia*. The two older divisions of *naturalia* and *artificialia* which are drawn from much earlier ways of dividing the world, are now supplemented by a new classification, *curiosa*.
>
> (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 144)

What this implied was that there were correct manners in which to collect and display, a knowledge possessed by experts or specialists who could pass it, as gate keepers of the conventions of the field, to others.

Modern and contemporary museums are partially the heirs of that amateur semiprivate (in aim) activity, but not the only manner in which it evolved. Private collections and their display have never disappeared and the cabinets of curiosities have assimilated and reflected social and epistemological changes together with museums and not only after them. For instance, a very specific and paradigmatic discursive museographic tool like the guided tour –currently a highly institutionalized technique with a strong ceremonial character (Meyer & Rowan, 1977)- became widely stablished in museums during the first decade of the 20th century (Bennett, 1988), but long before that cabinet makers already introduced the objects of their displays to their visitors with a very similar kind of verbal explanation. When guided tours started to be introduced in French modern museums, it was because of a new purpose was given to museums: that of educating the citizens, for which information had to be facilitated. Nevertheless the former practice, although affected by the new understandings of museums, continued to exist. Nowadays and in a similar manner, contemporary private collectors also tend to verbally explain their collections, the story of the inclusion of specific objects in them, the relation between objects, and so on, to any visitor that would be interested to listen. In other words, collectors and cabinet makers have tended to physically, visually and orally mediate between their visitors and their collections even if these also change accordingly to the epistemic changes of their time and are moulded by the current practices of the museums perceived as more legitimate (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

In this line, Jannelli (2012) also states that contemporary amateur museums are a form of museum making that is parallel and comparable to professional museum making, with its own validity, processes, structure and motivations. To do this, Jannelli compares amateur museum practices to the magical thought that Lévi-Strauss defends as parallel to scientific thought as a manner to acquire knowledge (Lévi-Strauss, 1966). In this manner, "wild museums" (Jannelli, 2012), like magical thought, should not be compared to professional or highly institutionalized museums but understood within their own logic and meanings.

Nevertheless, contemporary amateur museums have to carry the burden of the negative connotations of leisure, although, curiously, such negative connotations do not affect

private collecting- an amateur pursuit as well- in the same level. Private collections are often highly valued[22] and have fed some of the most well-known public and private museums, but amateur museum practice has mainly been neglected or undervalued as unprofessional and illegitimate (Candlin, 2015; Jannelli, 2012).

Stebbins' theory on serious leisure is useful in this matter as well. Firstly, he restores the personal and social interest and seriousness of some leisure activities by differentiating between serious leisure and casual leisure, the first one being "the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge" (1992: 3). He adds:

> Both hobbyists and amateurs are practitioners in definite and lasting pursuits. Hobbyists are serious about and committed to their endeavours, even though they feel neither a social necessity nor a personal obligation to engage in them [...]. A hobby is a specialized pursuit beyond one's occupation, a pursuit that one finds particularly interesting and enjoyable because of its durable benefits.
>
> (Stebbins, 1992: 10)

Serious *leisurers*, to coin a word, have then careers in their endeavors, they acquire knowledge, training or skill with effort, they obtain durable benefits from the activity –like self-actualization, self-enrichment, self-expression, recreation or renewal of self, feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, social interaction and belonging, and lasting physical products of the activity –not obtainable from casual leisure-, and they strongly identify with their pursuits (Stebbins, 1992). This definition of serious leisure fits both private collecting and amateur museum making.

Secondly, Stebbins introduces a difference between hobbyists and amateurs, which is also an important difference between collectors and museum makers: "if full-time participants in these activities fail to meet the sociological standards of a profession, or if there are no full-time participants, the part-time enthusiasts are more accurately described as hobbyists than as modern amateurs" (Stebbins, 1992: 42). A hobby is then an activity that does not resemble any ordinary work role -something that happens with,

[22] Of course, the valuation of private collections also depend on the capital of the collector, not only economic –which is important as well if the investment on expensive items has been relevant- but also social and symbolic.

for example, fly fishing, bird-watching or collecting- even if some professions perform similar activities as part of their tasks –ornithologists might need to bird-watch but it is not their final purpose. Considering this, collecting should be considered a hobby:

> Since ownership or possession is required for collecting, a museum curator who uses other people's money to make acquisitions for the museum is not a collector unless he or she has strong proprietary feelings for the objects acquired.
>
> (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, & Holbrook, 1991)

If we understand that the professional collector does not exist, collecting is then properly understood as a hobby. But we do find different kinds of professional museum makers in the shape of the curator, the museographer, the museum educator, the conservator or the security guard. In small local museums, professionals find themselves in the position to perform all these professional profiles simultaneously in a very similar way than amateur museum practitioners often do. This emphasis on the existence or inexistence of a professional equivalent and the presence of a public in both hobbies and amateur activities takes Stebbins to understand leisure activities as part of Hobbyist-Public (HP) systems or Professional-Amateur-Public (PAP) systems respectively. Private collections are part of a Hobbyist-Public system, as they can actually have a specific public, it does not matter how reduced or seldom, that is often constituted by other hobbyists in the same field. Amateur museums instead, are part of a more complex Professional-Amateur-Public system where the amateur is often the public of the professional activity, where professionals can sometimes be the public of the amateur and where both share, in different degrees, a more general public. It sometimes happens as well that professionals and amateurs relate not just as reciprocal public but as collaborators, like with the participation of amateur meteorologists in the data gathering networks of public meteorological services. This conception of PAP or HP systems can be useful as an approach for the analysis of the relations between professionals, amateurs and publics of amateur museums. Taken from a flexible perspective, such systems that are simplified in only three profiles include a wide variety of actors that fulfil different roles and that could include close relatives and friends, the whole community as potential visitors and collaborators, public organizations, the material culture at play and the codes and conventions in use between all of them.

Paul Martin (1999), who has researched the relationship between the practices of collecting and museums in the UK, defended the instruction of museography, conservation and curating as a service to be provided by museums to private collectors (Martin, 1999). In this manner, the activity of the collector would be redirected and encouraged towards amateur museum making, or in Martin's words, "museum practice would become democratized" (129). Although Martin's proposal was directed to motivating and helping collectors to obtain the tools to maintain and arrange their collections, it would also turn into a motivation to create their own museums. Amateur museography, conservation or curating are often part of private collecting, as collectors also display, keep and manage their collections in different degrees of intensity and rigor. But amateur museum practitioners also need to perform other professional profiles, which are very well delimited in more formal and larger organizations (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), and they do it all by themselves: display design, public relations, fundraising, ticket selling, visitor guiding and so on, including the practices already performed as collectors like acquiring, conserving, researching and cataloguing.

Highly institutionalized professional museums also encourage collecting and amateur museum making in a different manner. They play an important role in legitimizing and naturalizing the collection by offering normalized manners of collecting and "encouraging the public literally to become collectors of things" (Macdonald, 2006: 86). In this institutionalizing process, collecting becomes legitimized and socially accepted as a practice. Furthermore, some collectors sometimes try to donate their private collections to public museums, in an attempt to guarantee their preservation after their death but also trying to apply the museum's legitimatization and validation on the donated collection (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, Holbrook, & Roberts, 1988). Again in these manners, museums encourage museum making too: in the same manner that they indirectly or passively encourage children to play museum making and schools to do exhibitions in the corridors with the work of their students, they encourage a more serious –in Stebbins' sense- kind of amateur museum making.

Collecting and museum practices have also been understood as play and game. Or in slightly different light, as art and craft (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004). Museums, like the arts in general, are commonly considered a field of leisure (Kelly) which provide satisfactions like self-expression, mastery, skill development, personal growth and the product. Understanding museography as a linguistic system (S. M. Pearce, 1995) and

museum making as a narrative (M. Ball, 1994), museum practice should not differ much from writing poetry or painting landscapes. Like these creative activities and as a form of language museum making is above all, communication. The collector –and of course the museum maker- is "a narrative agent, the motivation itself is subjected to the development of a plot" (Ball, 1994: 112). This narrativity starts at the process of selecting the sacred objects from the rest (Danet & Katriel, 1994), and continuing with their arrangement and reframing:

> The collection is a form of art as play, a form involving the reframing of objects within a world of attention and manipulation of context. Like other forms of art, its function is not the restoration of context of origin, but rather the creation of a new context, a context standing in a metaphorical, rather than a contiguous, relation to the world of everyday life. Yet unlike many forms of art, the collection is not representational.
>
> (Stewart, 1984: 151)

It is not representational because it constructs a closed narrative entity that for Stewart refers mainly to the subjectivity of the narrator as the ultimate referent. In such narration "the self generates a fantasy in which it becomes producer of those objects, a producer by arrangement and manipulation" (Stewart, 1984: 158). But she refers only to collecting, which for her is always midways between the private and the public, between hiding and displaying. Such narratives of the collection played and performed from the private become public when self-established as museums. Like composing and replaying a song, the game of collecting and exhibiting is "replayed at will, in reverse order if need be, (representing) the perpetual fresh beginning of a controlled cycle, thanks to which, starting out from any term he chooses and confident of returning to it, man can indulge in the great game of birth and death." (Baudrillard, 1994: 16)

As play, museum making should be, if we follow Callois, a "free and voluntary activity, a source of joy and amusement" (Callois, 6). Furthermore, in play like in museums, "the game's domain is [...] a restricted, closed, protected universe: a pure space". 7

When museum making is totally converted into a game its rules become irrefutable. Callois explains how the rules of games are accepted as irrefutable by all the players, even those that cheat, because one can only cheat against a law that is recognized as such. We could consider that the naturalized manner in which we have seen in the first chapter that amateur museum practitioners use some museum conventions are taken for

granted at least partly in a similar manner that we take for granted a series of arbitrary rules when we accept to play a game.

Private hobbyist collections are sometimes temporarily shown within museums without being constituted as museums themselves. Such is the case of People's Shows, popular in Britain and "exhibited as celebratory spectacles" (Martin, 1999: 108). These shows were open to any collector that wanted to participate in them, constructing collective exhibitions of popular private collections. Collectors could curate their own collections with the museum's supervision and independently from the other participants. As Martin describes:

> In People's Shows, the collections have been created and imbued with the collector's own meaning and values. In Debordian terms, they subvert the original intention of the object collected [...]. This can be read as a very English way of mocking convention, through eccentricity. It is, though, perhaps more about material control. Collecting then, can be read as resistance to the spectacle by deliberately imparting meanings other than the intended ones into objects. This is done in an attempt to gain or regain a sense of proportion in a society increasingly at odds with itself, and to reassure ourselves that we still have our basic understanding of what things are. In reconfiguring the meaning of an object, through its collection, we demonstrate that understanding, through our confidence to change the objects' meaning for ourselves whilst still retaining our grounding in its material reality.
>
> (Martin, 1999: 108)

Martin is suggesting processes of empowerment through collecting and the exhibition of these collections, which is also detected by other authors in relation to collecting as consumption (Belk et al., 1991), in relation to leisure (Shaw, 2001, 2006) and in relation to museum making (Butinx & Karp, 2006; Jannelli, 2012; Klimaszewski & Nyce, 2014; Klimaszewski, 2016). But although there is in collecting and in museum making chances for empowerment, People's Shows should be specially questioned because the structures of power that make them possible propose a controlled and up-to-down visibility and legitimization. The meanings of the exhibited collections change the moment that a legitimate professional curator selects and displays them in a legitimate –and legitimizing- museum[23]. Despite that, there are two interesting issues rising from

23 A similar question should be asked about the tension between empowerment through the use of legitimized and legitimizing museography and the naturalization of and subordination to its power

Martin's analysis of People's Shows to be taken into account when trying to understand the motivations of amateur museum practitioners. First, in relation to collecting, the opportunity to regain a sense of proportion by reconfiguring the meaning of objects, which increases the self-identification already commonly found in leisure pursuits. And second, in relation to curating and museum making, the appropriation of legitimizing power of the museographic institution and its forms that I started to discuss in the first chapter.

Nevertheless, this kind of appropriation differs from another manner of understanding amateur practices: that of the Do-It-Yourself culture, which, more than appropriating the practices of another group, seeks to recover the control of production.

Do-It-Yourself Museums?

Amateur museums have been considered Do-It-Yourself museums by Taimre (Taimre, 2013). Yet the expression do-it-yourself or DIY is used to refer to so many different kinds of activities, with so many different purposes and attitudes behind them that it is hard to define whether amateur museums could actually be considered DIY museums. There are some aspects that relate amateur museums and DIY action both approaching and distancing them. Literature on DIY does not help establishing specific activities, objectives and purposes as DIY, but instead it shows how divergent and plural the DIY label is. Nevertheless, I think it is useful to situate amateur museums in relation to DIY as an approach to leisure. In the following pages I will try to highlight different key issues about what DIY is in order to consider in what manners amateur museums coincide and in what manners do not coincide with it.

Before being used to name a cultural and political movement, in English speaking countries DIY referred (and still refers) to "any creation, modification or repair of objects without the aid of paid professionals" (Kuznetsov & Paulos, 2010: 295). Although for centuries people have been fixing, producing and building their own goods by themselves, DIY belongs to modern societies where it "opposes the principle of self-reliance with mass production and consumer economy" (Kuznetsov & Paulos, 2010: 295). As a cultural field of action "driven by non-experts, this movement

structures in amateur museum practices: the sought "legitimacy acts like a manipulable resource" and "like a taken-for-granted belief system" simultaneously (Suchman, 1995: 578).

embodies creation, sharing and discussion of DIY practices from crocheting and design to robotics and auto repair" (2010: 295). This vision understands DIY basically as home improvement (Wolf & McQuitty, 2013) or artifact building and repair, but above all, as a hobby. The benefits and motivations of such DIYers are "leisure and recreation, the satisfaction from completing a project well, or to enhance one's identity" (Wolf & McQuitty, 2013:197), as well as self-expression and creativity, learning new skills, impressing other people, gaining fame or reputation, or spending time with friends (Kuznetsov & Paulos, 2010), motivations that are also common of hobbyists like collectors (Belk et al., 1991; Belk et al., 1988). Saving money and the lack of the specific wanted goods and services in the market are other motivations of DIYers.[24]

When all these attitudes of DIYers seem to have a political effect by consciously or unconsciously opposing consumerism and mass production economy, the most political understanding of DIY goes further than to be understood as a kind of activism. It is after Hartley's reuse of the term DIY to describe an engaged kind of citizenship (2001), that DIY started to be conceptualized as a political and cultural attitude based on choice, individual difference and semantic self-determination. In a manner sometimes close to de Certeau's consumer tactics (de Certeau, 1988), Hartley places the core of such exercise in the apparently passive activity of watching television and its decoding and use far from the intentions of the producer. In consequence DIY is understood as a "'critical' activity, an activity that provides both the possibility to intervene substantively in systems of authority and power and that offers an important site for reflecting on how such power is constituted by infrastructures, institutions, communities, and practices" (Ratto & Boler, 2014: 1).

Many authors have traced the origin of this kind of DIY to different historic moments and cultural movements, from amateur radio hobbyists of the 1920s, 1980s electronic music and 1990s rave culture (Kuznetsov & Paulos, 2010); to free schools or to food

[24] This kind of DIYers fit the more general figure of the prosumer, this is "people who produce and consume their own goods and services" in postindustrial societies (Wolf & McQuitty, 2013: 195). As a prosuming activity, DIY is closely related to self-servicing (which is only motivated by cost), to arts and crafts activities and to voluntary simplifiers who are "motivated by product quality, ethical and environmental concerns and self-sufficiency" (Wolf & McQuitty, 2013: 196).

gleaners and diggers (Hemphill & Leskowitz, 2012). Most authors, though, directly relate the DIY movement to British Punk culture, as a reaction of the working class youth to the consequences of the economic situation and the political decisions of right wing leaders that undermined their future (Hemphill & Leskowitz, 2012; Holtzman, Hughes, & Meter, 2005). Punk involved the self-making of music labels, concerts, clothes or clubs, but also a self-managed political action at the margins of legality embracing disobedience (Hemphill & Leskowitz, 2012). DIY culture even served as a reaction to itself: against the male hegemony of zine production or against the sexist and homophobic direction of the late punk scene in the mid-1980s, a reaction that led to the queercore scene (Spencer, 2005).

This kind of DIY seeks control of production and therefore of self-representation (Spencer, 2005). DIY promoted cheap and available means to almost anyone with some free time and a will to expose his/her own views. It was a chance to control cultural production, even if in small scale, and therefore a chance for empowerment. Between the 1970s and the 1990s DIY culture in the shape of zines, music, cinema and art was spread and popularized, community meetings were celebrated and workshops for teenagers and adults were done in order to promote the empowering message of DIY: "It was empowering to realize that anyone, however amateur, could produce something which would be valued as a finished product" (Spencer, 2005: 10). Some other authors saw a turning point of DIY as a movement in the Arab Spring, the 15M movement in Spain and Occupy Wall Street in the USA (Ratto & Boler, 2014), understanding that it became less individual and more collectively articulated.

DIY products are usually marked by a lo-fi aesthetic that derives sometimes from the amateur and low budged origin of the activities, as well as from the rejection of mass-produced objects and tools (Spencer, 2005). But DIYers are not only amateurs. Many experts and professionals are putting their knowledge and skill at the service of others, freeing and sharing the information outside universities and corporations and building something else with and for the community[25]. Some authors and DIYers claim for a de-professionalization, de-capitalization and de-institutionalization of activities, and in

[25] To give an example, this is common for engineers that design and share open source DIY modular synthesizers like Befaco, or for architects like the collective Recetas Urbanas that promote activist DIY architecture.

that attempt, they hold them outside the usual highly institutionalized frameworks of academies and corporations (Atton, 2014), avoid public and corporative funding and professionalization restrains.

Yet the political effect of DIY is not always conscious or sought. Fanzines and zines are one common and paradigmatic example of DIY activity (including their writing or drawing, designing, publishing and distributing) and the empowering chances of producing one's own cultural products:

> Many writers create their zines as a conscious reaction against a consumerist society. They adopt the DIY principle that you should create your own cultural experience. It is this message that they pass on to their readers – that you can create your own space. Unlike the message of mass media, which is to encourage people to consume, the zine encourages people to take part and produce something for themselves.
>
> (Spencer, 2005: 14)

The example of zines also helps understanding how activism and politics are not always at the center of the DIYer's intentions. Many zine authors started writing to fulfil a personal need without even knowing that others were doing the same: they were just trying to satisfy their self-expression without having to rely on publishers or the mainstream circuits (Spencer, 2005). For them it is an individual activity with a mostly individual purpose that coincided and eventually mixed with the expectations of more community and politically driven authors. That they do not all have a political intention does not mean that they do not have a social effect.

DIY can be a form of resistance in three different levels: by making something by oneself outside the commercial mainstream circuits, by building community and spreading and freeing information, and by explicitly producing political content and performing political activism. Making by oneself is political because "practices of "making" are potentially linked to critically-infused reflection about aspects of the process itself", inviting "reflection on the relationship of the maker to the thing produced, reflection on how elements [...] work together –in short, consideration and awareness of the mediated and direct experiences of interacting with the material world" (Ratto & Boler, 2014: 2). On the second level, the relevance of the community is fundamental to DIY as a cultural and political movement because "participatory democracy emphasizes putting power back into their own hands" (Hemphill & Leskowitz, 2012: 68). The importance of the community for politically driven DIY is

such that has led some authors and DIYers to question DIY as a term because of its individualistic connotation, and other terms like do-it-ourselves (DIO) or do-it-together (DIT) have been coined (Richards, 2013: 274).

To achieve such participatory democracy, information needs to be freed and shared: "the premise of a DIY aesthetic is an open-source mentality, sharing information and establishing like-minded communities" (Richards, 2013: 274). Keeping information free against copyright laws and corporations and bringing power back to public domain with the free spreading of information through internet or analogical formats like zines, skill shares, meetings or piracy, "DIY activists are creating alternatives to the status quo, they take pride in their acts of creation, and they see these new channels as explicitly political" (Hemphill & Leskowitz, 2012: 69).

For authors that see DIY as an apolitical hobby, the present expansion of DIY communities is not linked to politics and activism but to the role of internet: "Over the past few decades, the integration of social computing, online sharing tools, and other HCI collaboration technologies has facilitated a renewed interest and wider adoption of DIY cultures and practices through (1) easy access to and affordability of tools and (2) the emergence of new sharing mechanisms" (Kuznetsov & Paulos, 2010: 295). Although for some DIY is by essence lo-fi, it has been able to embrace the communicative advantages of internet (Spencer, 2005).

But the term DIY is also being rejected because of the commercial trend that is filling the market with very well accepted products and services labelled as DIY, appealing to individualistic craftsmanship and the need for self-expression:

> Beyond its roots in radical politics, however, the DIY movement has also been coopted by corporate interests as a hobby and fashion aesthetic in the 2000s. Craft project and home improvement magazines such as *ReadyMade* and *Craft* and a DIY home improvement cable network have emerged to capture an upscale DIY market. The term *DIY*, then, has become politically contested.
>
> (Hemphill & Leskowitz, 2012: 67)

Construction of the self and individual self-expression is behind DIY, not only in its most commercial facet. Sennett's analysis on the changes in public live and the perception of the self (Sennett, 2003) is useful to grasp part of the complexity that intertwines political and public action with the self. Sennet shows how modern western

public life became individualized and focused on personality endangering political life, which comes to be scrutinized under the light of the individual and its personality instead of its political programs and ideas. Relations among individuals in the public sphere have also blurred behind the primacy of the construction of the self and personal identity in detriment of the construction of shared public life. In this situation, DIYers' fight to recover public space and public life through sharing time, work and information is double-edged: DIY serves also individual self-expression, it seduces and serves individual identitarian needs and it is a form of social distinction. Notions of authenticity -this is how the appearance of individuals seem to fit their real personality- are at stake here. This situation, that for Sennett is a danger for public and political life, is also a danger for DIY activism: it facilitates its commercialization and individualization, answering to personal needs instead of collective ones or turning collective live into an expression of personality: "anti-consumerist maker cultures of DIY political movements have been repositioned and reappropriated through the machinations of new commodity markets. This is DIY as depoliticized lifestyle and self-managerial branding" (Chidgey, 2014: 107).

Amateur museums of different kinds share some features with these different understandings of DIY. Community museums, which are considered by some authors a kind of amateur museum (Jannelli, 2012) are born from a collective need and desire for empowerment. They activate collective memory, knowledge and material culture through museographic discourse (Butinx & Karp, 2006) and they do it by themselves without governmental or corporative support, usually through informal training and with the intention to free and spread information. It is from their sense of community that their cultural and political proposal arises. In all these senses they are just like DIY proposals, but they are very rarely named DIY museums[26]. Unlike with other cultural practices, the term "DIY museum" has not been popularized and there is no active dissemination of self-made museums coming from the DIY communities and environments. Informal education and information spreading about how to make lo-fi museums –like it happens with music, publications, food growing or biology- is very uncommon.

[26]Taimre has named them DIY museums without propperly justifying the choice of such terminology (Taimre, 2013).

Museum hacking or subverting is also very rare as a concept and as a political proposal unless when it comes from the art world. Guerrilla Girls are a well-known example of activist artists groups that perform from and into the artistic or cultural system sharing many of the social and political values of DIY culture. Although they could be said to do DIY activism, their incidence in museums is by attacking and subverting them through actions but not by making and running their own museums.

There are also some artists-run museums like the Estonian Museum of Contemporary Art (EKKM), a squat museum (that eventually gained Tallinn's local government approval and permission to use the publicly owned building) done as disagreement to the inexistence of a public contemporary art museum. With the small profit of their illegal bar, they make exhibitions and activities and they even gather a collection. They cover only unavoidable basic expenses: nobody gets paid for their artistic, curating and management work. This kind of museum also fits the social and political values, methods and dynamics of the DIY movements although they do not use such terms. The collective is formed by active professional artists, curators and managers. There are other museums with similar objectives and formats like Puno-MoCA (Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puno), or NuMu (Nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Guatemala). Many artists have also done their own museums as institutional critique artistic projects, but their proposals are usually not intended to create real operative alternatives to the museographic status quo but a critique and visualization of it. Examples of this kind of proposal would be Museo Salinas by Vicente Razo, the Museo Neo-Inka by the artist Susana Torres Márquez or the Museo Portátil by Michel Zózimo (Desjardins, 2013). These museums, even if functional, are artistic works of art in a museographic shape which are or may be easily inserted in the artistic circuit and market.

Other cases would be the museums made by amateur artists as means to show their own work without the need of entering the artistic circuits, the market and formal museums. Their knowledge is usually informally gained and they are at the margin of governmental and corporative direct influence, but like some zine writers they lack a politically driven intention and a sense of community.

Other museums that fit some DIY characteristics are the amateur style museums that are made to complete some commercial offer (a winery that attaches a small wine museum to its shop, a rural hotel or restaurant with a room dedicated to ethnographic

objects). This option is basically made to attract customers or to widen the services offered and therefore it has little to do with the rejection of the consumer society that defines DIY.

Finally, the kind of museums that are the object of this research could also be considered DIY museums only if we compare them to the specific kind of DIY that is far from its most activist conception. What amateur museum practitioners mostly share with DIYers is a strong sense and pride of learning and making by themselves without the need of professionals, governments and corporations and only with the help of other members of the community. As seen in the interviews, they express certain pride for being able to keep up with the challenge, something that will be analyzed in a few pages (see the section on motivations and durable benefits). Yet instead of challenging traditional identities and production/consumption roles, this self-making "can also be understood as part of a hegemonic acceptance of the breaking apart and individualization of civil society" (Ratto & Boler, 2014: 5) and align by "liberal individualism" (12). In this manner then, amateur museums can be compared to the personal zines made with the purpose to produce one's own literature.

A common characteristic of these amateur museums that apparently fit DIY values is the lack of professionalization of their makers. In fact, Atton (2014) considers DIY or alternative media (to which we could include alternative museums) as being possible "without the necessity of professional training, without excessive capital outlay and they must take place in settings other than media institutions or similar systems"[27] (Atton, 2014: pp). They do not have a certified education on museology or on their respective fields of interest. Yet as serious hobbyists (Stebbins, 1992) they do possess a wide range of self-taught knowledge, acquired through practice, observation, books and texts of different kinds and the exchange of information with other hobbyists and some professionals. An important part of this knowledge is therefore practical and tacit, and often naturalized. Their de-professionalization of the museographic practice is not a political choice nor a source of pride. It is even a reason for uncertainty for them,

[27] Atton (2014) talks about ordinary people, which I have purposely cut from this quote because it is a politically charged term and it escapes any proper definition. I understand that alternative media should be available to anyone, ordinary or not even if we would accept such a classification.

which can be stated in the fear expressed by Agustí and by Rafael of being judged by me as someone who does have certified knowledge, this is holding education titles and other legitimating symbols that objectify my knowledge (Bourdieu, 2013). The manner in which they acquire knowledge and experience is explained in the next section.

Amateur museum makers are not (necessarily) politically naïve: they know where they stand and they express specific motivations and purposes of their amateur work, but they are not politically triggered. As we have already seen, there is no consensus among DIYers about the importance of political purposes and much DIY activity remains at the limits of political intention and activism like amateur museum practitioners. Although Magda from the Maternal Museum is the one to have clearer political intentions, the rest seem to coincide with Agustí Jr's answer to my direct question about whether there was a political intention behind their endeavors:

> There is nothing political at all, it is just a pastime that has turned into a very nice hobby that we simply want to let people know about. What was our intention? As we thought that it looked good [...] and because the surroundings were so nice…
>
> (Agustí Jr The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

Another important DIY feature is lacking in these amateur museums: a sense of community and "cooperative effort" (Hemphill & Leskowitz, 2012: 67). These amateur museum makers do have a sense of community as part of their motivation is to contribute to the community life by sharing their passions and knowledge, but their projects are rather individual. Although they often seek the collaboration with others in order to learn and share their experiences and even to join efforts to make cultural contributions, there is always a strong sense of authorship and the projects are, beyond anything, private and personal. Considering communities in Kuznetsov and Paulos' sense "as a group of people who share common goals and interests- communicating through mediums online and in person" (Kuznetsov & Paulos, 2010: 297), amateur museum makers do not belong or create communities as such, although they might do so as collectors or amateurs of their fields of interest (for example Agustí and his family in relation to butterflies and natural history, Josep in relation to mineralogy and Antoni in relation to Coca-Cola). These kind of hobbyist communities always include some how-to tips, such as how to obtain new specimen, how to keep them properly, how to sell and buy wisely and so on, as well as discussion spaces where they share experiences and knowledge.

Furthermore, the researched amateur museum practitioners do not generally seek decapitalization and deinstitutionalization. They actually prefer and seek governmental and corporate support, sometimes obtaining bits of it. If they do not have such support is not because of a political position but because of a lack of interest from the other part or because of other kinds of barriers. Catalan amateur museums, for example, cannot easily be registered as museums at the Catalan administration register -which would allow them to apply for subsidies when available-, because they cannot afford to fulfil registered museums' obligations in terms of security, accessibility, accounting, management and so on. Also, their efforts do not so much decapitalize the museographic event, on the contrary, they capitalize it for their own benefit. Of course, decapitalization and deinstitutionalization are a side effect as their activity "not only takes place outside a formal organizational structure, its reliance on improvisation keeps the process of production mobile, moving between work and home, different parts of the home, inserting itself between everyday routines – even becoming everyday routines"(Atton, 2014: 346).

Acceptance and use of illegal means and disobedience (Hemphill & Leskowitz, 2012) is definitely not a common practice in amateur museums. Although this could be appropriate for other kind of politically driven museums (some community museums, institutional critique museums made by artists or activist proposals such as the Estonian squat EKKM), amateur museum practitioners do not consider the breach of the law as a means for anything because their museum practices is not usually situated against the status quo.

Finally, although amateur museum practitioners believe in sharing their knowledge – and that's what they do through museography- they keep tied to copyright laws and traditional concepts of authorship and intellectual property or at least they do not question them. The catalogue of the Maternal Museum has a copyright warning, unlike the booklets of the Bread Museum and The House of Butterflies that do not have any reference to copyright but either to any other kind of intellectual rights management like copyleft, that are common to DIY[28].

[28] The Spanish intellectual property law protects any cultural product by default. An author needs to actively tie his or her work to copyleft licenses in order to avoid copyright or manage it flexibly (Ley de Propiedad Intelectual. Real Decreto Legislativo 1/1996)

From all the kinds of amateur museums listed, only community museums seem to me to fit DIY motivations, objectives and processes in a consistent manner. Individual amateur museum makers not only do not use the DIY terminology, but are not organized either in DIY communities nor they spread their knowledge to promote other DIY museums and most of them are not even familiar with the existence of a DIY movement and communities. Even if it might not be incorrect to call them DIY museums in a wider sense of the term, and in the same manner than individualistic, and isolated zine authors are sometimes considered part of the DIY zine community, I think that doing so would be misleading. Individual amateur museum practices fit DIY no more than many other hobbies and amateur practices do, sharing common characteristics but lacking essential political intentions and means. Nevertheless, amateur museums, like zines

> reconfigure understandings of power, agency and symbolic codes for their participants – in the end, it does not matter if bigger systems remain untouched because other transformations in individuals and communities are taking place, and these participatory shifts must not be underestimated or even jettisoned from understandings of what activism is and can do.
>
> (Chidgey, 2014: 106-7)

In a similar manner, amateur museum makers do not seek resistance nor empowerment through their activities, which does not mean that they do not obtain it. Museum-makers might be empowered by using a highly legitimizing language and as a consequence, becoming legitimizing and legitimated discourse producers. In other cases, using the museographic conventions might be chosen with empowering intentions like the case of the Maternal Museum that was created to counterattack the lack of relevance given to women in museums. Furthermore, if we consider that their activity brings them joy and feelings of satisfaction, their improvement of wellbeing can be considered a form of empowerment by itself (Freysinger & Flannery, 1992).

Museum Practice as Leisure

In this section I will unfold some of the collected data in order to understand and analyze the researched museum practices as leisure. To do so I will focus on specific issues that show on the one hand why we should not avoid to understand these practices

as leisure and on the other hand, how the approach of leisure can shed light to issues that are central to their practices.

In the following pages I will approach their practices from the point of view of their leisure self-awareness, of their sense of freedom of choice, of their strong self-identification with their practices, of the balance between the amateur practices of collecting, museum making and research on their fields of interest, of the processes of self-learning and the expertise that they achieve in their fields, of the costs of their leisure practices as well as their motivations and durable benefits.

Amateur Self-Awareness

This research and the consideration of the researched activity as leisure takes as a starting point

> the individual's narration of use of time and space for personal enrichment and pleasure (which) highlights the conscious choice of the individual and recognizes leisure as one of life's primary needs rather than a subsidiary activity, secondary to the fulfilment of the necessities of life.
>
> (Rojek, 2005:20)

As a consequence, the need to conceptualize and analyze their activity as leisure arises from their own recognition of it as such, although keeping in mind that "it is the personal and social orientation of the participant that makes an activity leisure- or something else" (Kelly, 1996: 7-8). Some authors have found that "leisure is a meaningful concept that people utilize in terms of defining and categorizing their everyday life experiences" (Shaw, 1985: 19). In consequence, the importance that I give to the consideration of their practice as leisure derives from the self-identification of the researched museum practitioners as amateurs.

When asked about why they carry on with the costly tasks of the museum, Agustí Jr from The House of Butterflies answered that they do so because "it is a hobby and you do it because you like it" (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015). Later on he added that their activity "turned into a very nice hobby" that they simply want to share. Josep from the Geology and Gypsum Museum is also clear about it, although he specifies in his manner that his is a serious hobby:

> Me: Do you consider it a hobby, or what is it to you?

> J: A hobby, completely. It is a hobby that has taken me to visit Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxemburg, and the north of France, Portugal… and almost the whole Spain. And Morocco! [...] But yes, it is a hobby.
>
> (Josep, the Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

Also Antoni clearly considers his Coca-Cola Museum to be his hobby:

> Me: Why did you want to open it to the public?
>
> Antoni: Because this is my hobby and my entertainment (he smiles).
>
> (Antoni, the Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016)

Martí from the Vietnam Museum, also indirectly claims not having other hobbies: "only this one that already gives me enough work" (Martí, the Vietnam Museum, e-mail interview, 2016).

Yet Joan from The Den of the Shark, accepts with certain regret that all his work about sharks is a hobby:

> Me: … and do you consider it a hobby?
>
> Joan: Well, as I could not do it for a living maybe it is a hobby, as I cannot live from this it has to be considered a hobby. But for me is more than a hobby, it is a philosophy of life. As soon as I can I go diving with the sharks, or to the mountains to look for stones, or I lock myself into the lab to do research, or I do the guided tours.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Joan is the only one of the interviewed museum makers that has expressed how sometimes he regrets not having pursued his passion further. He has often thought of quitting his job to dedicate all his time to the study of sharks, but economic uncertainty and his lack of formal education on the field have stopped him. Although he started studying geology triggered by his interest in the study of fossils, he quitted it in part for a lack of interest in how the degree was structured and in part because he perceived a scientific career as being very little promising in the Spain of his youth. Now he invests all his free time in it.

Yet it is not so easy to determine what exactly they understand for a hobby or for leisure. From the interviews it transcends that they understand leisure in opposition to work and to making a living, which in consequence limits leisure to "free time". Furthermore,

their idea of leisure seems often consciously linked to the idea of enjoyment and to the freedom of choosing it that I will analyze in the next pages.

Freedom of Choice

Freedom of choice is often understood to be essential of leisure as well as of play although it is as well questioned by authors of leisure studies because of its unclear relation to work and to necessities, but also because of the implied supremacy of agency over structural constrains (Rojek, 2001). Freedom of choice in leisure activities does not presuppose total agency and rational choice but a sense of choice of the practitioner in relation to the amateur activity. The sense of freedom is often given by the conviction that one can choose not to do it. A leisure activity that one is feeling obliged to do – playing golf with costumers in order to gain their loyalty, or sports and cultural activities that parents impose on their children- can no longer perceived as leisure (Kelly, 2009).

We already briefly saw in the introduction how amateur museum practices in Catalonia seem to be sharply gendered. Although I lack enough data in order to be able to determine differences and limitations of gender, class, race or age, it is necessary to keep in mind that these practices are also affected by them like other authors have found of all kinds of leisure. If all the amateur museum practitioners that I have been able to meet have chosen to make their own museums as leisure, this is because they have enough economic comfort and discretionary time in order to pursue their activities which, they all agree, have high costs. The habitus is also behind leisure choices. Institutional forms and patterns of practice are transmitted, incorporated to the self and reproduced in all areas of life and of course also in leisure. In our leisure choices we are acting within the margins for improvisation left by our habitus, which is enough to feel that we are freely choosing our leisure activities.

Nevertheless, serious amateurs and hobbyists do not feel "a social necessity nor a personal obligation" (Stebbins, 1992) to engage with their hobbies. And yet amateur museum makers receive benefits and rewards that could be understood as a fulfilment to their necessities. The lack of economic need in relation to the leisure activity is one of the main is one of the main issues behind their sense of freedom. Although some amateurs and hobbyists earn some money as a result of their activity - some charge a symbolic entrance fee, others get paid by museums and other organizations for their

services-, this is not their main economic sustain. On the contrary: their leisure activity has quite relevant economic costs.

Something that shows how free they feel to choose to do or not to do their activities is that they often say that they will close when they get tired of it. The absence of compromises with other organizations and their almost absolute control of their –private- activity increases their feelings of freedom, as nobody would be directly wronged from their ceasing. Those that are more pessimistic about the continuity of their museums and of the interest of public institutions to help them (Geology and Gypsum Museum, The House of Butterflies), not only seem to feel free to do as they please with their museums and collections, but are ready to exercise that freedom against them. This is, they prefer to burry all their work to the ground rather than give it to a public institution who they consider that does not deserve it or that might mistreat their work.

Strong Self-Identification

Most authors agree that leisure is central to the construction of identity or, in Kelly's words, it is "an integral part of who we believe ourselves to be, how others come to define us, and what we would like to become" (Kelly, 1996). To be able to find self-identification in leisure activities, we need first to refer to the notion of identity. For Hall, identity can only be understood in its relation to politics and agency, and it is constantly changing, being strategic and positioned more than essential to the self (Hall, 1996). Identity operates across difference for "the *production* of self" (13) entailing "discursive work, the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, (and) the production of 'frontier effects'" (Hall, 1996: 2-3).

It is here where we can understand museum making as a tool for constructing or molding one's identity and not the other way around. Museum making, collecting and the specific fields of interest of each museum maker do not simply fit with who they are but are a manner to build who they are and show it to others:

> Leisure is *declarative*. It says something to others about our self-image, aspirations and judgements about what is of value. Through these declarative articulations we manifest ties of belonging and markers of difference. By extension, leisure practice is an important indicator of social inclusion and exclusion. It represents to others the kind of person you are and the kind of persons with whom you choose to associate.

(Chris Rojek, 2005: 89)

For Kelly (1996) leisure is on the one hand a part of the self and on the other it is an expression of it. Yet to be its expression it needs to have a visible aspect or to be shared or communicated to others. In this communication of the leisure pursuit "the demonstration of mastery achieved through discipline and practice is found to be satisfying" (Kelly, 1996: 11).

Cohen-Gewerc and Stebbins (2013) define six steps through which a leisure activity comes to be tightly related to individuality. First, there is a setting of preferences that harmonize that person's values and tastes with the qualities of the chosen activity. Second, the impression that one is using personal agency to choose the activity and the way to do it. Third, the pursue of lifelong learning and educational career. Fourth, self-fulfillment as "either the act or the process of developing to the full one's capacity, more particularly, developing one's gifts and character" (2013: 53). Fifth, maintaining authenticity as "being honest with oneself and with one's presentation of self to others (54). And sixth, finding an individuated identity.

All the researched museum makers strongly identify with their museum practices, but especially with their topics of interest. Some of them are collecting, researching and exhibiting objects that have a relation with their own past, their professions or their families. These are the cases of Antoni (the Coca-Cola Museum)- who has worked almost all his life for the Coca-Cola company, towards which he has strong feelings of belonging-, Joaquim (the Bread Museum) –who has also a lifetime experience in the hundred years old bakery that has always belonged to his family-, Joan (The Den of the Shark) –whose collection of fossils was a childhood activity shared with all his friends-, and Rafel (the Toy Museum) –whose toy collection was triggered by the memories of his own childhood happiness-. Also Magda from the Maternal Museum can be said to have a similar kind of relation with the topic of her museum as she is both a woman and a mother. All these links to their personal experiences or the inheritances of their families can only enhance their feelings of self-identification with the objects that they collect and their topics of research.

When asked about how important sharks and the museum are for him, Joan sets it clear:

> Very important, after so much time, imagine that I never quitted it! And at that time, when I was seven, a lot of people from the village did collections: "you have this one,

> I have this other one, let's exchange them". I am the only one left and I have specialized on teeth. Very few people do this. This process happens only to one of a hundred million.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Joan states that despite starting as many others, he sees himself as having followed a process that is not common at all. The fact that he continues with these interests after that many years is for him also a proof of how important sharks are for him. Thus sharks are perceived by him as being central to his life, as being a "philosophy of life" (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016) and as something special that very little people do, this is, something that distinguishes him from others.

In the case of Rafael (the Toy Museum) it is also clear that his toys are central to his identity. He started his toy collection with a toy that reminded him at his own childhood, a period of life that he remembers as happy. After years of work, his museum is the place where he prefers to be:

> I prefer to… I have to work, but [...] if they call me, I prefer to be here than… I feel that I belong here more than there (pointing at his studio).
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, Medellin, 2015)

And he adds:

> My idea is to manage to [...] become old here. This would seem very nice to me (he laughs). It would be delicious to end up my years in a place like this, surrounded by the people, by… it's like the dream.
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, Medellin, 2015)

The collection and the museum give Rafael a sense of place, the place he belongs to. He defines his relation with his collection as one of love, as something that cannot be planned but that one feels the necessity to do, a necessity that seems thus to come from a deep part of the self:

> It's like when one chooses what to study, what to play at, is something not so much about thinking but about feeling. I don't think that I love my girlfriend, I don't think, you feel that you love her, I think it's this way, one feels a necessity […]. One starts wanting to know to whom it belongs, how it got here… one creates… that's why they get so personal too.
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, Medellin, 2015)

Both Rafael and Josep (the Geology and Gypsum Museum) rejected important amounts of money for their collections because, as Rafael, says, "This is part of oneself" (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, Medellin, 2015): after years of researching and learning, it becomes part of them. Josep expresses instead how could he sell "something that (he has) enjoyed, that (he has) fought for... for what? For money?" (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016). Their collections become the embodiment of their passions, their effort, their knowledge and their skills and thus, a part of their selves that serves also as their presentation to the world, especially through their musealisation.

That their museums and their fields of interest become a distinctive feature of them in the eyes of others can be easily seen in the comments that they receive. Some of them say that their friends call them "crazy" for their passionate dedications. This is the case of Agustí Jr from The House of Butterflies:

> Friends tell us: "those of the butterflies; you are crazy!" and "what do you do with this?" I mean, very little people (understands it). And well, of course here in Vic, we know someone (that is also interested in butterflies), two or three and that is all.
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

And it is also the case of Joan from The Den of the Shark:

> I am the "crazy of the creatures", even before opening the museum. My friends tell me "you are crazy, dude"! It is different for those of you who come from outside. But for them it is just "this guy is mad", it's a different perception [...], they know me since we were little… (he laughs).
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

In none of the cases they are named crazy in a negative sense or at least they do not find it offensive, but it shows how others view them as distinct because of their leisure activities.

Also Joaquim from the Bread Museum is identified by his community members through his activity. When he received a public recognition from the local government for his work, it was as a historian of bread (Lleopart, 2015), this is it was his amateur passion that brought him recognition and that signaled him as special among the rest of the community.

Collecting, museum making and fields of interest

But what specifically is the leisure activity that the amateur museum makers feel identified with? In all the cases, it can be said that their leisure activity is divided into three main activities, all of which could be considered leisure pursuits by themselves. These activities are collecting, museum making, and research on their respective fields of interest. Said otherwise, the practices of museum making that are the focus of this research are tightly related to the practices of collecting and of research on their respective fields of interest, which could both be developed without museum making. Understanding these three activities which constitute their museums helps understanding the different overlapping roles that each have and how their importance is also differently balanced in each of them.

Although there are alternatives to museum making that do not rely on a collection (such as interpretation centres), the definition of museum from the influencing ICOM still demands -although avoiding the word "collection"-, that a museum "acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity" (ICOM, 2007).

In aware or unaware accordance to this definition all the amateur museums of this research include a collection. The relation between the museums and their collections and between the museum makers/collectors with their collected objects is different in all the researched cases. Most of the researched amateur museums originated on the basis of a previous collection. This is the case of The House of Butterflies, The Den of the Shark, the Coca-Cola Museum, the Toy Museum of Medellin, the Vietnam Museum, and the Geology and Gypsum Museum. There are also differences among these cases in the way that each museum maker relates to collecting. Yet from these cases, they all relate differently to the practice of collecting as a hobby.

Antoni (the Coca-Cola Museum) and Rafael (the Toy Museum) consider themselves to be very active collectors. As Rafael puts it:

> I have been a collector all my life, since I was a six or seven years old kid, I started collecting stamps. I had my collection, I still have it, of stamps…a great-aunt of mine… pushed me because she was also somewhat of a collector and then she was already quite an old person, an aunt of my mom, and she worked at the government, and she received letters and collected the stamps for me…I was six or seven years old. And I

> was a collector for many years. Now a bit less, but I still gather… I collected circus objects, postcards, bills, coins…my wife says that I am a collector of collections.
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

Similarly, Antoni explains:

> I collect spring-powered toy cars, pencil sharpeners… any kind of beer related objects, jars, posters… (he laughs) I collect two thousand things. I have more than seven thousand sugar packets. Now I have a collection of matches… my son now is collecting water bottles. Water bottles! There are bottles that are worth a fortune, but as he goes to the Coca-Cola conventions, at the hotels he finds bottles of water of a thousand different classes… he wants to collect everything. Even more than I, he likes things more than I do.
>
> (Antoni, the Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016)

They are also less systematic in their cataloguing than others, although they seem to know exactly what objects they have. It is tempting to infer from this that their manner of collecting is more impulsive and less directed towards museum making than in the other cases, who might be more systematic because they have their display, research and public communication in mind. Rafael only started cataloguing his toys when he lent some of them to other museums and he needed to formalize the ownership of the object. Even then, it was his wife who did the task because he highly dislikes it. The cases of the Toy Museum and the Coca-Cola Museum are the ones that seem more unbalanced towards the objects and the collections. As we have seen, they are both eager collectors, and their relation to objects is much more accumulative than the other collectors. Rafael projects a very strong and powerful nostalgia on the toys which is enhanced with the stories that the visitors share with him and that he explains to other visitors. It was from the first toys that he found that he started researching on their history and their particular stories when those where available. Antoni already had a lot of information about Coca-Cola and his research is mostly limited to the basic information of the new objects that enter the collection. It is obvious that he has a devotion for the Coca-Cola brand which is also linked to his own life, but the process of collecting and the collection as a product are the triggers of the whole activity.

Also Josep from the Geology and Gypsum Museum does not enjoy at all the task of cataloguing either, and he is also one of the museum makers that is fonder of his collection per se, despite the museum:

> Me: I remember that you have labelled all the pieces…
>
> Josep: Yes, but there's a lot of work left to do and it is not something that I… (he shakes his head)
>
> Me: And do you have some kind of register?
>
> Josep: No, this is bureaucracy and I have never liked it. [...]
>
> Me: Some collectors specially enjoy the moment of…
>
> Josep: Counting! That many of this, that many of that! It has never satisfied me. I have tones of stored stones, waiting to be displayed, I mean that I could enlarge the collection but everything is frozen…. It is not my nature.
>
> (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

Also Martí from the Vietnam Museum seems to prefer the practices related to collecting, in this case including

> Research on the object, cataloguing the object… what I like less is to have to put it within the cabinets because I have to move all the other objects and this is a lot of work.
>
> (Martí, Vietnam Museum, e-mail interview, 2016)

The research on the object intersects with the research on the field of interest, as through the objects Martí is researching on the Vietnam War, but compared to Joaquim (the Bread Museum) or Joan (The Den of the Shark), the object is in the case of Martí the very center of his interest.

The order in which each museum maker has been interested in collecting and in museum making also shows in which cases one activity is a result of the other or vice versa. In the cases of Rafael (the Toy Museum), Antoni (the Coca-Cola Museum), Martí (the Vietnam Museum), Joan (The Den of the Shark), Agustí and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies), the idea of making a museum arrived after years of collecting. Josep's (Geology and Gypsum Museum) idea of making a museum was formed almost as soon as he started collecting.

Only in the cases of Joaquim from the Bread Museum and Magda from the Maternal Museum the decision of making a museum was the one that triggered the gathering of a collection. The Maternal Museum is an obvious case as Magda wanted to make a museum in which women and mothers would be represented as the main characters. The collection started being gathered after this decision. This can also be linked to the

apparent lack of passion that she shows for the objects compared to the emphasis that she puts in the stories behind them, which she explains either orally to the visitors or through the books that she has written in relation to the topic. Magda's collection is the least systematic one among all the researched collections. She gathers objects of many different kinds as long as they have a relation with the idea of motherhood. In this manner, she accepts donations by any artist (professional and amateur), she has personal items of specific mothers of renowned personalities, gynecological tools, educational posters on sexuality, and ethnological items such as cradles and so on. Instead, Joaquim from the Bread Museum was convinced by another museum maker and by his readings on bread museums to use the old baking tools that belonged to his family as the basis for a museum. He thus formalized these items as a collection and he started to actively feed it. Joaquim has nevertheless a wider interest in collecting and he is also a collector of cinema programs and old comic books.

The collection of The Den of the Shark also needs a special comment because it is the one that has a stronger instrumental purpose. Joan understands his collection as a material bank for research. He does not have any fetishist and possessive relation with the thousands of objects that he has, which is especially remarkable if we consider the amount of dedicated work that their preservation demands from him. In this sense his collection is really similar to those of universities and some zoological and botanical museums for which the exhibition of items is only a secondary possibility totally subjected to the needs of research.

The field of interest of every museum maker is that which constitutes the topic around which the museum and the collection revolve: history of bread, butterflies, motherhood, gypsum, sharks, Coca-Cola, Vietnam war or toys.

In most of the cases what constitutes the core of the leisure activity and what mostly rewards these museum makers is the research on their fields of interest, standing out as the fuel for the rest of activities.

This is very clear in the case of Joan from The Den of the Shark. Sharks, and more precisely the research on their dentitions, are his real passion. This research and all his learnings and contributions to the field are the core of his leisure activity. Collecting and museum making are only secondary products of it: collecting as a need to have objects of research and museum making as an educational addition. This is also the case

of the Maternal Museum and the Bread Museum. We have already seen how their collecting is a result of an interest for museum making. But their museums are also a result of another interest: a specific feminist fight in one case and the history of bread in the other. Joaquim gets very clearly carried away when he talks about history and about his readings on it. He also explains how his approach comes from the conjunction of his professional experience and his interest in history. The collection and the museum are just a formalization of it, one of its possible products.

In a more balanced position, Josep from the Geology and Gypsum Museum has an interest in gypsum, which has always been related to his family and his own professional past. He highly enjoys doing fieldwork with his expert friends and learning from them as well as organizing activities in relation to the topic. Although he enjoys finding new materials to add to the collection, once he already has them he seems to lose his interest and the objects are almost abandoned to the floor of a room, waiting years to be displayed.

Agustí and Agustí Jr are meticulous with every aspect of their practices, what makes them appear to be the ones to balance most the practices of collecting, museum making and researching on their fields of interest.

Yet for most of the amateur museum makers museum making seems to be the least important of the three overlapping activities. It is outstanding how most of the costs that they perceive of their activities refer mainly to museum making, not to collecting nor to the research on their field of interest. Despite not being needed to pursue the other two activities museum making is perceived by most of them as that having the most negative aspects. It is also in the activity of leading guided tours, receiving visitors and fighting for the interest and favor of public organizations that they receive a more negative return.

While they easily express the enjoyment related to collecting and to researching in their fields of interest, the tasks related to museum making often figure among their least preferred. This might be linked to specially two issues. First, museum making requires certain regular tasks such as maintenance and receiving visitors that are not so easy to match with one's own current desire. While reading about one's preferred topic, going to do fieldwork or to shop to get some new items are activities that can be conducted virtually when they most feel like or at least they can be easily cancelled if they do not

want to do them, receiving visitors on a Sunday morning provokes stronger sense of obligation, especially when one has arranged the visit a long time ago and the time of others is also at play. Also, cleaning and maintaining the space in proper conditions is also somewhat of an obligation when visitors are coming. Second, museum making has for all of them an openly public intention. Turning their collections and their passions into a museum is partly turning them into a public good beyond their private enjoyment. Although they are aware of doing it because they want to, they also see that their activity as museum makers brings some positive effects to their communities, something that they perceive to be despised by their local governments and other public organizations. Although what they expect from such organizations is very different in every case (Antoni from the Coca-Cola Museum is happy enough with the warehouse that the local government lends him, but Augstí Jr from The House of Butterflies, as well as Josep and Joan from the Geology and Gypsum Museum and The Den of the Shark, have expected to receive some other support from their local governments), it is quite general for them to express certain kind of disappointment from the lack of support and recognition from their communities, something that they expect as museum makers rather than as researchers or collectors. All in all, the specificities of museum practices make them highly demanding and little rewarding in comparison to collecting and research on their fields of interest.

Nevertheless, when asked why they turn their passions into museums, some of them, like Josep (The Geology and Gypsum Museum) and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies) express how sharing them enhances their enjoyment:

> I do the things to enjoy them. If I can also show it, then I am very happy.
>
> (Joan, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

Thus the museum, despite all its costs and problems, might work as an enhancing tool, a practice that crystalizes and unifies their efforts and passions on collecting and on their fields of interest and that is label as well, as we will specially see in the fourth chapter, to infuse them with value.

Self-learning and Expertise

As we saw from Stebbins, a hobby or an amateur activity is a "specialized pursuit" which despite not being performed professionally, might equal its professional

counterparts in quality and dedication. Knowledge and skills are acquired through leisure and this is often done in a serious and systematic manner. Furthermore, in leisure careers people tend to be autodidacts more often than when the career is pursued as a profession.

All the researched amateur museum makers have developed their skills and knowledge on museology and on their fields of interest through self-teaching and research, with the sporadic help of peers and professionals and with the use of their experience in their working life and other hobbies.

Joaquim (the Bread Museum), for example, talks about how he always learned history in a self-taught manner:

> I have been learning History for many years. Even if it was in a self-taught manner, I… well, I have looked for documentation, I have studied it…
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

He also had to learn how to preserve the objects in his collection, especially the breads:

> You learn it with time… I had to think "how will I conserve them?" Then I went to talk to one that has butterflies, he has a great butterfly collection that is also an organic material that it is also easily damaged, and he has them with camphor balls closed in glass cabinets. He was a great collector but now he is dead and his son does not continue, they have them there in boxes… but well, I contacted other people and they told me "we don't know how you could do this of conserving bread". And I started finding my way. First I dry them so they lose all the humidity, so they would not go mouldy and then I treat them with varnish so no oxygen can go in.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

We already saw in the first chapter how Joaquim has also used the classification files of the Catalan government and how he has asked for opinion and help to professionals, also observing other museums. Of course, although Joaquim does not have any formal title on history or museum management, he does have a lifelong experience in bread baking and the management of the family bakery. This experience with bread, gives him the knowledge about the tools and the breads he collects, and also the capacity to redo breads and to reproduce ancient bread making techniques as well as to understand the chemical characteristics of it which also help him finding out how to preserve them.

Joan from the Geology and Gypsum Museum is a similar case in the sense that he has also a lot of experience in the production of Gypsum. Not only his family owned a factory dedicated to it, but he has worked many years with Gypsum for other companies. Nevertheless, he is not a mineralogist and does not have formal education on museum management either. In his case, he has mostly learned from friends, some of which are university professors and museum directors. He also learned to do scale models for his reproductions of old Moorish ovens, benefiting from his drawing skills developed also as a hobby.

Agustí and Agustí (The House of Butterflies) have no formal education either in zoology and entomology or museum management. They often talk about how they had to learn for example, to take pictures of certain butterflies, for which they asked for the help of a friend who is a photographer that helped them understanding how to take the most difficult pictures.

> It has been a continuous learning process… we never stopped. And well, we have done everything like this, semi-professional.
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2016)

In their case, much of their knowledge on entomology was transferred from generation to generation. Their working life also gives them useful skills. They owe a company that designs, builds and sells furniture in Vic. This has taken them to build their own cabinets, which they sporadically did as well for other collectors and museums. This not only allowed them to save costs, but also to design their cabinets in measure. An important part of the visual effect of the display in the museum is due to these cabinets and drawers with a very professional and quality like appearance. They also claim to be very strict with the work that they sometimes have delegated to professionals –such as the design of the website, text translations or the voice locution of their introductory video- because of their experience in the furniture business, which have given them a sense of design and aesthetics and also on how to finish a product with quality.

Joan from The Den of the Sharks has spent all his life reading about sharks, up to a point to having learned to read scientific texts in English by himself:

> Joan: I have been since 7 years old reading thousands of books on sharks in any language: English, Catalan, and Spanish… In Catalan and Spanish very little, you

usually have to read them in English. I don't speak English, I understand it but I don't speak it.

Me: You have learned it for this…?

Joan: Of course, reading it! I know much more scientific English than the English from the street. I can read a scientific book on sharks, but talking, I talk what they call beach English, because the language is difficult for me… I translate everything.

(Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

What is also outstanding of Joan's self-learning process is how he learned to preserve shark body parts and the degree of expertise that he has achieved.

Me: So you specialized in preparing the material?

Joan: Yes, of course, because I have had to prepare everything by myself! I started… about 25 years ago. At first the result was shitty, but of course, by trying to put this, now that, now I will do it like this… what happens is that it depends on the material, sometimes it's very big and I don't have time nor space…

(Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

He has also had the need of finding his own method for classifying shark teeth using compared anatomy:

Me: How do you classify them?

Joan: It is my own system [...] what has been done with the jaws, as I tell you, it can change between the upper jaw and the lower jaw, if it's a male or a female [...]. So of eighty species of sharks I have found tooth per tooth, the dental series, and I have them on black bands and what I started to do is to find, because of their structure, fossil tooth, to what shark does each tooth belong. And then I compare the position. And then I can know: "It's the third lateral right of the lower jaw".

M: And this is your system?

J: Yes, there are books, but of course… you take a book of fossil teeth and they have 3 or 4 teeth and sometimes only of the upper jaw, not the lower ones… as the lower ones are different, they were sometimes classified as belonging to another specie. They had a mess with the fossils… luckily compared anatomy is every time most used and some species of shark are already clear.

(Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Rafael, has two bachelor degrees on Fine Arts and on Law none of them being authoritative in the fields of toys or museum management, although through the degree in Fine Arts as well as his experience as an artist he has surely gained relevant knowledge on museology or exhibition display. Rafael has learned to identify the toys through books and also thanks to Internet and he has sometimes seek for the advice of museologists and other professionals.

Antoni from the Coca-Cola Museum seems the one that has invested less effort in self-learning because he has acquired most of his knowledge on the Coca-Cola company, its products, and history during his years of work for the company, and also from a couple of books about it. In relation to museum making, he has never looked for information and has improvised his practices. Finally, the collectors club that he is part of and all his contacts with other Coca-Cola collectors are also one of his main information sources.

Also Martí from the Vietnam Museum has specially learned about the Vietnam War from books. He says that he has been an autodidact in relation to museum practices, also "asking to professionals and reading books on museum management" (Martí, Vietnam Museum, email interview, 2016).

Magda from the Maternal Museum is the only one that has followed some courses on museology. He has also clearly used her knowledge gained in her university degree in archaeology) for her research on birth houses and her skills as a journalists to write about the museum and spread it in the media.

The degree of deep specialization that the researched amateur museum makers have achieved after years of dedication to their respective passions is difficult to measure. It is not the purpose of this research to evaluate their knowledge and degree of expertise either. Nevertheless it is an issue that often appeared in our conversations and which is linked to their own self-perception, which is interesting information to take into account as it shows how they situate themselves in relation to the authorized experts.

As Joan often expresses, he could focus on a very specific topic, shark dentitions, because he is an amateur.

> Here in Spain the shark is not… there is no specialists. If they come from the university I have to explain it to them.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

> I have given some courses on dentitions here in Vilanova i la Geltrú. Only to talk about the mouth and the teeth (I need) four hours. The teeth, their bites, everything. I don't even talk about general structure, nothing, only the mouth.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

> There is no museum that has this! The internal parts… of course, I could specialize on this but they can't. As I can dedicate only to this…
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

The Den of the Shark is considered to be unique in Europe for its specialization and the width of its collection ("Reobre el Museu El Cau del Tauró," 2010).

> Museums that are exclusively of sharks can be found only in the USA and Australia as far as I know. There are none in Europe. There are the typical huge museums of natural sciences where there is something on sharks, something on mammals, something on… because they have thousands, millions of pieces, like the British Museum, but of course, if they want to show a bit of everything, they have to choose… Here in my museum there are a hundred species of shark, and these cannot be found anywhere else in Europe nor in Spain.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Also the Vietnam Museum is considered to be unique in Europe ("L'únic museu d'Europa sobre la guerra del Vietnam," 2003). Joan's specialization lead a publishing company to entrust him the writing of a book on entitled "Vietnam War US Elite Forces: Uniforms, Equipment & Personal Items. Vietnam 1965-1975" (Demiquels, 2015), specially directed to collectors.

Agustí and Agustí Jr are also highly specialized in some of their interests, especially butterflies. Also as in the case of Joan, they have achieved their expertise partially because they have narrowed their focus on the butterflies of a specific area. They have also, dedicated, like Joan again, all their available time to the research on butterflies, to do fieldwork and to the museum.

Costs

Even if some of the amateur museums charge a small entrance fee to visit the museum (The Den of the Shark, The Bread Museum at will, The House of Butterflies invites visitors to buy their 5 euro booklet), all the amateur museum makers coincide in that

their activity is basically a huge expense of money. They need a considerable amount of space, which in the best cases they do not have to directly pay because it is inside their homes (the Bread Museum, the Vietnam Museum, The House of Butterflies) or inside a building owned by their families or inherited (the Maternal Museum, The Den of the Shark). Others have had to buy, build or rent their spaces. Such is the case of Antoni from the Coca-Cola Museum, who took advantage of the low prices during the last Spanish real state crisis to buy the commercial premises where the museum is located. Also Joan rented the premises of another building in front of the museum for the temporal extension of The Den of the Shark, and Rafael (Toy Museum), had to buy to his brothers the space they inherited from their father. From all these cases, the Geology and Gypsum building might be the most outstanding, as he built it from scratch.

But economic expenses do not end with the building. Acquiring and preserving the collection, cleaning, building the displays and so on have also remarkable costs.

> Then we put everything nicely, as always, and we saw that it looked fine and we got motivated and decided to do a website. You do bit by bit. But of course, everything needs time and expenses.
>
> (Agustí Jr, the Hause of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

Joan also says that he had to cover his expenses with time, and it took him ten years (from 1992 to 2001) to prepare the first room of the museum:

> You need a strong investment and I did not have that much money, but year after year…
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Joan might be the one that has tried harder to compensate his expenses by charging an entrance fee. He also had a more ambitious vision of what he could handle:

> When I rented the front space, even couches came… but (I had) many expenses. Eight hundred euros per month only for Saturdays and Sundays… I could not assume that. Plus I did not have time to do anything else, (like) researching, classifying the sharks…I always had to exclusively dedicate my time to receive the couches. And the couches (they wanted to pay) one euro (he laughs). "Common, you spend one hour, or at least 45 minutes, I can't! At least two euros!" And they only paid between one euro and a half and two euros. It is not enough.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Also Josep from the Geology and gypsum museum, when asked how long it took to build the museum, he answers:

> I did not count, but a lot of time, a lot… a lot of time and money, of course.
>
> (Josep, the Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

Most of them coincide in that their activity was always dependent on their capacity to cover the expenses. A good example is given by Antoni explaining how he had to do the cabinets also bit by bit, one piece at a time, depending on when he had money:

> We made corner by corner, when we had enough money we bought (new cabinets). [...] and so we did bit by bit until we had everything put in cabinets.
>
> (Antoni, the Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016)

Also Joaquim from the bread Museum:

> Me: How do you finance it?
>
> Joaquim: From my own pocket (he laughs). If someone gives me something when they come to visit the museum, fine.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

Josep is very grateful to his wife because of her support, something that he considers especially generous because he has to spend time "and a lot of money!" (Josep, the Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016) in the museum.

This economic effort is one of the main costs to their activity, but not the only one. They are also very aware of the costs of time, which affect mainly their families who have to accept and support them in order to provide them with the free time that they need to dedicate to their leisure activity. Joaquim, from the Bread Museum, is very aware of the costs of his museum for his wife:

> Joaquim: She was the most sacrificed in this. She is the most sacrificed.
>
> Me: In what sense?
>
> Joaquim: Because I did not help much at home, not to say at all. Now I help more than before because now I am retired, and she still works the same.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

And he adds:

> Those who want to do things, either big or small, we are a bit selfish. When you read the classics you realize that. They have done great things but they have been selfish. There are things that are not compatible, either you do one thing or the other one. It is difficult to do everything and do it well. So you have to sacrifice something, and the one that does the sacrifice is often the family. You go up here (at the museum) and your wife stays downstairs cleaning…
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

Joaquim's thoughts are interesting also because he is aware of how his leisure time is subject to the work that his wife does at home, freeing him from his tasks, so he can have more time to dedicate to the museum.

In The House of Butterflies, the wife of Agustí (and mother of Agustí Jr), has also had an important role that they also perceive as a sacrifice:

> Agustí Jr: We did it the three of us… because we are three. If I was married maybe we would not be talking about this.
>
> Me: Who is the third person?
>
> Agustí Jr: Well, my mother
>
> M: She is also part of the museum?
>
> Agustí Jr: well, she has been patient. Because this is not her thing, and she has been patient, and he has collaborated.
>
> Agustí: She has spent a lot of time siting in the car.
>
> Afustí Jr: she has collaborated a lot, doing the housekeeping, which she keeps doing even now that she is old, and that is very helpful. [...] We understand each other. Well, we have our things, of course, within families...
>
> (Agustí and Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

In the case of Rafael, from the Toy Museum, his wife has dedicated a lot of her time to the museum. He does not perceive this as a cost for her because, in his understanding, she also enjoys it, although it should not be forgotten that this leisure activity is not directly her choice:

> Me: And your wife?
>
> Rafael: She likes it and helps me, she comes, cleans, puts order, organizes… yesterday she was mounting these houses of Extralandia… when (the toys) go to exhibitions she

> is the one that is responsible of this, she talks to them (the museum workers), she does the classifications, packs them, makes the inventories, she receives them… all the logistics, that are very important, so they wouldn't get lost, so they would have an insurance… I am, in this… no, I am a collector, I know about the toys, I think I know…
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

In a similar manner, the wife of Antoni from the Coca-Cola Museum also helps him with the cleaning of the objects and the space and especially by accompanying him to all the collector gatherings around the world. She, though, is not especially fond of it:

> Paqui: well, I don't love it, but as I do not work… I have been with the grandchildren till now, but as I do not have them any more…
>
> (Paqui, the Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016)

The chance that I got to talk to her came from the coincidence that during the interview she was helping Antoni to gather and pack Coca-Cola items for their trip to a collectors gathering in Italy. In the case of Paqui, is obvious that she feels some kind of personal obligation, coming from her perception that her aging husband needs help and also from the fact that to spend time together, it often has to be through Coca-Cola related activities. She says that she is happy that her husband is benefited from that hobby, and she resigns to take part in it. It seems that now that she has time because she does not have to look after her grandchildren any longer, she does not think of the option of finding a leisure activity for herself.

The costs for their families is a necessity for the viability of their projects and this is how most of them understand it. Either they are aware that their wives did a long term effort for them or that without their support and acceptance their endeavors would have not been possible.

Motivations and Benefits

Despite these costs, they all have strong motivations for continuing with their leisure practices, and they receive rewards of different kinds for it. The kinds of motivations that can be detected from their own explanations coincide with those commonly found in leisure activities by other authors (Stebbins, 1992, 2011).

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has influenced many authors of leisure studies with his psychological concept of "flow" to describe the state of absorption into an activity that

makes one forget about any other issues. This state of flow is also perceived as enjoyment, which for him depends on a balance between the difficulty of a task and the capacity to solve it. Thus, the task should not be too easy nor too difficult to fulfil in order to be enjoyable (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Enjoyment is the most easily detected motivation of amateur museum practice, but it is related to more durable benefits such as satisfaction, pride and increase of self-esteem.

Rafael is the most explicit interviewee when talking about his emotional motivations and the flow of being immersed in the activity. For example he expresses how much he enjoys to collect:

> It's delicious to be a collector. Because you review, you go back and look, return… things have memory so I remember people again, the moments… very nice, I like it a lot. That's how I see it. Somehow I think that it's repeating with someone else what one has felt.
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

But Rafael's enjoyment is also related to doing things by himself, which also results into feelings of pride when he can see the results of it and also show them to others:

> So I do everything: I paint, I do the cabinets, this I did myself, this sign (he shows me a sculptural sign waiting to be hung on the museum's door), so everything… but this is my enjoyment, and I do it so people would come.
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

Rafael often refers to the love he feels for the activity of museum making and collecting toys, to the enjoyment of doing it, and of provoking people's reactions. Also Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies), who is much more frugal about emotional explanations, refers to enjoyment as his main trigger:

> You like it and you do it, do you know what I mean? It's a hobby that you do because you like it.
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

Also Josep from the Geology and Gypsum Museum talks about his enjoyment in the performance of some of his leisure practices like doing the scale models of the gypsum ovens:

> I enjoyed it so much! My father was still alive and when I was doing the models he used to come and tell me "aren't you coming to have dinner today?" And me; "I am

> coming, I only put two more stones and I will be there" (he laughs). It is something addictive. I enjoyed it because at least these old ovens cannot be forgotten. [...]
>
> I do things for enjoyment. And if I can show it to someone, then I am happy.
>
> (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

Josep is so aware that he does this for enjoyment, that he simply does not do the tasks that he does not enjoy, like classifying the objects of the collection. He also says to enjoy most:

> Finding the materials (the minerals). Going with the colleagues and study an area, another one… I have enjoyed this so much!
>
> (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

Antoni from the Coca-Cola Museum considers his hobby to be a form of entertainment after his retirement:

> I am here entertained the whole day. Many retired people hang around in the street and they don't know…As I tell them, retirees used to go to see the construction sites, but now, as there are none, where can they go? Here!
>
> (Antoni, Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016)

Enjoyment gives way to satisfaction, pride and an increase of self-esteem when the museum makers see and evaluate the results of their efforts and when they receive compliments and positive comments and reactions form visitors or peers. Joaquim (the Bread Museum) expresses it in the following manner:

> You feel very satisfied, of course, you have done a task…well, but I don't know how to say it, is this kind of thing that, as you do it bit by bit and it keeps growing I don't know if you are totally aware of what you have done. You don't think of it, you keep on going; you keep on going (with the museum tasks). Of course then yes, at some specific moment you say 'listen, maybe it was actually worth it'.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

Agustí and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies) often express pride when visitors, especially if they are experts in the field, show interest and respect for what they have done:

> Agustí Jr: Some English women that were biologists or something like that of natural sciences came (to visit the museum), they were researching flowers around Planoles [...].
>
> Agustí: …and they sent us a letter saying that…
>
> Agustí Jr: …they were amazed that something like this (the museum) was in such a small village…And this people is used to go to places [...]. It seems that there, in England, you don't find this, and they said that there are a few things on fossils, but not exactly this… She was impressed.
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

This pride is also shown in their explanations about the reasons to open the collection to the public:

> As everything looked very nice (after installing the collection) we said "now we will show it to people, so they would know it".
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

Like in the case of Rafael, they also show pride in having done things by themselves and on being the only museum of the kind in Catalonia:

> Agustí Jr: We enjoyed it a lot because we saw that it was looking nice and all of that [...] and this is good because (our museum) is the only one of the kind in Catalonia.
>
> Agustí: Yes, a man from (the museum of) Granollers came and...
>
> Agustí Jr: He was amazed! A man that we know from the museum of Granollers. But I mean that we have done everything by ourselves.
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

Thus, part of their feelings of pride are related also to the already commented level of expertise that they have achieved and that is sometimes valued by other experts and professionals. In some cases, like it is seen in this last excerpt, the museum makers show also pride for being unique or special in a specific area, as we have also seen in the section on their expertise. This pride related to the uniqueness and to the comparison with other museums, is also very visible in the case of the Coca-Cola Museum, that Antoni considers it to be "Europe's bigger collection!" (Antoni, the Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016).

The benefits detected and explained in this section are those that they directly relate to their practices as leisure. Yet other benefits can also be inferred from them, as it has already been introduced in the first chapter and which will be further analyzed in the fourth, in relation to the use of authoritative and legitimizing languages and the improvement of their positions within their fields.

Relations with other amateurs, professionals and public

As we have already briefly seen, the relation of amateur museum makers with a public is central to their practice of museum making. It is in fact the conversion of their interests into museological shape what helps them to share and make their collecting and researching practices visible. Kelly (1996) finds that the leisure programs in fine arts seek for participants to have the role of the public because "the producers need just enough people to come to legitimate the production" (Kelly, 1996: 250). One of the main roles of the visitors of the amateur museums is that of legitimizing their museum products (I will further explain this effect on the fourth chapter), but also to enhance the benefits of their practices of collecting and research on their fields of interests. Some of the museum makers express how if they share it and show it to others, their enjoyment is even better (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum; Antoni, the Coca-Cola Museum; Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies). Yet the relation that they keep with such public is nevertheless problematic because receiving visitors takes too much time to some of them, because they don't receive the expected reactions, or because it requires from them an important work of maintenance of the museum (Martí, Vietnam Museum; Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies; Joan, The Den of the Shark). For others, instead, receiving visitors is an amusing and rewarding task, like in the case of Rafael (the Toy Museum), Antoni (the Coca-Cola Museum) or Joaquim (the Bread Museum).

Amateur museum makers also maintain relations with other amateurs and other professionals. Although these are often also part of the public – that is one of the manners that they get to know each other- their relation goes much further from that. For most of them, the relation with other professionals and amateurs interested in similar fields, is one of the most positive and rewarding parts of their whole amateur activity. It has to be said that these professionals and amateurs are almost never museum making experts. What they share is the interest for the same field of research and not so much the language used to talk about it. For example, Antoni specially relates with

other Coca-Cola collectors, especially through collector clubs and through his participation in fairs and gatherings. Agustí and Agustí Jr maintain rewarding relations or keep good memories about their relations with other entomologists and natural sciences collectors, especially from their area. Josep, from the Geology and Gypsum Museum, specially enjoys the company and the work with the friends with whom he goes to do field work and from whom he has mostly learned about geology and minerology. We have already seen in the first chapter (see the section on Public Relations and collaborations) how some of them have often collaborated with professionals and have as well been treated as such (especially Joan from The Den of the Sharks and Josep, from the Geology and Gypsum Museum).

Their leisure activities, including collecting, research on their fields of interest and museum making, are triggered and shaped through their relations with their public, other amateurs and professionals. It is also through these relations that some of the benefits of their practices are enhanced, something that I will specially delve into in the fourth chapter in relation to the effects of ritualization.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The aim of this chapter has been to defend that although leisure and amateurism are often charged with negative connotations, seeing these museum practices as leisure can bring relevant insights to their understanding. To do so, I have shown that this negative approach to leisure is due to the traditional western view that situates leisure as less important than work and, as a consequence, amateurism as inferior to professionalism. I have also shown how in museum practices, the boundaries between professionalism and amateurism are not clear, especially if we consider the historical formation of museums and the progressive differentiation of roles or positions within their practices. Similarly to the distinction between consumers and producers discussed in the first chapter, the distinction between professionalism and amateurism is a struggle for authority and it has the effect of keeping some practitioners in the margins of the institution while others are reinforced in their central positions. The dynamics and paths for professionalization - such as certified education, belonging to professional associations, participating and having access to congresses and journals and being affected by the homogenization of practices given by audits and the demands of public policies- unite those that are part of the in-group and drift others apart. The tendency of

information to be kept within professionals also provokes differences of style and taste in museum practices, which facilitates the distinction, in Bourdieu's sense, of one group from the other.

And yet, the researched museum practices that are the object of this research have to be understood taking into consideration that they are performed as leisure. This is, that their practitioners identify and position their practices as such. I have discussed and analyzed some issues that show that leisure and specially the conceptions that these museum practitioners have of leisure are partly justifying and also shaping their practices. Although I cannot delve here into their exact understanding of leisure, it can be inferred from their explanations that they identify their museum practices as such mostly because they do them for enjoyment and they don't make a living out from them.

Nevertheless the data from the interviews can also be related to some issues that many authors identify as central to leisure. One important aspect is amateur museum practitioner's sense of freedom of choice in relation to the activity, which is less common in activities that are usually understood as work or as a necessity. All the amateur museum makers are, in a way or another, showing that they feel free to continue or to stop doing their leisure practices. In a similar manner, they also express a strong self-identification with their chosen practices; something that can be found also in paid work, but that is especially common in leisure. Leisure pursuits are understood by many authors to be part and expression of the self, which partly justifies their choices and also their strong commitment to them.

The motivations and benefits expressed by the museum makers such as enjoyment, entertainment, pride and self-fulfillment, are also commonly found in leisure (Stebbins, 1992, 2011). Although, as I especially argue in the first and fourth chapters, these are not the only benefits that they obtain from their practice, they are the benefits that have more presence in their explanations, which allows me to infer that they are more conscious and more relevant for them. The main costs of their museum practices need to be understood also in relation to leisure. Money and time are the most obvious and direct ones, but most amateur museum makers also realize that their families, specially their wives, have had to do sacrifices for them to be able to carry on with such strong commitments. Because the activity is freely chosen, the expense of the personal and family resources can only be understood if the personal benefits are felt to be more important.

If, as I have explained, one of the most relevant issues that distinguish amateurs from professionals is the path that they have followed in their learning, understanding how these museum makers have obtained their knowledge and developed their skills can also help us see them as hobbyists without undervaluing their efforts and the quality of their work. All these amateur museum makers are mostly autodidacts in their fields of interests and in museum making, which puts them in positions of disadvantage in relation to their professional colleagues because they do not have certified education and have not been habituated in the same practices: this is, they do not share the same habitus. And yet, many of them are able to specialize on their topics of interest and become experts on them, even in relation to professionals.

The point of view of leisure has also helped me to identify that their museums are shaped by three different practices –collecting, research on their fields of interest and museum making- that overlap and that are tightly related to each other. Yet they all have a different importance for their practitioners and although the general benefits are enhanced because of the combination of the three practices, museum making seems to be the one to have more costs in relation to the benefits. This is in my view one of the most relevant findings that the approach of leisure has given to my analysis, especially considering that the practice that is central to my research –museum making- turns out not to be central for the museum practitioners. I believe that this lesser importance that they give to museum making might explain the absence of a community of amateur museum makers. Most of them are part of communities or networks of peers with whom they basically share a common field of interest, and yet the field of interest is never museum making per se.

This lack of a sense of community of museum makers is one of the issues that distance amateur museum practice form do-it-yourself proposals. In this chapter I have also seen museum practice with the approach of DIY. The interest of doing so was to further examine the position from which these museum makers do their practices. The debates around DIY culture remind that the position that we occupy in our fields is relevant in relation to the chances that we have to produce our own cultural products, but also to the meanings and effects that our production has. DIY restores the legitimacy of de-professionalized and deinstitutionalized production as a means to fight the power inequalities given by the control of production, and thus reverting the degrading meanings given to amateurism.

Yet as I have argued, amateur museum practices cannot be understood as DIY for several reasons, including that they do not identify themselves as such, their lack of political commitment, their traditional understanding of intellectual property and the circulation of information, or their relations with governments and corporations. Nevertheless, this analysis allows to detect that amateur museum makers, like most DIYers, are proud of doing things by themselves and, very importantly, that issues that are important to my research like the processes of empowerment and resistance through museum practices and the recovering of the control of cultural production are not directly desired by the museum makers. Amateur museum practitioners do not have a political intention and yet they have a political effect because they produce from positions of disadvantage in relation to professionals. This position of disadvantage and the space of freedom left by leisure allows them to appropriate a set of practices whose authoritative and legitimizing effects partly reside on a mythological system that sustains them.

SECTION II

Myth and Ritual in amateur museum practices

In the first two chapters I have analyzed some amateur museum practices putting special attention to the positions from which they are conducted, this is, from positions of disadvantage in relation to practitioners with higher economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital. I have started to show how amateur museum practices imply a benefit for the practitioners, and I have defended that the approach of leisure gives very important clues for the understanding of their positions of disadvantage within their fields of action as well as of their motivations for doing museums.

Section II has the objective of highlighting the manner in which amateur museum practitioners, from their positions of disadvantage, take profit of their practices within their fields of action, but mainly that of museum making. To do so, I have developed two chapters in which I continue my analysis from the approaches of myth (chapter 3) and ritual (chapter 4). Myth and ritual theories propose an understanding of myths and rituals – religion and magic- as working together (Segal, 1998). This understanding has been applied to explain secular cultural practices (Mahan, 2007). Museum rituals transmit and maintain a system of myths, which, in turn, keep alive the shared values on which museums rely. Analyzing museum practices from the approach of myth and ritual theories has allowed me to integrate "the subject's thought and the object's activities" (Bell, 2009: 47) as a structural thought-action mechanism (19). Understanding amateur museum practices as rituals tied to the mythical system of museums has furthermore allowed me to situate them within the museum institution, as well as to highlight the manners in which amateur museum practices contribute to its preservation and in its transformation. Furthermore, the mythical-ritualistic system in which amateur museum practitioners ascribe their practices increases their symbolic capital and improves their positions within their fields. And yet the analysis of how they perform museum rituals and how they relate to the mythical system of museums shows that they also push towards their modification, again, because of the positions from which they act.

CHAPTER 3

The Mythological System of Amateur Museum Practices

Introduction

The museum institution is rooted in a series of myths that constitute a system in the sense that they are tightly related to each other, enhancing one another, and sharing ideological backgrounds. The origins of these myths can be tracked back to the Enlightenment and, although they have been changing and fluctuating until today, contemporary museums can still be understood as the product of the myths of modernity and one of modernity's central institutions.

The system of myths on which museums rely and that are part of the myth of modernity, have often been approached in a very negative and pessimistic manner coinciding with the main crisis of modernity's grand narratives (Barthes, 1991; Benjamin, 2002, 2006; Wagner, 1994). And yet more recent accounts of myth can help us understand that myths have a function in social cohesion, in the transmission of values and in guiding our practices, and thus constitute an unavoidable part of our understanding of reality (Blackshaw, 2003; Kolakowski, 2006; Segal, 1998, 2004).

This latter approach to myth will help me in this chapter to clarify some powerful ideas about museums whose historical origins and trajectories are often forgotten or vaguely simplified by museum practitioners. In my view, a glimpse to how powerful, active and present these myths are still today is a key to the understanding of the motivations and practices behind museum making whether professional or amateur. Moreover, this chapter aims to show that amateur museum practices can help to problematize the mythical system of museums despite the fact (or perhaps also because of it) that they are nevertheless reproducing and renewing some of these very myths, which are meaningful to their makers. It is also because of their link to these myths that they are able to give symbolic value to their worldviews.

This chapter will dwell on the definitions of myth provided by Segal (1998, 2004), Kolakowsi (2006), Bourdieu (2013), Benjamin (Benjamin & Tiedemann, 2002;

Benjamin, 2006) and Blackshaw, (2003) among others. Bringing these different definitions together, we can define myths as apparently "self-evident stories" (Segal, 2004: 4) about significant issues that constitute a relevant part of people's reality and truth, and that have a powerful role in structuring and affecting social relations.

It is my hypothesis that the mythical system of the institution "museum" is behind the choice and practice of amateur museums, but amateur museum practice might be interfering in this very mythological system, helping to make its complexity visible, and partly undermining it with their unorthodox approaches. For this reason, in this chapter I will analyze amateur museum practices in relation to some of the myths that have structured the practice of museums since their modern origins. At the center of this system of myths I highlight those derived from scientific thought and its universality; those derived from history, such as the myth of progress and of a gone better past; the myth of the nation-state; the myth of heritage and its preservation; and the myth of the educational role of the museum. This is why I will explain in some detail the mythological system of the museum institution through its main myths and their relations, also relying on authors from heritage and museum studies (Akagawa, 2016; Bennett, 1995, 2006; Duncan, 1995, 2014; Groot, 2009; Hein, 2006b; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Kaplan, 2006, 1996; Kockel & Nic Craith, 2007; Lowenthal, 1998; Macdonald, 2003, 1998; Pearce, 1994, 1995; Pomian, 1990; Preziosi, 2009; Smith, 2006; Young, 2002; Silberman, 2016) which I have put in relation to further sociological, historical, and philosophical approaches (Allchin, 2003; Barnett, 2003; Billig, 1995; Eliade, 1991; Gilloch, 1996; Leerssen, 2010; Lévi-Strauss, 2001; Midgley, 1996; Nora, 1996; Simmel, 2004; Wagner, 1994, 2015; Zarandi, 2003).

Finally, this system of myths will be analyzed through the specificities of the case studies of this research, thus questioning what role these myths play in each museum and how they are reflected in their practices. This analysis will show that amateur practitioners have a struggling relation with such myths, relying on them, contributing to their maintenance, using them on their behalf, and also participating in their transformation.

Uses of the concept of myth

I will first briefly introduce some theoretical approaches to the concept of myth, thereby illustrating the highly diverging ways in which its social function has been seen, evaluated and understood. Later on, and dwelling on these approaches, I shall propose my own approach.

Segal, who has approached myths from the field of religious studies, defines them as "stories about something significant" (Segal, 2004: 5) that "might seem self-evident" (4) and that can be more widely understood as "beliefs or credos" (Segal, 2004: 4) that are part of a religious system or cosmology. In his more philosophic view Kolakowski (2006) understands myths as a tool for society to transmit values which are intrinsically mythical. The mythical organization of society lessens individuality and freedom in order to situate the individual as an object with fixed capacities occupying a specific place within an order of things (33). In consequence myths are an essential tool for the maintenance of social solidarity through values. This is, myths serve to naturalize a series of more or less arbitrary norms and thus are at the core of social practice as explained in the introduction. In fact, myths appear to be discovered or just known instead of created. According to Kolakowski, this kind of mythical consciousness is present in all societies as an answer to the needs of conservation of humanity because it binds society together. Human consciousness is for Kolakowski inevitably mythical, and its needs cannot be satisfied only by scientific knowledge (2006: 137-158).

The mythical system on which museums rely needs to be understood through modernity, where they originated. Wagner (1994) problematizes what we understand as modernity today, whose beginning cannot be clearly set in time nor space, as it happened in disperse regions and moments ranging from the seventeenth century to late eighteenth century or even the beginning of the nineteenth century. For him, the changes in social organization, political ideas and economic practices of that period of time are relevant enough to consider a transition towards a new kind of society, even if such transition is ambiguous and relative. This ambiguity is due in part to the relevant differences between the discourses of modernity and the reality of their practices. Such discourses included ideas of freedom, scientific search of the truth, common well-being, or progress, which concealed the inequalities and power relations that created and maintained them. For Wagner, modernity has to be understood through its practices and

institutions which are characterized by being at the same time enabling and constraining and by having a wider "social and spatial extension" (Wagner, 1994:26) than in the past.

The grand narratives of modernity have often been accused of situating myth in opposition to rational thought (Segal, 2004), not only strengthening the myth of the opposition between science and religion (Barnett, 2003) but also enhancing a highly polarized and negative view on myths. Notwithstanding, this view has also been challenged by many authors, the most influential of all being Lévi-Strauss with his defense of mythical thought as a rigorous thought system (Lévi-Strauss, 2001) similar or parallel to scientific rational thought. Also Barnett (2003) dismantles this opposition arguing how during the Enlightenment there was not such separation between science and religion and how religion and myths were always part of rational thought. Other authors have also shown the myth making capacity of science, and also the myths which scientific thought is based on (Allchin, 2003; Midgley, 1996). Myth is in consequence not opposed to rational thought, science or truth. It is present in all cultures independently of how religious, rationalistic or scientifically minded they depict themselves. Because myths are a kind of story which has a key role in social cohesion and cultural transmission, they are present, active and powerful in all societies.

Authors such as Walter Benjamin or Roland Barthes have faced contemporary myths with a highly politicized view. Barthes approaches myth from a semiotic point of view. He states that when the signifier of myth "becomes form, the meaning leaves its contingency behind; it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, history evaporates, only the letter remains" (Barthes, 1991:116). This form does not retain the long and complex story of the signifier, forgetting the origin of its meanings and thus complicating a critical reading of myth. When the form "has put all this richness at a distance" (116) it turns history into the "self-evident story" from Segal's definition of myth (2004: 5).

For Benjamin, the relation between myth and truth was

> one of mutual exclusion. There is no truth, for there is no unequivocalness—and hence not even error—in myth. Since, however, there can just as little be truth about it (for there is truth only in objective things [Sachen], just as objectivity [Sachlichkeit] lies in the truth), there is, as far as the spirit of myth is concerned, only a knowledge of it. And where the presence of truth should be possible, it can be possible solely under the condition of the recognition of myth—that is, the recognition of its crushing indifference to truth.

(Benjamin, 1996: 326)

Benjamin's opposition between myth and truth might seem nowadays too strong of a polarization. Gilloch has focused on Benjamin's complex use of myth. She emphasizes how history is for Benjamin not totally left behind in myth: "the form does not suppress the meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at (myth's) disposal" (Gilloch, 1996:117). It is this distance with the origin of the story that partially constitutes the very negative light in which Benjamin saw myth, this is as "rooted in superstition, ignorance and fear" (Gilloch, 1996: 9). Such myth does not only belong to the past but it still proliferates in modernity. Benjamin blamed modernity for putting itself at the peak of civilization, with "the promise of the overcoming of the mythic" (Gilloch, 1996: 105) while perpetuating instead pre-existing myths and producing new, often disguised ones. The core issue of myth is that "it transforms history into Nature" (128), this is, it naturalizes it: "Myth [...] gives (things) a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact" (Gilloch, 1996: 143). In other words, myth depoliticizes history through a rhetorical transformation towards such "eternal justification".

Benjamin emphasizes that the hidden ideology of myth implies a circular functioning. Myth enhances and reproduces itself also contributing to the maintenance of the system of myths that it is part of. Bourdieu (2013) explains this kind of circularity when explaining how dispositions of members of a group are confirmed and reinforced in the practices of the members and their institutions, being this the basis of collective beliefs. He includes myth as one of the institutions that "constitute collective thought as much as they express it [...]" (Bourdieu, 2013: 167). He further adds that "the self-evidence of the world is reduplicated by the instituted discourses about the world in which the whole group's adherence to that self-evidence is affirmed" (167). This circularity is very relevant in the analysis of museum's relation to its own mythological system because the museum institution both relies on and reinforces the myths that constitute it. Yet Benjamin also held a positive view on the utopian and transformative potential of myth (Gilloch, 1996), something that can be seen, for example when he analyzes Goethe's work and its mythical qualities (Benjamin, 1996).

Although these kind of negative conceptions of myth have been very influential during the twentieth century and they are relevant to understand part of the crisis of the myth of modernity, other approaches can show why myth is still so present in our societies

and what their role is in them. In the last decades myth has been understood in a more relational manner and some authors have brought some light on the role of myth in contemporary Western societies. An interesting example is that of Blackshaw's work (2003). In it, he understands myth as an inevitable part of social life, which he detects and analyzes in the leisure life of his groups of friends. Myth, especially the myth of masculinity, play a special role in the structure of their relations and in their practices, and in the definition of their identities. He identifies an "all-embracing myth", which contains the underlying truth about his group of friends. This all-embracing myth reveals "an ideal of leisure, which provides the key to the 'reality' of 'the lads'" (Blackshaw, 2003: 92). This conception of myth is neither utopian nor pessimistic while being still able to analyze its ideological implications: myth is simply and complexly defining life and constituting our reality. In a similar manner, I will not be understanding myth as opposed to reality, but on the contrary as being part of it.

In the pages that follow, I will delve into some of the central myths of museums, which are, at the same time, the ones that infuse museums with the power to create, maintain and modify myths. Furthermore I will also detail how the researched amateur museums relate to them.

Museums' Mythical System

The myths of modernity have been changing according to the different epistemic shifts of modernity and are still nowadays present in different shapes (Wagner, 1994). Thus, the manner in which museums have been relying and taking part in them has also changed with time. Nevertheless, the myths of modernity are still active in museums and their understanding is necessary for the understanding of museum practices.

Museums' mythical spirit often appears in Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, as "unquestionably belonging to the dream houses of the collective" (Benjamin & Tiedemann, 2002: 406), close to dioramas, theatres, casinos, train stations and of course, department stores and bazars, emphasizing the panoptic illusion of making it possible to see everything and in all possible ways (531). His emphasis is nevertheless on some architectural forms, the arcades being the "most important testimony of latent "mythology"" (834). Museums, as cousins of the arcades, can also be understood under similar myths and rites, as we will see in the next chapter.

There is a contradiction in Benjamin's polarized vision of myth -sometimes positive and sometimes negative- which reminds of the contradictions that are perceptible among museum studies scholars and practitioners that show museums both as the incarnation and perpetuation of some of the worse myths and vices of modernity and, at the same time, as a tool for social transformation, political fight and improvement of quality of life. Such contradiction is beautifully explained by Lord (2006) through a revision of the use made of Foucault's heterotopies in the field of museum studies. The heterotopian space is generally used in a negative tone when applied to museums as spaces of representation, of discipline and of ordering. Nevertheless, Lord reminds us of the fact that it is because museums are heterotopian spaces that they can also offer us other kinds of opportunities:

> Because it is an 'Enlightenment' space of representation and a space of difference, the museum is able to perform a critique of its own historical foundations and to fit into a historical series of postmodernist or poststructuralist thinking.
>
> (Lord, 2006: 7)

This is, the museum, although founded and established during the Enlightenment and the time of birth of the myths of modernity, has the capacity to demystify itself. She further adds:

> Heterotopias are disturbing, Foucault says, because they undermine the syntax that causes words and things to hold together. The heterotopia is a site for discursive analysis because it already does the work of discursive analysis: it undermines the relation between words and things, and maintains the space between them as a space.
>
> (Lord, 2006:10)

Thus in Benjamin's and Lord's sense, the myths of museums and museums' mythical capacity can have negative and positive effects on their societies depending on how they are used.

In the field of museum and heritage studies many authors have worked on tracking and revealing the formation and perpetuation of the myths of modernity in the concrete case of the museum. Thus, the works of Carol Duncan (1995, 2014; Duncan & Wallach, 2004), Tony Bennett (1988, 1995, 2006), Douglas Crimp (Crimp, 1980), Hooper-Greenhill (1992) or Susan Pearce (1994, 1995,1994) have been followed by many others. These authors belong to a line of research that was conducted especially during

the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, and it can be seen as a consequence of what Wagner (1994) considers one of the main and later crisis of modernity which he identifies as starting in the 1960s. In this line, Pearce (1992) situated museums within a series of modern ideas and propositions, like linear time and progress that gained "strength and social breadth as the modern period progressed" (1992:3), this is, as a product of modernity. Preziosi (2009) identified the mythical quality of modern museum narratives as the capacity to naturalize the "facticity" of society's fictions (Preziosi, 2009: 41).

More recently the tendency has been that of recovering the positive side of museums' relation to myth, although very few authors use the concept of myth when talking about the positive possibilities of museum practices. Instead of simply critically researching museums' histories then, museologists try to propose manners in which museums can still make sense for our societies. Of course we are now somewhat far from the modern myth of the museum. Poststructuralist, feminist and postcolonial approaches to museum practice revealed and questioned the modern mythical system and prepared the ground for their redirection towards new purposes.

Mythic science and its universality

Kolakowski (2006) considers that it is precisely the sovereignty of reason what shows that it is produced by a mythical consciousness (51) satisfying the need for truth and certainty of individuals. He claims that rational thought, and thus also science, are in permanent contradiction: we accept its utilitarian purpose in attempting to escape its mythical aspect, but by doing so, we are implying something more than its self-sufficiency, thus returning to a mythical dimension (60). The mythological dimension of rational thought and science unfolds when their historical and ideological construction are hidden.

Benjamin and Simmel criticized science for putting itself in opposition to mythical thought. In his unfinished work about the Parisian *passages* Benjamin (2002) noted down Simmel's thoughts on the delusion of human dominance of nature, which he related to the mythical qualities of science:

> The illusions in this sphere are reflected quite clearly in the terminology that is used in it, and in which a mode of thinking, proud of its . . . freedom from myth, discloses the direct opposite of these features. To think that we conquer or control nature is a very

> childish supposition, since . . . all notions of . . . conquest and subjugation have a proper meaning only if an opposing will has been broken . . . . Natural events, as such, are not subject to the alternatives of freedom and coercion . . . . Although . . . this seems to be just a matter of terminology, it does lead astray those who think superficially in the direction of anthropomorphic misinterpretations, and it does show that the mythological mode of thought is also at home within the natural scientific worldview.
>
> (Simmel quoted in Benjamin, 2002: 661-662)

Simmel (2004) is concerned about the mythical hidden aspect of scientific thought which disguises its own generalizations and is rooted on a taken for granted steady ground. For him, thus, science keeps on denying its mythical nature.

For many authors the birth of the modern museum is tightly related to the birth of modern science during what Foucault called the classic episteme of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Foucault, 1972). Their predecessors, the royal or princely collections or the *studiolos* and cabinets of curiosities of the Renaissance, where ordered through rules such as the creation of worldviews or the exhibition of wealth (Bennett, 1995), but it was from the seventeenth century onwards that they gradually adopted a scientific approach (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). This happened in museums of all kinds, but it has been especially observed of natural history museums, which started to prioritize the search for the "natural rule", the persistent laws of nature, instead of the exception and the rarity. The "new principles of scientific rationality" (Bennett, 1995:41) entered the collections and the museums and radically changed them.

Hooper-Greenhill (1992) situates the origin of public collections during the seventeenth century as a tool for scientists to share resources. European scientific societies like the British Royal Society had communal intentions and it was also then that museums started being understood as having the social purpose to reform knowledge.

> A plan had been devised to establish common, scientific, non-clerical monasteries in the four corners of the globe, working towards scientific co-operation. The proper study of 'science' was to be furthered by the establishment of a museum, library, printing office, botanical gardens, and laboratories in each house.
>
> (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 146)

These collections were meant to mirror the totality of nature and "the scientists of the Royal Society were determined to accept as "true" only that which they could prove through replicable experiment" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 147). The purpose of these

societies to create a universal community is also exemplified by the recovery of Latin as the common scientific language, still used in some museological organizations such as botanical gardens or natural history museums.

The core of the myth of science was its equation to universal truth, especially given by the belief that nature can be described through general rules that can be applied universally. Universal truth is a truth that forgets that it is situated, and by that attempts a totalizing order of things and peoples[29]. Thus, a scientific order of things and peoples based on rational thought had the appearance of not being ideological but natural, neutral. Universal ambition aimed at explaining life worldwide with universal principles that, concealing power relations, contributed to enhance the superiority of some social groups over the others. The museum, like other similar institutions of the time, embraced this universalizing order:

> The conflict between the theoretical universalism of the museum's discursive space and its actual articulation to existing social hierarchies has been, and continues to be, responsible for fuelling a politicization of the museum as it has been called on to reverse these exclusionary and hierarchical effects.
>
> (Bennett, 1995: 46)

The universalizing pretension was hiding and enhancing social differences. The wealthy white man was situated at the social center as the norm, while women and other races- the concept of race was especially developed and justified also in that period of time- where situated, exemplified and scientifically proved as inferior versions of it. Although museums and collections had always had a political purpose, during the Enlightenment, their scientific appearance hid it under the authoritative notions of rationality and truth. Science was ordering virtually everything known and museums helped to naturalize that ordering, legitimizing scientific myths while of course, being legitimized by them.

> Museums which deal with science are not simply putting science on display; they are also creating particular kinds of science for the public, and are lending to the science that is displayed their own legitimizing imprimatur. In other words, one effect of science museums is to pronounce certain practices and artefacts as belonging to the

[29] Modernity itself had universalizing claims in attempting to build a global project valid for the whole humankind (Wagner, 1994)

> proper realm of 'science', and as being science that an educated public ought to know about.
>
> (Macdonald, 1998: 2)

Furthermore, museums also produce scientific research and some of their collections have been formed with this purpose. Science museums, and in less intensity also other kinds of museums, are regarded as scientific, this is, as authoritative but as "separate from power and politics" (Macdonald, 1998: 2).

And yet science did not gain a mythical dimension only by opposing itself to myth, as Simmel and Benjamin thought, but mythical narratives about science also pushed in this direction. Museums contribute to the romanticizing and mystification of science and scientists through the way they present scientific work. For Allchin (2003), accounts of scientific work and of scientists' lives become mythical when they tend to monumentalism (enhancing the importance of the discovery and some of its details), idealization (especially of the scientist as exemplary, of his –almost never her- methods and research design), affective drama (dramatic twists such as the "Eureka!" moment or the triumph of the truth over prejudices) and an explanatory and justificatory narrative (that emphasizes the authority of science). The "historical narratives of science exhibit conventional literary features of myth" (Allchin, 2003: 330) and they are often propagated by museums. As he notes, such mythology of science is a pseudohistory of science that nevertheless is widely reproduced by school textbooks, journalism, and I add, museums.

The myths of science and universalization in amateur museums

Most of the researched amateur museums have a direct relation with a specific scientific discipline: natural history, history, biology and compared anatomy or ethnology. Only, as we are about to see, the Coca-Cola Museum seems to have some distance with such scientific approaches, although it is also linked to more recent disciplines such as marketing.

Agustí and Agustí Jr, from The House of Butterflies, have a strong scientific approach. In their case it is the traditional discipline of natural history the one that informs and gives shape to their collection and their display. Such scientific discourse is transmitted to the visitor, first of all, through the name of the museum ("small museum of natural

history"), but also through the ordering of the specimen in the collection, their use of the standard scientific classification in their labelling and the vocabulary they use in the guided tours, websites and leaflets:

> The House of Butterflies is a small natural history museum that, aside from the butterflies, boasts a collection of fossils from above all the Eocene (Tertiary Period) from the Plana de Vic, minerals and rocks from all over Catalonia, and numerous specimens of Coleopteran and Dipteran.
>
> [...]
>
> The collection consists essentially of macro-Lepidoptera.
>
> [...]
>
> Butterflies are excellent bio indicators of environmental quality.
>
> (Gabaldà & Gabaldà, n.d.)

Their introductory video on the life cycle of butterflies has also a strictly scientific and pedagogic approach.

Joan from The Den of the Shark is the one that has taken his scientific work further. His research, especially on comparative anatomy applied to shark teeth and also his work in preserving almost all the parts of the sharks for other museums and for their study by other scientists, has situated him as an equal among professional colleagues from universities and museums. In fact, his collection is meant "for research and for the research of other experts in the field" (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016). From the guided tour one can perceive that his knowledge on sharks is vast but it was only in the interview when he let me know about all his collaborations with authorized and legitimized scientists, especially archaeologists and biologists:

> They came from Valencia to do a research on cartilages, also some archaeologists on vertebras… Now when I open a shark I keep everything, I keep the vertebras so when archaeologists finds some, they can know approximately what kind of shark it belongs to, if it was eaten, if it is from nowadays, if it is a fossil… this kind of things.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

As we have seen in the last chapter he is doing a job that nobody else does because he has the freedom to choose exactly what to do, while the directives of their jobs and departments limit museum professionals and university scientists. His museum and the items exhibited are a very small part of his work, not only quantitatively –most of his

collection is stored somewhere else- but especially in terms of time and dedication, which he mainly spends on research and on conservation of the shark body parts.

The biggest contribution that he is doing in terms of research is on the identification of shark teeth using compared anatomy and his own classification system:

> Joan: From the current 80 species of shark, I have been finding tooth after tooth, what is called the dental series, and I have them on black stripes… and I started to find out, from a fossil tooth, and because of its structure, what shark it is from. Then I compare in what position should be, and from here then: "it is the third lateral right of the inferior jaw", so…
>
> Me: And this system is made by you?
>
> Joan: Yes…. Well, there are books but…if you take a book of fossil teeth, they have 3 or 4 teeth from one specie, sometimes they specify "superior, lateral,…" but no… some have started to take pictures of whole series, something that is really useful, but before that they only had 3 or 4 teeth and sometimes only the superior ones, not the inferior… and then the ones of the inferior jaw that were different from the superior one seemed from another species. They had a mess with the fossils. Luckily compared anatomy is every time more used and quite a few species of sharks are already done…
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Also Josep from the Geology and Gypsum Museum has a strong scientific approach to his collection and display. He has no formal studies in mineralogy but he does have a whole life working experience in the field of gypsum extraction. Differently from Joan from The Den of the Shark, though, he does not conduct a deep research on geology and mineralogy, but this is nevertheless the lens from which he approaches his collection. Despite that, when asked about the classification system in the museum and the labels that he uses, he says that he is very little scientific and that he has his own personal system:

> Josep: No, it's mine. I have not done it scientific at all.
>
> Me: I remember that you wrote the date, the place of (recollection)…
>
> Josep: And the mineral. I know it is not scientific. The museum of Manresa, of the school of mines is very scientific. It's really good. And with the one who directed it, Mata-Perelló, we did a lot of fieldwork together, at the south of France, Portugal, Spain… and he is a great man. He is a number one.

(Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

As can be read in this quote, he did a lot of fieldwork – one of the activities that he enjoys most- with some friends that can be said to fully belong to the scientific academic environment. One of them was a professor at the Department of Mining Engineering and Natural Resources at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya and director of the museum of the same university. Another one is a paleobotanist from the University of Barcelona, a friend that he has often accompanied to do fieldwork:

> I often went with my friend Carles, who explained to me a bit of all this geological issues of the region… sometimes even, when he was doing his PhD years ago, I went with him (to do fieldwork) because he said that he wanted to quit, that he was sick of it and so on, and I told him "Carles! No way! Don't say that because we won't let you, you have to continue and whenever you tell us 'that day I will be in that place', we will come with you".

(Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

Joan has been organizing activities with both of them especially at the Institut d'Estudis Penedesencs, a regional cultural organization. He often talks about having learned especially from them. Summing up, even if he does not have a scientific ambition, it is clear that it is the scientific approach the one that informs him about the objects of his interest. His scientific approach can also be seen in the museum, which is focused on the pieces, ordered by type and signaled as such, even if not in a way that he considers to be properly scientific.

As we have seen in the second chapter, what many of the interviewed museum practitioners enjoy most is to find new items for the collection and to conduct some kind of research on them. A scientific kind of inquiry is what triggers them and is thus reflected also in their displays. Their lack of formal education on their fields does not stop them from continuing their work. Most of them (The Den of the Shark, The House of Butterflies, the Geology and Gypsum Museum) have authorized experts as close friends, who they have met because of their shared passion, and with whom they enjoy to spend time and to learn with. The high specialization that they achieve in their very limited topics makes them, despite being amateur and self-taught scientists, feel valued – also among experts.

Nevertheless, the fact that they hold scientific approaches does not mean that they are totally entangled with mythical science and/or its universal aim. Differently from other kinds of more institutionalized museums, usually much larger, where the reference of the curator (often a scientist-curator) as a human being is very remote, amateur museum practitioners always introduce and show themselves as the makers and narrators of their stories. Thus, the claims for universality of the scientific imagery is highly counteracted by their presence, their inevitably personal discourse, the chance given to visitors to ask them personally about any issue, because the whole museum is encapsulated in them. Science is made human, specific and situated and as such it loses part of its mythical reverence and objectivity without losing any of its interest. Furthermore, science, like museum practices, is presented as something that can be done by virtually anyone beyond their formal education and authority in the field. Science becomes partly demystified at least because it is practiced from outside its institutional centre and incarnated to specific individuals.

Mythic History, Progress, and the Longing for the Past

The authority given by the raise of modern science and its mythical dimension is also related to other myths such as those of history, progress and nation-state.[30] The discipline of history, similarly to other scientific disciplines that we already saw in the last section, has also a mythical dimension. For Kolakowski (2006) history relies on myth when it is shown as provided with sense or meaning, as situating facts in an order of things that comes from a "providence", preceding history or that answers to a sense of destiny of humanity (44-47).

Mythical history can be said to lead to two other myths that are somewhat opposite to each other: that of progress as the Enlightenment saw it and that of a better gone past as a longed by romanticism. The myth of progress situated humanity in an ascendant scale of facts that made the future better than the present and the present better than the past. The romantic myth of the past was based on the longing for better times that cannot come back. Nevertheless, both myths coexist in western societies, and we can see very

[30] With the differentiation of the myth of history and progressive time from the myth of science I do not want to enhance a division of scientific disciplines, but to highlight relevant differences in the manners in which they became mythical and especially in relation to museum practice. Furthermore, because the myths that are behind the myth of the museum conform a system, they cannot be seen in an isolated manner.

powerful traces of them in the present, in which the past is romantically recovered and commercially packed as well as the promise of a bright ascending future.

Wagner (2015) situates the origin of the myth of progress in the period between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in Europe, when

> The expectation arose that comprehensive improvement was possible, improvement in all respects. And such improvement would not necessarily be only temporary. It could be sustained in the long run, and every future situation could be subject to further improvement. Furthermore, such comprehensive improvement was not only possible; it was even likely to happen because one had gained insight into the conditions for it to emerge. This change of expectations was the invention of progress.
>
> (Wagner, 2015: 29)

This kind of progress was possible through the conviction that humans could use agency, reason and learning capacities to build on the advances of former generations, something that is highly related to rational thought and the myth of science. This growingly accepted lineal and progressive understanding of time "like a fragment between two eternities" (Eliade, 1991:112) differed from other understandings of time such as cyclical ones, which became massively dismissed. For Eliade linear progressive myth of time is our modern Western attempt to deal with the suffering that history, the perception of time and destiny provokes in us (1991). The idea of progress brings us a positive vision of time and of the future, putting us in the best moment of humanity so far, and reminding us that it can only get better. Historical events are given value through the adaptation to a specific myth or a structure of myths.

> From the seventeenth century on, linearism and the progressivist conception of history assert themselves more and more, inaugurating faith in an infinite progress, a faith already proclaimed by Leibniz, predominant in the century of "enlightenment", and popularized in the nineteenth century by the triumph of the ideas of the evolutionists.
>
> (Eliade, 1991: 145-6)

Although Eliade acknowledges that during the twentieth century this lineal view of time has been widely criticized and that attempts have been made to recover certain interest for myths of cyclical periodicity (153), he also claims that the idea of progress and lineal time is still by far the most generalized and naturalized in Western societies. Also Wagner (2015) tracks some relevant changes of the idea of progress since the Enlightenment till present times, especially in the middle of the twentieth century -such

as the questioning of Europe's leadership of progress and of its grand narratives-, to claim that although slightly different, it is still one of the structuring ideologies of Western society.

Although this conception of time was linked to the empiricist discipline of history and thus to a rationalistic thought system that opposed itself to mythical thinking, Benjamin criticized the progressive and linear time as being as mythical as that of the eternal return, and yet as of hiding its mythical nature:

> The belief in progress -in an infinite perfectibility understood as an infinite ethical task- and the representation of eternal return are complementary. They are the indissoluble antinomies in the face of which the dialectical conception of historical time must be developed. In this conception, the idea of eternal return appears precisely as that "shallow rationalism" which the belief in progress is accused of being, while faith in progress seems no less to belong to the mythic mode of thought than does the idea of eternal return.
>
> (Benjamin, 2002: 119)

Modern historicism was for Benjamin characterized by its claims to universal history, its epic narrative and its "empathy with the victor" which "invariably benefits those currently ruling" (Benjamin, 2006: 406). Furthermore, he blamed museums and monuments for their role in creating mythical pasts (Gilloch, 1996).

The end of the eighteenth century brought many documents into public light thanks to the opening of many royal, aristocratic and monastic libraries and collections, whether it was through expropriation after the French revolution or because of shifting political agendas in other countries. All this past arising to be interpreted, turned the first half of the nineteenth century into a quest for the past which romanticism infused with ideas of authenticity and nostalgia (Leerssen, 2010). This development was tightly related to that of the discipline of history "as an empirical discipline" (Bennett, 1995: 76).

Pomian (1990) detects an interest for objects from the past as early as in the mid fourteenth century, making the practice of collecting antiquities spread around Europe and becoming a common practice during mid sixteenth century. It is nevertheless at the beginning of the eighteenth century in England and later on in France and Germany that there was a growing interest "in medieval works of art, an interest reflected in the

growth of countless collections specializing in objects from this period, as well as in a corresponding increase in prices" (Pomian, 1990: 38).

For other authors (Bennett, 1995; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Walsh, 1992), the historicized arrangement of objects in museums as we still know it today began in early nineteenth century and by the end of it, most museums were already organized to explain evolutionary time (Bennett, 1995:186). Before that, objects where arranged by theme, material or size (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992).

For Bennett, historical and evolutionary epistemic replaced universal taxonomical order in museums, although both shifts were a consequence of the Enlightenment (1995: 96). This modern epistemic shift came by the hand of emerging disciplines such as "geology, biology, archaeology, anthropology, history and art history" (96) which approached and affected the conception of time and progress as displayed in museums in different manners. History and archaeology linked the stories of nations to that of Western civilization, and "the discursive formations of nineteenth-century geology and biology allowed these cultural series to be inserted within the longer developmental series of geological and natural time" (Bennett, 1995: 77). Also science and technology museums reinforced the idea of technological progress, which celebrated industrial capitalism. And anthropology was the discipline that, at the end of the nineteenth century, connected imperialist Western nations to the others, ordering also persons and races, some of which, like "'primitive peoples' dropped out of history altogether in order to occupy a twilight zone between nature and culture" (1995: 77). Also Clifford analyzes how during the twentieth century an ethnographic Western look to the others often situated non-western cultural practices in an ambiguous past, given a specific position within the linearity of progress (Clifford, 1988).

The museum was not only deeply transformed through the influence of these new conceptions of history and progress. It was also an active agent in their naturalization and spread. For Walsh (1992), the museum was one of the main tools "for the imposition of capitalist time" (Walsh, 1992: 33) during the Industrial Revolution. History and all the disciplines related to it, like art history or natural history, as well as the increasing legitimation of scientific thought and its institutions, built a conception of progress for which museums provided physical proof. This physical proof is especially powerful under the shape of another myth, that of heritage and the necessity of its preservation. Objects from the past were exhibited as gates to other times more

than as documents. They were only valid as long as they were truly from the past, this is original, and were shown and venerated as sacred objects or as relics. Museums of any kind started ordering their displays in a linear historical order that implied or directly stated a succession of facts that led to the next step in history. Art museums, for example, grouped artists by styles that corresponded to specific periods of time and that implied a step, a phase in a long staircase towards the current, more perfected artistic forms (Duncan, 1995). Anthropological museums also ordered the peoples historically, situating any non-Western society either outside the evolutionary line or as stuck in its beginning. One of the consequences of such displays was that of the naturalization of lineal and progressive historical thought among their visitors, being still nowadays, one of the most common choices in the ordering of objects in museum displays of any kind. Preziosi (2009) also considers that the "spatio-temporal dramaturgy of the modern historical museum" transforms history into a "teleology — a story (a work of artifice or artistry in its own right, it's important to note) with a direction and purpose. In the modern museum, time is arrowed" (Preziosi, 2009: 44).

But museums did not only embody the myths of the history and progress, they also impelled their visitors to be part of it: "the museum provided its visitors with a set of resources through which they might actively insert themselves within a particular vision of history by fashioning themselves to contribute to its development" (Bennett, 1995: 47). This was achieved with the juxtaposition of certain objects that allowed a timely comparison and also more metaphorically and ritualistically, as we will see in the next chapter, by the organized walking of visitors through space, who embodied or performed such evolution in their own transition. By the end of the nineteenth century

> the installation of evolutionary narratives within museums resulted in precisely such a mind-body technology, furnishing an environment in which both body and soul might be constituted as the targets of practices of self-improvement aimed at modernizing the individual, bringing (and I use the term advisedly) him more into line with the high point of civilization's advance.
>
> (Bennett, 1995:189)

Although museums have already been very often criticized for their views on the past and although alternative proposals are now available, still "both in the practices of museums and, as visitors, in our relations to them the illusion that they deal with the 'real stuff of history' persists" (Bennett, 1995: 126). This is why the analysis of how

museums deal with the myths of progress and the past is still relevant (Dickinson et al., 2005).

The Myths of History and Progress in Amateur Museums

The way in which amateur museum practitioners relate to the myth of history and progress show that the general outline expressed in the previous paragraphs is much more complex when applied to specific cases. The specificities of the practices of these museums show in what manners they are informed by the myths of history and progress and thus also how they contribute to their maintenance or to their modification.

The Maternal Museum is perhaps the one that has a more direct relation with the manner in which museums deal with history. Magda's concern was the questioning of whose past was being told by the main museographic discourses. In fact, the trigger of the museum was Magda's realization that women were virtually invisible in Spanish museums before the 1960s. As she explains in her introductory "justification" in the book "Les Mares al Museu" (Sanrama, 2012) she wrote one of her firsts books on birthplaces as the consequence of

> The need to fill a void – directly speaking- in essay literature specifically dedicated, not only to collecting and to cataloguing, as could be interpreted, but also to our history. A historical void from our own roots that nobody noticed.
>
> (Sanrama, 2012: 7, my translation)

Furthermore, she adds that the idea of the museum was based on the dignity of women,

> taking the initiative in the study and knowledge of concrete cases lived and explained by well-known individuals from different social, cultural and economic classes, that were tied to the decisions, beliefs, orientation or disciplines of their mothers, while also of the submission to repression, the disdain and the suffering that they lived because of a chauvinist society.
>
> (Sanrama, 2012: 10, my translation)

Magda relies on the mythical capacity of history in order to vindicate the role of women as mothers. She tries to compensate one of the oblivions of history and of the manners in which museums have dealt with it. The visitor of the Maternal Museum is obliged to do the same reflection that Magda did decades ago and thus the myth of history and its

representation as intrinsically male appears in least in part, as the ideological product that it is. Despite this emphasis in history, the items in the Maternal Museum are not ordered chronologically but thematically and there are almost no labels to show the date or the period of time of the objects. During the visit to the museum, history turns into a series of stories triggered by the exhibited objects that Magda and her daughter use to talk about mothers of well-known persons, about political agendas on motherhood, about maternity or medicine and also about their own adventures in the making of the museum.

Joaquim from the Bread Museum has a strong historical point of view. It seems that his passion for history was one of the triggers of his interest for the collection and preservation of bread baking tools and breads.

> I have always been an enthusiast of history. If you pay attention here, well, (he points at the books on the shelves) [...], there is mainly ancient history, and when I read ancient history I found a lot of documentation on bread which I kept.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

History has "always" been Joaquim's passion. He has not followed formal studies on history, but he has been learning it by himself and he has his whole office full of history books with plenty of bookmarks. When asked if he has only learned history by himself, he claims the seriousness with which he has done it:

> I have been learning history for many years. Even if it was in a self-taught manner, I… well, I have looked for documentation, I have studied it…
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

He has also specific interests in archaeology and collaborates with another local organization, El Camp de les Lloses, which is an interpretation center about a Roman settlement in the town. With them, he has often shown how to bake bread using specific ancient Egyptian techniques for which he has needed to conduct previous research work:

> I have often done an experiment with Egyptian bread, a system that they used, because they baked bread in forty different manners, so of one of their systems, which is very well studied and documented.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

His approach is historical and even the techniques of bread baking are inscribed in the display and in his explanations into a historical narrative, distinguishing those of a recent past –the last century- or those of ancient Egypt or Rome. Joaquim does not attempt to challenge the manner in which history is represented and used in museums. His understanding of history seems to be quite traditional in the sense that he relies on what he calls "the classics" (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015), such as Homer, Plato or Pliny the Elder. He, nevertheless, insisted during the interview in the need of people, especially youngsters, to read such authors by themselves in order to have a critical opinion on contemporary events. His understanding on how history is supposed to be "read" and understood is active and critical. Furthermore, he also talks with irreverent humor about his own reverence towards to such books:

> I have already red The Iliad twice. You need stomach to do it! But you have to. It is like reading the Russian classics, you have to! (He laughs). There are things that there's an obligation to do. Then you can see the world in another manner, right? Although if you ask me what everything inside here means (pointing at the books), of so many books, and there are even more in another place, I would tell you: You know what? Letters, a lot of letters. Letters and dust.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

Differently from what we could expect from a historic approach, the Bread Museum's display is not ordered chronologically, but the objects' disposition is adapted to the available space, with aesthetic intention and also by thematic ordering (baking tools, shop tools, types and origin of breads, and so on). History is made visible in the printed documentation hanging from the walls, mostly from history and bread baking magazines and books, in the dioramas and figures that show baking processes of other times, and in the old tools that are no longer used, and in his comments that often refer to a close or a distant past. References to dates are only present in the documentation and some of the figures. Time does not seem to be linear nor progressive in the Bread Museum. History is also demystified because Joaquim's references to the past do not rely on epic episodes, not even on especially celebrated or acknowledged practice. He is only talking about bread baking, a practice that can hardly be monumentalized, that has no specific heroes or epic moments. It is, again, like in the case of the Maternal Museum, refocusing on a practice that does not historically belong to the wealthy, the

educated or the victors, but to the working classes including women, even if it is only because of the choice of the object of research.

The Vietnam Museum also has a specific approximation to history as it revolves around a past episode and all its items and documentation are somehow embodiments of that past. Nevertheless, Martí does not intend to reconstruct a linearity of the facts of the war. His collection is not ordered historically. The unit that is most respected is that of the original owner of the items, that are kept together, if possible with a picture of the soldier who used them during the war, and the letter with which they agreed to the sale or donation. This procedure might seem closer to that of an archive, highlighting the entry and origin of the document. People and an insight into their life histories are prioritized rather than the main war narrative. The collected objects and the explanations of Martí also highlight the conditions in which the soldiers lived and fought during the war. In this case, the discipline of history is informing Martí when he situates the objects of his collection in the narration of the facts of the war, but it is not directly reflected on the display.

The Toy Museum also has a strong engagement with the idea of the past as its collection of toys ranges from the nineteenth century till the present. Although neither the display nor the narrative of the whole museum have a direct historical approach, the fact that most toys are old and can be easily situated in a specific period of time, often lived by Rafael or his visitors, the museum has an effect on the perception of the past. Furthermore, Rafael and others view his toys as historic documents:

> These days the tram of Ayacucho was inaugurated here, so they are doing a book on the history of the tram in Antioquia and they came to see the toy trams that I have to… they turn into…and about three years ago a group of historians came from the university of Antioquia and then they saw that I had a very important historical material that could not be found anywhere else in the country, in Colombia, and also in documents, I have many documents, many things of childhood, I have photographs…
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

The quality of Rafael's toys as historic documents is also enhanced every time that he lends them to other institutions for exhibitions with a strong historical approach. In these exhibitions, the toys are situated within a historical narrative which enhances their historical value. Rafael's approach is not that of the myth of progress. It transmits the romantic longing for the past, especially for a lost childhood. It escapes the tendency

of historicism (in the sense given by Benjamin) of highlighting the victors and the wealthy. Many of his toys belonged to the working classes, and they are the ones to reconstruct their history through their personal stories once they reencounter them at Rafael's museum. Although Rafael researches the toys that he collects, an important part of this research is made through his own memories as a child and especially through the memories of the community.

> I came out to buy some brushes to clean bottles from a man on the street and he saw that I had some toys downstairs and he came in… and he told me "my daddy did all my toys and cars…" and then he found them in a cabinet, the toys that his dad did, because the father also sold them… and so the story[31] comes back. It is like he was taken here by somebody's hand to see the toys of his dad. Somewhere here there's one of the butterflies of this man, they are made of tinplate, like this plane.
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

Or, to give another example:

> During the first exhibition (of the toy collection) in Confenalco (a bank), a man started looking for me, he went to the offices of that place to get my phone… he finally called me and told me: "the plane that you have was mine when I was a kid, my father brought it to me from I don't know where…" he was a man in his 60s or 70s. [...] When they gave me the toys back he came to visit me and I took the plane out and he said "yes, this is the one, this was mine", and I told him that there were millions of toys like that one in the world, and he told me "no, this one is missing the wheels of the left side and I have them". He took them out from his pocket and put them to the plane!
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

Thus, the history that he researches and transmits is made of small personal stories, those of the individuals that played with the toys. Furthermore, the recyclers of Medellin, one of the most humble occupations in the city are the main collaborators of Rafael as it is them who find most of the toys and have learned with him to clean them without altering them too much.

> Almost everything I have is from the recyclers, from the garbage [...] I have a lot of contact with the recyclers [...], they know me, I give them my card, they come and I show them…at the end this is also theirs, somehow they have also learned like I did

[31] "Story" and "history" are the same in Spanish (historia).

> because there was no knowledge about this. So we learned together, I taught them not to clean or paint them... they cleaned them and erased all the marks or the names that the kid wrote on them…they get very emotional (when they come to see the toys). They feel that their life is not only about garbage when they see… this is not garbage!
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

The figure of the archaeologist, of the historian who finds forgotten documents and brings them to light is here taken by Rafael and by the recyclers, having no academic authority at all. The work of Rafael is thus shared with many people in his community who help him and inform him and who keep the toys activated, somehow alive. Instead of protecting such unique historic documents, Rafael allows his visitors to play with the toys. His grandchildren ride the old bicycles of the collection because they are faster than the ones that are now being produced; every now and then an old woman goes to hold a doll that she had when she was little; and I was offered to hold any toy that I wanted to during my visit. These historical documents are not treated as sacred, as we will see in the last chapter, but they are informing history while being in use, while being shared and explained by their old and new users. And yet, the feeling of touching a magical object that allows one to time travel does not disappear. The history of toys is in Rafael's museum totally fragmented, a mess of stories that overlap and that he gathers in his memory, their permanence being in absolute fragility. He is in fact thinking of writing all these stories down. His approach would not be that of writing about the history of toys but about the stories that toys have brought to him.

The relation with the objects from the past has a similar tone in the Coca-Cola Museum. Displayed also in an apparently random manner, vaguely ordered by typologies of objects -bottles, posters, pins, clocks-, the visitor finds the older objects only by being very observant or being led by Antoni. The weight of mythical history only appears when Antoni shows his oldest bottle of coke as being his favorite item in the collection. When asked for the reasons behind such choice, he highlights its age and scarcity, which makes it difficult to find:

> Well, they are the hardest ones to find. With all the years I have been collecting I haven't seen it anywhere rather than in photographs. Nobody ever told me that they had it to.
>
> (Antoni, the Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016)

More than in the objects and their arrangement, a historical understanding of the museum can be found in Antoni's explanations about the origin of Coca-Cola as a product and as a brand. He, nevertheless, only supports his historical explanations on two books: a collectors' catalogue and a book on the history of Coca-Cola. In Antoni's museum, progressive time or the historicism of the victors that so disturbed Benjamin can be detected in the success story of a brand, but not so much in the disposition of the objects and their display which, because of their accumulation and lack of theatricality remind more of a very little glamorous consumerist society of cheap products. Furthermore, if one would be left alone in the museum, the older items would probably be unnoticed and any sense of the past and historic time would be very difficult to gather.

The House of Butterflies, The Den of the Shark and the Geology and Gypsum Museum deal with a different kind of past as they are more concerned with natural objects than with human products or practices. Butterflies, sharks and minerals are usually presented as timeless or at least inserted into another kind of time that can be extended to the origin of the universe and within which human time becomes risible. Only when dealing with animals, biologic evolution and extinguished species can be related to the myth of progress and to a nostalgia for a past in which some species were not extinguished yet.

Nevertheless, the recalling of the past is present in all of them in other ways. In the case of The House of Butterflies, the fact that their hobby is inherited from older generations of their family makes history relevant in situating their scientific discipline in temporal context. Also in the Geology and Gypsum Museum there are hints to the old factory of Josep's family (like photographs and a scale model) and the models of old Moorish ovens in disuse also give a sense of progressive time, a kind of progress that erases older practices in order to give way to new ones. There is also, in his case, certain nostalgia of the past like it happens with Rafael's toys. In the case of The Den of the Shark, and although Joan does not incite this kind of interpretation, mythical history can only be triggered through the fossils of extinguished specimen of sharks, like those of the megalodon, triggering the imagination of a prehistoric past with gigantic carnivores.

To sum up, almost all the narratives of these amateur museums have some relation with the past which they reflect in different intensities and manners. The practice of collecting is often understood to be rooted in a nostalgia for the past and a permanent

state of longing (Stewart, 1984) inherited from romantic collecting attitudes. Entering into such issues would mean to adopt a psychological point of view, which is beyond the interest of this research. It is of course obvious that the items of a collection can be seen -and are often presented so- as being forever tied to the moment in which they were produced, used or collected, always in the past, and that they are because of that, embodiments of those other periods of time, windows to the past and carriers of its meanings.

Nevertheless what sometimes seems to be either a naturalized understanding of a progressive past or a nostalgic recalling of it is at the same time partly demystified through the museum practitioners' fragmentation of such narratives. In it, questions about who discovers, reconstructs and explains the past are directly and indirectly raised. The past becomes personalized and fragmented, and it changes its focus of attention from the wealthy, the hero, and the victor to women, working classes, humble production processes and cheap consumerism.

The Myth of the Nation-State

The nation-state is one of the central institutions of modernity (Wagner, 1994). He considers that although earlier empires might have been longer lasting and might have ruled over larger territories, "they shaped actual everyday practices only to a very small extent" (26). It was during modernity that the nation-state extended "administrative rules far into the everyday life of the subjects and citizens (Wagner,1994: 26). History and its mythical aspects were central to the myth of the modern western nation-state, which was ideologically explained and justified through them. Leerssen emphasizes how "the past became a point of identification, and increasingly part also of the growing sense of nationality as the premier organizing criterion of the European landscape" (Leerssen, 2010: xxii). Also Nora analyzes how history, as opposed to memory, served among other things to establish the idea of the French nation. In the creation of the myth of the nation-state during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "the nationalistic definition of the present cried out for a justification through a highlighting of the past" (Nora, 1996: 5), which gave a secular mythical origin to France. He also clearly expresses the interrelation between the myths of history and of nationhood by saying that "history was holy because the nation was holy. The nation became the vehicle that allowed French memory to remain standing on its sanctified foundation" (5), a link that

broke down for Nora in the 1930s, when "the nation ceased to be a cause and became a given; history became a social science; and memory became a purely private phenomenon" (6). Nevertheless, most authors consider that the mutual reinforcement between history and nationhood is still active. National governments still "play a critical role in this process of nationing history while simultaneously historicizing the nation" (Bennett, 1995: 141). And in this process museums and heritage sites are paradigmatic authorities in embodying "those constructions of the nation's past and projections of its future destiny" (Bennett, 1995: 142). In fact for Nora, museums, like archives or monuments are sites for memory, that are "only" material, functional places that become activated through its ritualistic use, activating its symbolic aura.

Billig (1995) also identifies that the modern nation-state "brought an ideological transformation of common sense" (9). He uses the term "banal nationalism" in order to highlight the manners in which national identity is build and maintained in everyday life through unnoticed means, especially symbolism and language, "forgotten reminders" and "embodied habits of social life" (8).

> nationhood provides a continual background for [...] political discourses, for cultural products, and even for the structuring of newspapers. In so many little ways, the citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, this reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building.
>
> (Billig, 1995: 8)

As a myth, nationhood only exists as long as we continue to believe in it, something that, as we will see in the next chapter, is continuously renewed through rituals like those performed in museums. As Billig further adds, "only if people believe that they have national identities, will such homelands, and the world of national homelands, be reproduced" (1995: 8).

For Preziosi such renewal of the myth through nationhood is also carried in national museums:

> Whatever else they set out to accomplish, great national museums exist precisely in order to foster and perpetuate the belief in the truth of abstractions such as national identity, character, mentality, or ethnicity — after all, right there in front of one's eyes, as the evidence right there in the vitrine you're standing in front of, is the actual sacred

> relic of some person, people, place, or time. The evidence for the abstraction (say, "England" or "Greece" or "Sweden" or "The Netherlands'') is precisely in its "representations," effects, and products.
>
> (Preziosi, 2009: 47)

The process of nationalization of collections and libraries was due and went parallel to a wider process of national construction in many Western countries. This process might be said to reach its symbolic peak during Romanticism when the idea of the nation became tightly linked to the construction and "canonization" of its past (Leerssen, 2010: xviii). Sites, constructions, collections and other kinds of material culture became national heritage that "had resonances with a vast majority of citizens", and through which "loyalty to the nation-state was literally or symbolically mobilized" (Silberman, 2016: 33).

This happened in especially two manners. First, linked to the idea of time progression, a new conception of time arose: that of the distinction between national and universal time (Bennett, 1995: 76). The inclusion of Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations as the cultural ancestors of some western countries served as legitimation for the expansionism of countries such as France or Britain, and a reinforcement of their symbolic power. This inclusion in turn was only possible thanks to the military campaigns that allowed archaeological findings in other lands, their transfer into European collections and their display in their museums. The second manner in which the myth of history articulated the myth of nation-state was by using the recent past to prove the formation of the nation and show it as a natural unity. One of the educating purposes of museums, as Duncan (1995) has explained, was that of creating a sense of belonging to the nation-state. Such an abstract conception like the nation-state profited from the crystalizing capacity of museums and their collections: "Universal histories (were) annexed to national histories as, within the rhetoric of each national museum complex, collections of national materials were represented as the outcome and culmination of the universal story of civilization's development" (Bennett, 1995: 76-77).

> The nation gives perpetual homage to itself by celebrating every aspect of its past, each and every one of its social, geographical and professional groups which it believes has contributed to the general prosperity, and all the great men born on its soil and who have left lasting works in every domain imaginable. Even objects from other societies

> or from nature render the nation which has collected them more illustrious, since this action shows it has recognized, via its artists, scholars, explorers, even its generals, their value and has even been able to make sacrifices in order to acquire them. It is precisely because a museum is the repository of everything which is closely or loosely linked with its nation's history that its contents should be accessible to all. This is also why they should be conserved.
>
> (Pomian, 1990: 44)

As a consequence, still nowadays all European countries have "national" museums. This leads to a further myth concerning the nation state: that of its duty in collecting and preserving the nation's past. The taken-for-grantedness of such duty is quite generalized: although the "how" has been often discussed, the "why" is mostly a given.

Also the nations without state use museums for the creation and enhancement of national identity. The Museum of History of Catalonia and the National Museum of Art of Catalonia (MNAC), an example of this kind of museum, have a very strong political agenda in collecting, preserving and narrating the historic and artistic past of the Catalan nation. Such objects become the tangible proof of Catalan history and identity, which can eventually turn into its symbols: "Catalonia wanted MNAC to symbolize a nation; a nation that is in this case inscribed within another nation (Holo, 2002: 182, my translation).

But the use of heritage in the form of material and immaterial culture to define collective and national identities is not only western any more, but also common in many other countries and regions, which often and paradoxically use the myths of nationhood and the museum's myth making capacity to fight the colonial impositions of identity and patriotic pride (Kaplan, 2006, 1996; Silberman, 2016).

> Material representations of traditionality and age help to legitimate an ethnic group's claims to a unique identity and political power and to their attempts to create a sense of unity among themselves. This is a major reason why the creation of a museum is often seen as vital to those groups seeking wider visibility in order to be granted greater political rights, autonomy, or "national" status.
>
> (Kaplan, 2006: 153-154)

The idea of nation-state and the right to defend it seems nowadays taken for granted as well as its link with material and immaterial culture and its preservation and articulation in museums. Museums thus are a tool for nation states or stateless nations because they

facilitate the embodiment of such an abstract and complex identity milieu into touchable proofs. The validity of the myth of the nation state and identity as embodied in material culture is proven in military conflicts by the destruction of material culture that has already been codified as heritage as a means for cultural annihilation (F. Kaplan, 2006; Preziosi, 2009). Nowadays different national and ethnic identities are represented in national museums, although this raises new questions not only about what and who's material culture has to be included but also on how to do it, and what kinds of relations can arise from it (Macdonald, 2003).

Yet not only national state museums, those run and financed by central or regional governments, or museums seeking for the construction of ethnic identity but any museum, be it national, local, community based or private, engages "in the construction, representation and mediation of national identities" (Chapman, 2007: 243). This is so because in a more or less evident manner, many museums somehow deal with the notion of identity and nation. Sometimes it is because they have to set some limits to their collections and their fields of inquiry, and the limit of the nation, the region, the group of belonging or the state are often chosen and thus reinforced. Also, the subjection to laws of heritage, of material culture transactions, or of museum regulation pushes museums towards a self-identification with the public organism to which they are inscribed.

The Myth of the Nation State in Amateur museums

The Catalan government has exclusive legal competences on Catalan museums with the exception of those few that are of State ownership. The regulation of museums is thus an autonomic competence and all Catalan museums have to be registered as such (LLEI 17/1990, de 2 de novembre, de museus). Of course, in order to be registered as a museum, some conditions have to be fulfilled, which is why many museums are registered only as private collections open to the public[32] . Still, these museums registered as collections have a closer communication with the Catalan government than with the Spanish one, which is totally inexistent. All the amateur museum practitioners of this research were aware at the moment of the interview of the existence of this register and all of them but The House of Butterflies and the Coca-Cola Museum

[32] See the section "What is an amateur museum?" in the introduction

are registered into it (Generalitat de Catalunya, n.d.). Even if most of them have a negative or a critical opinion about the purpose and usefulness of that register and the work of the Generalitat towards them, the contact is already established. But when they are asked about their relations with public organizations, they talk mainly about the local governments, regional level administration (Diputació and Consell Comarcal) and sometimes about the Catalan government. The Spanish central government is never considered as an interlocutor.

Their relation with a sense of nation and of nation-state can be seen as well in their collections and in their museum displays although in a complex manner. Joan from the Geology and Gypsum Museum has done many trips around Spain, Europe and Morocco to collect items for his collection and also to research on Gypsum ovens. The idea of the nation-state as a conceptual limitation is present in the maps that are situated at the very entrance of the museum: four geological maps of the local area, of Catalonia and of Belgium as a comparative land (fig. 65). Nevertheless, his aim is towards a local activity that marked the recent history of his village (Vilobí del Penedès) and his family. Although they are not openly the main objective, the identity links are obvious in his museum, and also the feeling of belonging to his village and region. This seems to make it harder for him to accept the lack of support received by the local government.

The collection of The House of Butterflies is centered on the area around Vic and Planoles, although it includes a few specimens of the rest of Catalonia, Spain and some of other areas of the world. The distinction made by administrative border limitations sounds especially arbitrary when referred to nature and yet, flora and fauna, as well as landscape, are often used as national symbols (Young, 2002). Of course they are aware of such contradiction, but the convention is so strong that it makes it difficult to talk in other terms and this has, again, ideological consequences.

> You first study the butterflies, the ones in the country, and then the ones that are still here and the ones that are no longer… And then the ones that are different, because the same butterfly is different depending on where is it from.
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

And:

> All the minerals and rocks are from the country because we only do the country.
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

It is not always clear what Agustí Jr means by "the country", as he is sometimes focusing on Catalonia and sometimes he seems to include the rest of Spain. As it is written in the introductory text of the booklet, the butterflies, fossils, coleopters and minerals are mainly "collected in Osona and Ripollès, but also in other places within and outside the country" (Stefanescu & Gabaldà, 2014). Judging by the text on the website, the "country" is Catalonia. A sense of place is nevertheless important in their discourse. This is in part due to the specificities of natural history as a discipline, because it has traditionally tied the specimen and the pieces they belong to, to their natural contexts and ecosystems. Thus, a relevant information for botanists and zoologists is the location where specimen are found.[33]

Also Joaquim from the Bread Museum emphasizes Catalan breads and bread baking techniques, and especially those from the local region around his hometown Tona. Again, the local belonging comes from the fact that his collection started with the tools of the bakery of his family, which inevitably links him with the representations of his museum in an identity and emotional manner. Although his collection of breads and of flour sacks is multinational, the most relevant information on the labels is their origin, in the case of Spain, naming only the autonomous region (fig. 8).

The Vietnam Museum also has a particular way of dealing with the idea of the nation-state. The nation-estate is obvious in this museum in that the collection is about a military conflict between two nation-states. But none of them have a relation with the origin or life experience of the museum practitioners, and neither with the location of the museum. Of course these two nation-states have gained importance in Martí's identity because of his long-term dedication to an episode of their history. The strength of the myth of the nation-state in relation to museums can be perceived in the estrangement that it produces to its visitors as a first reaction, as he told me during the guided tour and as it happened to me when I first knew about the museum. If it feels strange to some of us that a Catalan man makes a museum on a historical fact so distant from his own country and experience it is because we take for granted that museums have a certain link with their homeland.

[33] As a consequence, some animals become symbols of places when they are found to have a special presence there.

In a similar manner, when I have shared information about The Den of the Shark most reactions have been of surprise for two reasons: because it is located in an inland town with no sea, and because most people ignore that sharks are very common in the Mediterranean Sea. Once the explanation that many fossil shark teeth can be found there because Arboç area was once under the sea and that there are in fact sharks in the Mediterranean, The Den of the Shark seems justified.

In my conversation with Martí from the Vietnam Museum, he stated that his collection is the most important one of the kind in Europe, as well as Antoni's Coca-Cola collection and Joan's shark collection. Comparing and ranking collections is a common thing in, for example, touristic guidebooks, while also ascribing them within a country, a continent or any other region. A museum is the most important one in its town, its region, its country, its continent or the whole world.

The weight of the nation-state is also perceptible in Antoni's (The Coca-cola museum) explanations about the Coca-Cola collectors club which he has had a strong implication with:

> So then I was contacting with other collectors…the year 1990, before the Olympic Games (Barcelona '92) we already had the collectors' club of… of Spain. Let's say of Spain, although it was in Catalonia it was also of Spain because it was the first Spanish club. The same happened with the first (Coca-Cola) factory that was in Barcelona, and it was the first factory of Spain.
>
> (Antoni, the Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016)

In this quote Antoni expresses the need of denying a possible relation of exclusion between Catalonia and Spain by affirming that what is Catalan can as well represent the whole Spain. He has thus a need of exposing and delimitating the boundaries of the frame of influence of his collectors' club and he does it exposing or being affected by a current political debate on political self-determination of two nations. A part from that, it is common that collectors clubs are framed within nation-state boundaries even if they deal with products with such an international presence like Coca-Cola.

All in all, the myth of the nation state is only present in these amateur museums[34] in the fact that it regulates their activity. Nevertheless, it is a very powerful and naturalized

[34] The case of the Toy Museum in Medellin is hard to compare with the Catalan museums as it would need to be situated in its contextual historical and political setting. Nevertheless, as we will see in the in

convention and it builds the legal frame in which we act. It is thus very difficult for the museum practitioners to escape from it while talking about their work. Furthermore, although some of the museum practitioners have an openly Catalan nationalist ideology (the Maternal Museum, The House of Butterflies, the Geology and Gypsum Museum), their museums are only indirectly influenced by the idea of the Catalan nation. In most cases, their spatial framework is a blurry compendium of the Spanish state, the Catalan nation and its administrative boundaries, and especially their local sphere, determined by their hometowns and their surroundings. In other museums the idea of the nation and the state are almost impossible to detect. Such is the case of The Den of the Shark, which focuses on Mediterranean sharks on one side and on the fossils found in the surroundings of Joan's hometown on the other.

Nevertheless, the myth of heritage and its preservation that we are about to focus upon relies on the understanding that material culture is meaningful for those inhabitants of a nation-state, that it belongs to them and that they have a saying on how it is managed (Groot, 2009). It is the nation-state the one responsible of guaranteeing the access to its own heritage because heritage is a proof of its own existence.

The Myths of Heritage and Preservation

It was also in the period of time between the Enlightenment and the end of Romanticism that the myth of heritage and its preservation as we still have it today was formed. If the motivations for keeping and preserving objects during the Enlightenment were explained under issues of scientific research and educational exemplarity, and before that as amusements or symbols of richness and status or moral superiority, it was during Romanticism that the remains from the past were kept for vague identity, aesthetic and historicist reasons that only the educated elite could designate and identify (Smith, 2006).

Smith analyzes heritage as being created and controlled by a hegemonic view that answered to Western elite's values and that constituted the authorized heritage discourse that is still valid today:

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the next section, Rafael often implies the idea that heritage management and protection is a governmental duty, which makes it easily framed within the boundaries of the myth of the nation-state.

> This discourse takes its cue from the grand narratives of nation and class on the one hand, and technical expertise and aesthetic judgement on the other. The 'authorized heritage discourse' privileges monumentality and grand scale, innate artefact/site significance tied to time depth, scientific/aesthetic expert judgement, social consensus and nation building. It is a self-referential discourse, which has a particular set of consequences.
>
> (Smith, 2006: 11)

The idea of heritage and its preservation were thus shaped in parallel to those of national identity, historicism and a liberalism that came with the raise of middle classes. Most authors coincide in situating the establishment of the idea of heritage during the nineteenth century, although "the first legal decree to protect national antiquities dates back to the seventeenth century in Sweden" (Smith, 2006: 18). In fact Walsh (1992) considers that despite the fact that in the middle ages there was already some kind of concern for conservation, preservationism as we still know it today appeared in the nineteenth century to reach its peak at the second half of the twentieth century (Walsh, 1992). During the nineteenth century, and coinciding with the nationalization of buildings and collections after the French revolution in France, and the creation of national collections in Britain through donations and public purchases (Lowenthal, 1998), most western countries legislated the selection and preservation of heritage. The pieces of material past were turned into heritage under romantic values, and they were reframed through legislation, through their highlighting by signaling, or through their inclusion into museums' collections where they became "facsimiles of themselves." (Bennett, 1995: 129)

> Fragments, remnants, and ruins were cherished as irreplaceable connection points with a receding reality, and were reconstructed or reconfigured into what should constitute a coherent and meaningful History. This rendered the past both accessible, a matter of tradition, continuity, and identification, and foreign, exotic, colourful.
>
> (Leerssen, 2010: xv)

In front of the growing industrialization this romantic heritage, was meant to recover an elitist material culture, especially through its cathedrals, palaces and countryside buildings dated before the seventeenth century (Smith, 2006). Heritage was meant also to be meaningful through the education of the public about its values and meanings, which also transferred "a sense of a 'conservation ethic'" (Smith, 2006: 19). Although

there were and still are many different approaches to how restoration and preservation are supposed to be carried on, what is always common in all of them (and is part of popular belief) is the certainty that some things *have* to be preserved for the future generations. The reasons and criteria for this conservation were, and still are, reserved to the educated and authorized: archaeologists, art historians, scientists, and so on.

Heritage and its preservation, linked to the myth of the nation-state, was during Romanticism also applied to nature, which led for example to the foundation of national parks (Young & Riley, 2002). The preservation of natural resources has more than ecologic purposes. It is still highly interfered with the conception of nature as heritage implying the duty of its preservation: "Legacies of nature, prehistory, art, and architecture are hyped in terms ever more alike. Exotic dragonflies and endangered dialects are not yet priced alongside Old Master paintings in Sotheby's sales books, but their collectors and protectors talk the same legacy lingo" (Lowenthal, 1998: 5).

The Western views on heritage have been imposed to non-western countries, especially through international regulations and international organizations like ICOM. The imperialist expansionism of western countries and their plundering of the material culture of invaded and visited countries, forced these other countries to adopt and use the value set of western heritage to reclaim what was theirs. During the last decades, the pressure of non-western countries have pushed towards amending the Eurocentric views on heritage. Nevertheless, and despite some improvements, these regulations continue to contribute to further spreading and establishing the hegemonic western views on heritage in the rest of the world. As a result, "in our present-day usage, the concepts of identity, tradition, and heritage have become almost interchangeable, both within and outside Europe" (Leerssen, 2010: xxii). UNESCO defines World Heritage sites as being of "outstanding universal value" (UNESCO, n.d.), a choice of terms which is as well highly unconvincing, as it keeps on mistaking the values of a few for those of everyone.

Nowadays, the term "heritage" is so overused and it is "so routinely [...] rated a good thing that few ask what it is good for" (Lowenthal, 1998: 94). Such naturalization risks to hide the "power relations that give rise to it and to make opaque the cultural and social work that 'heritage' does" (Smith, 2006: 17).

> The 'heritage' discourse therefore naturalizes the practice of rounding up the usual suspects to conserve and 'pass on' to future generations, and in so doing promotes a

> certain set of Western elite cultural values as being universally applicable. Consequently, this discourse validates a set of practices and performances, which populates both popular and expert constructions of 'heritage' and undermines alternative and subaltern ideas about 'heritage'. At the same time, the 'work' that 'heritage' 'does' as a social and cultural practice is obscured, as a result of the naturalizing effects of what I call the 'authorized heritage discourse'.
>
> (Smith, 2006: 11)

The concept of heritage is not only Western and bourgeois but also gendered (Lowenthal, 1998). Family heritage was traditionally transferred from fathers to sons. The word patrimony that in many languages is also used to refer to heritage is obviously male, paternal. Not only women did not traditionally own patrimony or inherited it, but they were also understood as part of men's property. Women though, are the traditional carers of ancestral data, being in many societies the ones to keep, remember and explain to the next generation (Lowenthal, 1998).

Heritage is still perceived as a tool for ethnic or national state unity. It is also a tool for remembering the horrors of the past and thus, a way to avoid repeating them, as objectual (even if immaterial) carriers of meaning that can be used for bringing communities together, or for those forced to displacement often by violent forces, a way to recover their roots. As an international enterprise, heritage can even be a war objective or the triggering of international hostility and the media seem more effective in transmitting the tragedy of heritage destruction than of the destruction of human lives in wars like the Syrian. By doing so they contribute to the myth of heritage and its preservation, taking its importance and the importance of the values that such heritage encloses for granted. Diplomatic tensions between countries with otherwise peaceful relations due to past plundering and the current symbolic and economic exploitation of the plundered material heritage are still current affairs.

In order to have such a strong power on societies, heritage needs to be also activated, enacted and re-enacted, and not just kept and researched. Heritage is put to public gaze, apparently for educational purposes. Heritage is permanently transformed through interpretation in order to answer to present needs. It transforms history into myth by acting as a temporal bridge and by monumentalizing it. This is, heritage is both a proof and a monument of the past. Heritage always has an ideological dimension as it naturalizes interpretations of past events that build present worldviews (Groot, 2009).

Through actualization, heritage enhances virtues or horrors, and depending on the effect that is sought, heritage celebrates or forgets. And yet Walsh (1992) considers that the past is presented through heritage as being unattached from the present, which gives the past an appearance of neutrality (Walsh, 1992). Of course, specific bits of heritage do not convey the same meanings for everyone. Not only specific heritage sites, objects and practices are discussed, but the myth of heritage itself is continuously being challenged. And yet it has the symbolic quality of answering to the needs of different people. As symbols of people and their identities, heritage can be used to build meanings that are exclusive of each other (Segal, 1998). In fact, heritage easily transmits ideas and worldviews that seem to be proved by the past but that in fact are not:

> Heritage relies on revealed faith rather than rational proof. We elect and exalt our legacy not by weighing its claims to truth, but in feeling that it must be right.
>
> (Lowenthal, 1998: 2)

Heritage is also a business product which, with the raise of tourism, became massively consumed. This does not only bring more difficulties for conservation (masses of visitors can harm certain sites), but also raises questions about the meanings that are being massively transferred and who is in control of them. It also sharpens the debate on who should take advantage of heritage as an economic resource and, if we believe that heritage belongs to everyone, who should exploit it.

Of course from the field of heritage studies, heritage has been already problematized for a few decades by scholars, practitioners and minority groups, who keep on trying to rethink its definitions, inclusions and exclusions, its political condition and effects, its tangibility and intangibility its Eurocentric approach and in sum, its challenges for the future (Akagawa, 2016; Kockel & Nic Craith, 2007; Smith, 2006). But these attempts have usually been proposed top-down instead of bottom-up, trying to include those excluded into the hegemonic heritage discourses instead of really challenging the current authorities (Smith, 2006). Instead, community heritage proposes heritage determination, management and activation by the same communities that produce the material and immaterial culture to be preserved, usually with the aim of building the representations of their own past and also of taking advantage of it as an economic resource. The manners in which certain material culture and other practices can be turned into heritage are diverse, but museums are an option among them.

The Myth of Heritage and its Preservation in Amateur Museums

Amateur museums such as the ones included in this research differ from community museums in that they do not openly consider heritage (community heritage) one of their objectives. They nevertheless have similar effects on their local communities: they bring economic wealth, even if limited, to their neighborhoods and villages and they enhance certain values related to them and their lifestyles or histories.

The House of Butterflies, The Den of the Shark, and the Geology and Gypsum Museum have brought to their villages coaches full of visitors from other towns and countries which have also spent their money in local commerce and restaurants. They are also visited by scattered visitors who might often spend part of the day in the area. Being their villages so small, the difference they make is perceptible, unlike the cases of the Coca-Cola Museum in Castellar del Vallès or especially the Toy Museum of Medellin, a big and active city that attracts many national and international visitors anyhow. This fact is one of the reasons that makes the museum practitioners confident in demanding some kind of support from their local governments. In any way, amateur museums scape one of the most common criticisms to the economic exploitation of heritage: that of benefitting big tourism corporations instead of local businesses.

Nevertheless, as already said, none of the researched museum practitioners openly talks about heritage. The term heritage (*patrimoni* in Catalan and *patrimonio* in Spanish, has connotations closer to possession and family-paternal inheritance) did not appear in any of our conversations during the interviews, visits and guided tours. Many of the discussed issues are nevertheless close to the idea of heritage or rely on the myth of heritage. Other issues, instead, seem to be in opposition to it. And finally, the myth of heritage and its preservation is sometimes a problem or a complication for the practice of amateur museum making.

In some cases, the idea of heritage that is present in the amateur museums might be in fact coming from some kind of inheritance that is central to the museum practitioner's identity. Agustí and Agustí Jr, from The House of Butterflies, inherited their hobby from their ancestors and from other collectors who were part of a generation that had a relevant role in the establishment of the discipline in Catalonia at the end of the nineteenth century. From a direct point of view, the hobby of collecting and researching on butterflies, rocks and fossils, is part of their family heritage. This is, it was inherited

from the grandfather of Agustí Jr and they feel it as a personal endeavor to preserve it and continue it.

> Agustí: All this was made by the priest and my father, they were two or three. And then this is very old. Here you can see all the places… if you look at this… of course, even people from minerology came and told us that these names (classification nomenclature) cannot be removed because this has a lot of value… because it has changed a bit now…
>
> Agustí Jr: This is the old naming [...]. We are conserving everything, both the original and (the old classification)…
>
> (Agustí and Agustí Jr, The House of Buttrerflies, interview, 2015)

And, showing me an old classification notebook:

> Agustí: And of course we have everything, if we would have thrown it away all this could be lost now [...]. This was done the year 1968 but it started in the 1900…
>
> Agustí jr: 1902.
>
> [...]
>
> Agustí: I have all these notebooks. Of 1920, this was made by Palau, maybe you know him, a naturalist, conservator, he was in Plaça Real (Barcelona).
>
> (Agustí and Agustí Jr, The House of Buttrerflies, interview, 2015)

They are also aware of the importance of the work of that generation of natural historians, and although they don't focus on that in their museum, they keep the original labelling and the original fieldwork and cataloguing notebooks.

Also Josep (Geology and Gypsum Museum) says to belong to a family involved with the gypsum extraction and processing for many generations. The museum building and his house occupy the parcel where their factory used to be. Although it is not a relevant part of the museum or his explanations unless one asks, pictures of his family posing in front of the long gone factory hang next to the models of abandoned and now dismantled Moorish ovens. This case is also similar to Joaquim's Bread Museum, as his family has been running the bakery for more than 100 years. The tools that belonged to the family's bakery were the origin of the museum's collection and he sometimes talks about his father in relation to the bakery and to the old processes of bread baking.

The ones that did not inherit their interests from their ancestors have, nevertheless, been cultivating them virtually all their life: Antoni (the Coca-Cola Museum), has worked for the Cola-Cola company since he was very young, Joan (The Den of the Shark), started collecting fossil shark teeth when he was seven years old with the other kids of his village, and Rafael (the Toy Museum) has "only" been interested in toys for the last 30 years, but this interest is undoubtedly linked to the memories of his own childhood.

Their sense of heritage can also be inferred from their preservation efforts through their collections. As already mentioned, Josep (Geology and Gypsum Museum) dedicates one of his exhibition rooms to the self-made scale models of Moorish gypsum ovens, which he believes to be abandoned and unprotected and to not well documented.

> Josep: …you could find that this old ovens all around Catalonia were being lost. So then I thought that I would use the room that used to be for exhibitions as a room for the models. I went to these places, I took pictures, I picked stones, I measured, I made the drawings and then I did the room of models of old Moorish ovens. [...] I enjoyed it because these old ovens… cannot be forgotten, they are here with history.
>
> Me: And they were not well documented?
>
> Josep: No, not that I know about.
>
> (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

Although he never specifically says that the ovens are heritage, his discourse around them fit the myth of heritage in his perception that they should be documented and remembered because they are part of history. If he does that through scale models it is because he cannot preserve them in their original shape and place.

Joan from The Den of the Shark works with a different kind of heritage: natural heritage. One of his main objectives when turning his passion into a museum was the attempt to bring closer a more realistic image of sharks to the population. As he perceives it, sharks are highly feared because they are misunderstood and unknown and this only contributes to endangering their preservation as species even more.

> I did the museum to explain what sharks are, to know what they are and from there, to be able to love them. You cannot love what you don't know.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Although he never directly talks about heritage, his discourse is close to that of natural heritage preservation triggered of course by ecologic and animalistic concerns. The

items of his collection are nevertheless quite far from the idea of heritage. He rather views his collection as a resource to be used for research by any specialist, lending it to universities and museums. Furthermore, he is little concerned about conservation issues, and allows the visitors of his museum to touch absolutely all the items including the ones that are economically more valuable and difficult to substitute.

This kind of natural heritage preservation ethic is also present in Agustí and Agustí Jr from The House of Butterflies. They also consider that part of their purpose is to give value to the butterflies of the area of Vic, some of which are in danger of extinction. As can be read in their website:

> The fall in the number of butterflies is becoming more and more alarming, a fact that highlights the highly negative tendency towards biodiversity loss that is occurring on a large-scale. The conservation of butterflies and their natural habitats is essential and one of the ways we can help is to make people more aware of the natural riches that we possess. [...] if we want people to respect the environment, then we must ensure that they truly appreciate it.
>
> (Gabaldà & Gabaldà, n.d.)

The idea that animals are "riches" that belong to us is a consequence of the myth of heritage. Their preservation work and the concern about the protection of material culture appears as a taken for granted when they talk about other amateur museums and collections:

> Agustí: A lot of people has made collections, for example in the countryside…farming tools… machines, a shovel, a sickle…and many of them who had place they also made some kind of museum, but of course, of old tools that they don't use any more. But at some point this will deteriorate and it will disappear [...]
>
> Agustí Jr: everything might deteriorate [...] but of course, you have to keep working on taking care of it.
>
> (Agustí and Agustí jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

But again, when it comes to the reasons why a collection should be preserved, they propose a mix of taken for granted ideas about the scientific value of "all collections" and a quite pragmatic view on the respect of the time and effort invested in them:

> All collections are of great scientific value and to complete a collection requires a great sacrifice in terms of both time and work. Thus, it is vital that collections be looked after and be well conserved.
>
> (Gabaldà & Gabaldà, n.d.)

Josep from the Geology and Gypsum Museum, does not openly include the preservation of nature among his purposes although he seems highly concerned about the deterioration of geological and mineral deposits because of the massive extraction by careless amateurs and speculators. This does not affect the museum as a product but it affects how he manages it and the other activities that he is involved with. For example, he avoids helping people that he knows to be careless in the extraction of minerals as well as speculators that try to make money out if this extraction.

In the case of Joaquim (The Bread Museum) the myth of heritage can be detected in his openly expressed attempt to contribute to the preservation of traditional bread baking processes and specifically of breads which are not being baked any longer.

> A few days ago I met a boy from Castilla that is a good friend of mine and he is going to his village, and I told him: "when you go there check if you can find something typical from there…" Because it's over, isn't it? It's over here, it's over in Castilla and it's over in Andalusia. It's almost over. Many breads are disappearing, they won't be made any more. Here for example we have the "hat bread" (*pa de barret*), or the "elbow bread" *(pa de colzes*) or many other breads are not baked any more, you won't find them anywhere. Right now I have to keep doing them, I have a whole collection of them, but they go bad and there is no problem as long as I can keep on doing them… the day I won't be able any more… (he laughs) we won't be able to do anything about it.
>
> (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

Some of the breads are of special concern to him because he cannot re-make them either because he does not have the knowledge or the ingredients. What he is interested in conserving is not so much the piece of bread itself but that specific manner of baking bread. So for him is not a problem at all to remake one specific piece of bread when he has the tools, the ingredients and the knowledge to do so. His historic approach also enhances the sense of heritage, as we have seen a few pages ago, as he also explains with documentation and dioramas the bread baking processes and bakeries of other periods of time that he values as practices of bread making rather than as objects.

The Maternal Museum has of course a critical relation with heritage in the same sense that it has been detected in relation to history. She is turning maternal objects into heritage through their musealisation. Furthermore, she seeks to highlight some inequalities provoked by a biased management of heritage. For example, in the catalogue of the museum, she comments that in many birth houses the plaques that signal the birth of some well-known individuals only indicate their first family name, this is, only remind of the father[35], "that is not who gave birth to them" (15). The myth of heritage is in Magda's hands a tool for enhancing the value and contribution of women as mothers in their societies, reversing the manner in which has traditionally been applied.

Although in this case heritage is obviously a tool for empowerment, some hegemonic ideas on heritage are also a burden for some of the amateur museum practitioners. For instance, Rafael (The Toy Museum), puts little attention to preservation, only cleaning the toys of general dirt when he buys them and dusting them from time to time. He allows visitors to play with the toys which obviously accelerates their deterioration. And yet he is sometimes concerned about the advice –or almost accusations- that he receives from some museum professionals.

> A man passed by a long time ago, a North American museologist who came to counsel the Memory Museum of Medellin [...]. He said "this has to be protected, this country has to protect this collection, all this is not yours, this is the heritage of this country. Why is it here? They have to protect this. You have three options: you either protect it (so it turns into an institutional thing), or sell it or this will be lost… you die and then all this is gone" he said. "This is amazing, nobody can do this again".
>
> (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015)

What the narration of this experience shows is how his collection is perceived in a very traditional understanding of heritage by an external museum professional. It also implies an accusation to Rafael of not doing the preservation job properly due to his limitations. In the case that this conversation is not faithfully remembered it shows at least Rafael's fears to receive this kind of accusations. Also, whether it was the museologists' words or Rafael's memory and interpretation of them, with this story

[35] In Spain people traditionally has a double family name composed first by the family name of the father, and secondly the family name of the mother.

Rafael is transmitting the idea that the nation state has the duty of conserving heritage. Curiously, but not surprisingly, once Rafael has done the titanic work of collecting, keeping and showing such an admired collection of toys, this is, once he has given them the patina of heritage, some of those authorized heritage discourse makers seem to discredit him as able to keep doing that job. When experts and other external people suggest that his collection should be better kept is because they understand that it has a value as heritage that makes it a wealth for the population in general instead of a private endeavor.

In an almost opposite manner, all the Catalan amateur museum practitioners feel that their collections and museums are not being taken into account by professionals and public institutions. When asked about the future and about the continuity of their collections and museums, they often show their convincement that they have the right to do of them whatever they want to. Although they make their collections available to the general public, it is not because of a sense of obligation tight to the idea of heritage. Only Joan from the Geology and Gypsum Museum was offered, once all the effort of building and starting the museum was made all by himself and his father, to share its management with the local government. He did not only decline that invitation that he considered as a lack of respect, but he claims that when he will close the museum, the collection will stay with him. This conviction is present also in Agustí and Agustí Jr from The House of Butterflies and in Martí from the Vietnam Museum. Amateur museum practitioners, either feel that no one will be interested in further preserving their collection (the Bread Museum) or that they can exercise their right over what is in fact private property to keep it for themselves and do whatever they please with it. Thus, their sense of heritage as being something of public interest and reserved for public use is limited to the opening of their collections in the shape of museums and to the sharing of their knowledge. In some cases it is obvious that the reason for this can be found in years of disappointment and resentment towards public institutions that they perceive as not having been up to their expectation. Issues of pride of the work done and of a strong identification with their collections and museums are also involved in such choices.

Some heritage sites and museums promote the participation of visitors with the inclusion of their memories, including them in the rethinking contents or in lending their own objects. But what amateur museum practitioners do is not merely

participating in an authorized heritage site or museum. They produce their own heritage without waiting to be invited by an authorized heritage authority to do so. They might have done it by reproducing some of the procedures and conceptions of the authorized hegemonic heritage, but as we have seen, the myth of heritage and its preservation is put in tension in practices.

The Myth of Museum's Educational Role

One of the myths of museums is that of the exemplary status of the objects that the museum preserves (Bennett, 1995), which is derived from the museum being an exemplary space, "a space where the population learn to civilize themselves by modelling their conduct on the middle-class codes of behaviour" (Bennett, 1995: 28). Before the Enlightenment, collections that were open to the public did not have an educational intention: they were mainly displays of power and means of power legitimacy. Some contemporary museum scholars still consider museums to be educational "in their very nature" (Hein, 2006: 340), or that "for all museums [...], their educational role is crucial" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999: 3) something that derives from the modern conception of museums.

The educational purpose of the eighteenth and nineteenth century museum is said to be homogenizing in that the values and worldviews of the middle class are made valid for anyone. Yet such attempt of homogenization hides an act of differentiation, which would explain how museums, instead of making society more egalitarian through education and civilization, they made it more unbalanced by "differentiating elite from popular social classes" (Bennett, 1995: 28). The lower classes were educated in higher status values with the explicit purpose of teaching them a shared code of conduct which would make societies more civilized and comfortable for the middle classes and the wealthy. It was through differentiation and distinction that the lower classes could be educated by being exposed to the rules of conduct and objectual wonders of the middle classes. This kind of homogenization did not expect to turn working classes into middle classes, nor to mix them, but to turn them into a more appropriate and gentle kind of working classes.

> The desire to propagate these (European, liberal) values found synergy with the liberal education movement, whose sense of pastoral care identified a moral responsibility to

> educate the public about their civic and national duties, and to promote social stability by fostering a sense of national community and social responsibility.
>
> (Smith, 2006:18)

Furthermore, the educational role of museums was believed to be self-evident and to have the capacity of self-instruction just by exposing visitors to a properly arranged and labelled set of objects. The universality of such educational purpose was limited in several manners. First, the values of a segment of the population were made universal when those of others -of working classes, of women, of other ethnic groups- were dismissed or even discredited. But its educational effect was also meant mainly for white men, being not especially relevant for others' education.

We already saw in the first chapter how it was after the French revolution that museums started to be used to create discourses that could mold public opinion (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). To do so, objects were selected and spatially arranged to transmit and justify the needed values, ideas and feelings towards the nation-state. Furthermore, informative labels started to be produced and guided tours offered to the general public.

But *studiolos* and cabinets already had an educational dimension before that, especially when they were considered to be a proper activity for the children of the wealthy. The main difference was that in this case, it was the practices of gathering, arranging and displaying the collections that were educational, not only visiting someone else's collection.

During the twentieth century, the educational role of museums still reproduced up-down authority and knowledge inculcation especially relying on the authority of museographic language married to the authority of science and of authorized curators and educators. Still nowadays museums are places where children are taken to learn to behave in public space in relation to others and where the public is often not expected to be critical nor active.

Of course during the last decades authors writing from the field of museum studies, cultural management, museum pedagogy and so on, together with every time more concerned practitioners, have rethought the manners in which museums are or can be educational (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999). Some of these proposals include the participation and involvement of museum visitors, the consideration of visitors as active users, the debate and questioning of museum's contents and so on. One of the most

claimed interests of museums is their educational capacity, which is also one of the main justifications for public expense on them. In 1992, Hooper-Greenhill, like others, identified "the educational role of museums (to be) claimed as a major justification" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 2) for their existence and the public investment on them.

The Myth of Museum's Educational Purpose in Amateur Museums

One first direct and obvious manner to identify the educational role of these museums is from the fact that they all receive school groups to their premises. The only exceptions are The House of Butterflies and the Maternal Museum which currently open only on weekends. Nevertheless, during the 1980s Magda received school groups in the Maternal Museum, something that she stopped doing in 1993 because of the limitations of the space and the risks of harming the collection (www.mothermuseum.com).

The rest of the museum practitioners regularly receive groups from local schools that repeat the experience year after year. An outstanding example is that of the Bread Museum, who receives many school groups from local schools and collaborates with other activities within the same school premises.

> (Showing his agenda) Look, all these are visits that we received… usually during May is the most… they finish school and the schools try to get the work done. Many schools come during May. Last Friday I had 60 children. Grown up children, [...] we did groups of 16, when a group was here another was at the Camp de les Lloses (the local archaeological interpretation centre).
>
> (Joaquim, The Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

And he continues:

> The 15th of June, like every year, I have a group from the school Vedruna [...]. They go to the flour mill, then to the Wheat Museum (Mas Colomer) and then they end with the Bread Museum. They do the whole cycle. And then they bake bread at school [...] and last year I had to go there because the teacher that used to do it has retired and now I have to do it.
>
> (Joaquim, The Bread Museum, interview, 2015)

In their relation with schools, and as we will see in the next chapter, the museum practitioners are situated in an educational position –they are both presented to children

as the museum practitioners and as their guides- which infers them with an extra load of authority. The authority of the school in prescribing the amateur museum as a relevant educational activity is added to such a perception of authority in the gaze of the children, their families and the neighbors that know about these visits.

But the educational intention is anyway at the core of most of the amateur museums. Collecting and the research they conduct concerning their collections are triggered and fulfilled for mainly personal enjoyment, as we saw in the second chapter. Museum making instead, is rarely explained by amateur museum practitioners in such terms. The tasks that belong exclusively to museum making are never among the preferred or most enjoyed activities of the interviewed museum practitioners. When asked for the reason or the motivations to open their collections and their work to the public in the shape of a museum, most answers tend towards the educational explanation, mixed with a desire of sharing what they love and what they have achieved (see chapter 2). This educational purpose is in most cases linked to a desire to protect and give value to some kind of heritage, whether natural or cultural. The explanations in this terrain are always quite vague, showing a certain degree of taken-for-grantedness of the desirability of education through museums.

> We wanted people to know it. And also, as many of the butterflies do not exist any longer…this has a lot of value, as we say on our website, because this way people knows what was there before, the children and not only children…This is very important.
>
> (Agustí Jr, The House of Butterflies, interview, 2015)

Education, directed to children and adults is understood by Joan (The Den of the Shark) and Agustí and Agustí Jr (The House of Butterflies), as a transfer of knowledge that allows people to love something, in which love is understood to be a condition for respect. It could be said that the educational role of museums is thus based on their capacity to infuse value to whatever they exhibit, this is to turn it into heritage or into something perceived as positive and worth of preservation.

> Bit by bit you accumulate a lot of material and you say "this has to be shared", because you have to take into account that I did a museum thinking that I didn't want to do what museums do: you go there, you see certain things, you read a sign and that's it. So I designed the museum with the guided tour in mind. You followed the guided tour, you came in, I told you what the teeth are, the bones… then the biological parts and then…

> everything is related and put in a manner so it can be explained in a guided tour. If you enter (the museum by yourself) it will happen like in any other museum… there are many things but you can only think "how nice, stuffed fishes", but if nobody explains you, you won't understand anything. I wanted to give life to the museum, if you do a place of culture, people has to leave it knowing more than before…
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Joan's emphasis on the guided tour as the best means to transfer his knowledge and to make sense of the objects and display of the museum is also related to his desire for the experience of visiting his museum to be educational - and is very close to Joaquim's (the Bread Museum) view. This is implied also in his convinced statement that people should leave a cultural site knowing more than before. Learning is then a primary objective of a museum for Joan.

> …what I can teach will be welcome by some persons. Not everyone because not everyone likes this topic, and some persons that come to the museum can also teach me something.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

And:

> I did the museum thinking of showing/teaching[36] what I am not shown/taught when I visit a museum.
>
> (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016)

Also, his insistence to make visitors touch many objects of his collection is justified under educational purposes, because "touching is needed for visitors to know how is the skin, the teeth" and so on (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016).

Antoni does not really put a lot of emphasis on the educational role of his Coca-Cola Museum. Nevertheless, when he explained me about a temporary exhibition that he prepared in another village, he gave a lot of importance to his role in explaining certain unknown information about Coca-Cola:

> I filled the cabinets with the most important, significant things,[...] and when people came I explained the principles of Coca-Cola, what happened, why was Coca-Cola

36 "Ensenyar" means both "to show" and "to teach" in Catalan.

> invented, all this… they are very interesting things and not many people know about it.
>
> (Antoni, Coca-Cola Museum, interview, 2016)

He also receives school groups although with less regularity, as well as students who make school projects about the Coca-Cola Company and he happily shares with them all the information that he has.

Josep, from the Geology and Gypsum Museum, does not directly justify his museum under educational purposes. Nevertheless, he is a strong defender of the gratuity of museums, because for him "culture" should be free.

> Me: But you could have kept it as a private collection, why did you have the need to turn it into a museum?
>
> Josep: yes… well… it's something that I have done as well for people to enjoy. This was my idea. This is something that I have always said: museums should be public and for free. This would make more culture.
>
> Me: Like libraries?
>
> Josep: What's the difference? (He laughs)
>
> (Josep, Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016)

Although it would be too daring to imply a defense of museums as educational entities from that, it is clear that he considers that culture engenders culture and that this is something positive for society.

To sum up, the myth of the educational role of museums seems one of the most accepted and influential museum myths in amateur museums. Furthermore, this myth, enhanced by the legitimation of schools and other educative prescribers, legitimizes their authority. And yet the educational authority and directionality of museums is challenged because it is performed by self-taught individuals that work from the margins of the institution. Even if this is not the usual topic of discussion during the visits and guided tours, it is implied in them that virtually anyone can gain the authority to teach others and influence their communities through education.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

I have focused on five myths as central to the idea of the museum as we still have it today and which derive from the modern conception of the museum. Such myths are that of science and its universality, the myths of history, progress and a better past, the myth of the nation-state –that relies heavily on the myths of history-, the myth of heritage and its preservation –that is rightly related to the last two-, and the myth of the educational purpose of museums. These myths reinforce and depend on each other, although they sometimes have contradictory versions of the same issues –for example the myth of progressive time and the longing for better gone times. Most of the critical work made by museum practitioners and scholars since the seventies was directly or indirectly facing the ideological consequences of the mythological system that museums are based on. If it is still so difficult to engage with new perspectives on history, science, heritage, identity or education it is because it means to fight against some of the most powerful myths of modernity and their naturalized values.

Amateur museums are also a product of this mythical system and they contribute to its continuity. And yet they relate to all these myths in ways that also contribute to changing some of their ideological features.

Many of the researched museums rely on the myths derived from science and academic disciplines, they accept their values and legitimacy and nevertheless, seeing their practices and the way they explain them in detail shows how they use and relate to them in different and contradicting manners. Although their disciplinary choices usually seem to derive from taken for granted assumptions related to the myths of museums, amateur museum practitioners often oppose their mythic disciplinary authority by choosing their own procedures or by highlighting neglected visions. Because of their lack of attachment to formal institutions they can also more easily subvert and change practices in order to adapt them to their own interests. In consequence, they implicitly transmit to their visitors that science can be made from outside the authorized paths by virtually anyone.

The effects of the myth of history, progress and the longing for a better past can be detected in them in the valuation of older objects over new ones or in the romantic view upon objects as gates to the past. And nevertheless, they are also questioning who's

past is being told and including the stories of those that are not traditionally represented by mythical history.

While public museums in Catalonia and in Spain tend to be framed within national, national-state or regional identity boundaries, these amateur museums tend to escape them. They are of course highly influenced by the myth of the nation-state and its role in museum practices, something that can be easily detected in their explanations. Furthermore, they are tied to legal boundaries that coincide with those of their towns, stateless nation (Catalonia), and the nation-state (Spain). And yet when we look at it into detail, the presence of this myth in their museums is so fragmentary and contradictory that it loses most of its effects.

However amateur museum practitioners are more directly influenced and affected by the myth of heritage and the need of its preservation. This relation with heritage is different in each case. In some cases it is related to a family inheritance that originated their collections or their interests, turning the heritage that they deal with into a very personal kind. In other cases it is related to natural heritage, and in others to local cultural practices and even to an active critical heritage production. And yet some taken for granted ideas of the myth of heritage, like that heritage belongs to everyone and as a consequence it has to be taken care of by the state, create tensions in their practices. Furthermore, these amateur museum practices achieve some of the most difficult objectives of contemporary critical museology such as involving communities in the selection and activation of heritage, and they do it without the direction and motivation of authorized heritage makers.

Finally, also the myth of the educational role of museums has a high influence in these amateur museum practitioners, which can be especially observed through their motivations for starting their museums. Their educational intention is especially linked to their museum practices and not so much to their collecting and research practices. The fact that they are regularly visited with educational intentions, like is the case of school groups, only confirms and enhances the educational role attached to museums. This taken for granted educational role of museums infers museum makers with the authority of the teacher/educator and of the expert that has a knowledge worth of being transferred to others. Nonetheless amateur museum practitioners, again because of their positions of disadvantage, manage to follow different paths towards this kind of authority and by that they contribute to pluralizing the figures of authority and opening

new directionalities in the exchange of knowledge. Like Candlin (2015) has detected in relation to British micromuseums, the discourses that these provide allow discussion and debate between individuals in a more or less equal relationship and museum practitioners and their visitors have the chance to both propose and discuss their views (Candlin, 2015), something that is desired by the most critical education departments of contemporary museums.

Although museums have been put under critical scrutiny by visitors, media, politicians, activists, practitioners and scholars, the taken-for-grantedness of their necessity and of their overall positive social benefit is still generalized. Although many oppose certain features of museums, it is hard to find someone who reasonably discusses museums *raison d'être* as a whole.

The self-referenciallity of museum discourses constitutes, reinforces and secures its own myth. In fact, all the myths that are part of it (of science, universality, past and progressive time, nation state and group identity, heritage and preservation, educational purpose) are self-referential. They enclose their own justification and they explain themselves, they are self-evident.

It is also this self-evidence and self-reference that makes their criticism and the proposals of alternatives much more difficult. All these myths require experts, authorized professionals which are usually part of the same value-system and who continue to legitimize the central discourse while excluding other options. As we are about to see in the next chapter, access to this legitimizing authority is not easy unless its hegemonic forms are assimilated. Thus, the museum builds a machinery that constantly puts itself into the social centre that renews its myths through a series of rituals and the activation of the myths already discussed. In a tendency towards circularity, it is also this process that keeps those myths alive.

In the next chapter I will analyze some of these rituals and the way in which their performance has an important role in the way amateur museum practitioners relate to museum's mythical system, defining their practices and the positions from which they perform them. This insight on museum rituals will further explain how museums are able to create and maintain myths and how this capacity affects not only the mythological system that sustains museums but also the museum practitioners as ritual makers.

CHAPTER 4

Ritual in Amateur Museum Practices

Introduction

The centrality of museums depends on the capacity that they have to put themselves in relation to the mythical system on which they rely, which they do through their ritualized practices. Furthermore, and in an almost circular manner, "the museum is a powerful tool to build and maintain myths, especially when its discourses are not problematic and show one-sided points of view" (Dickinson et al., 2005). Museums' rituals keep on naturalizing and maintaining the myths – the sacred postulates- that give meaning to museums' own existence and situates them at the social centre (Couldry, 2005). The mythical system that offers a steady ground on which amateur museum practitioners root their practices is maintained and renewed through a series of secular rituals performed within and outside museums.

Museums, like other modern institutions, perform civic rituals, this is, rituals that engage their participants with the myths and values that are considered to be desirable within specific societies. For Bourdieu (2013), rituals organize "the perception of objects [...] but also the production of practices" (118), creating "*lasting dispositions* [...] attuned to the objective processes expected from the ritual action" and thus making "the world conform to the myth" (Bourdieu, 2013: 167). Analyzing museum rituals helps to denaturalize them as civic rituals, and by that

> we reveal their implicit interactional rule sets and open up the possibility that they could be otherwise. In this way, strategies of critical making can be applied to rituals as well as objects, and in particular, there are opportunities to reimagine our civic rituals from the ground up by enabling audiences to intervene into public space.
>
> (McVeigh-Schultz, 2014: 322)

This is why understanding museum practices as rituals can be very helpful for detecting and clarifying some of the manners in which museums are practiced as well as some of the causes and consequences of these practices. The ritual lens allows to analyze museums with a special emphasis on their symbolic and ideological machinery.

Myth and ritual theory has been applied to secular cultural practices (G Lynch, 2007) which, "like more traditional forms of religion, take people out of the everyday, draw them into something larger that gives meaning and focus to their lives" (Mahan, 2007: 54). As an analytical lens, ritual is a doorway to macro-structure, but also to the understanding of microsociological situations (R. Collins, 2004).

This chapter has the objective of showing how the researched amateur museum practitioners relate to and apply ritual museum practices and what effects they obtain from it. This analysis shows that it is mainly through the features of museum practices as rituals that museum practitioners are able to appropriate the authoritative and legitimating effects of museum-making and take some advantage of them.

To do so I will first approach the concept of ritual through some authors that have worked from the field of ritual theory as well as from myth and ritual theory (Bell, 2009; Durkheim, 1995; Rappaport, 1999; Segal, 1998, 2004). I will also focus on the work of authors who have used ritual as a lens to understand some cultural practices (R. Collins, 2004; Couldry, 2005; Kertzer, 1988; Lukes, 1975; Pyyhtinen, 2014) and, of course, on authors from the field of museum studies, especially Duncan (Duncan & Wallach, 2004; Duncan, 1995, 2014) and Macdonald (Macdonald, 2005b). I will continue to rely on Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1991, 2013) in order to relate all these issues to the analysis of amateur museums as socially situated practices.

Afterwards I will show that amateur museum practitioners, like any ritual leading performer, are the main recipients of the rituals that they enact because they receive the liminal effects of their rituals as well as the emotional energy that these produce. And especially because performing museums' rituals they are setting themselves as ritual performers, reversing the usual path for achieving ritual authority and infusing themselves with symbolic capital that moves them toward more central positions within their fields and legitimates their worldviews.

Furthermore, I will delve into museum's civic ritual, this is, the role of museums in transmitting and naturalizing the myths and values that are considered to be bring society together. I will analyze how these specific amateur museum practitioners relate to museum's civic ritual, showing that despite being unauthorized museum ritual practitioners, they also contribute to it, especially because they are deeply influenced by the myths of heritage and of the educational role of museums.

Finally, I will analyze some of their practices in detail as being intrinsically ritualistic and I will show how these museum practitioners manage practices of distinction between sacredness and profanity. I will do this through the analysis of their attachment to ritual formality, the analysis of the symbolic and sacred features of their spaces, of their ritual performances and of the sacred and profane objects that they put at play.

Ritual

Lukes defines ritual as a "rule-governed activity of a symbolic character which draws the attention of its participants to objects of thought and feeling which they hold to be of special significance" (Lukes, 1975: 291). This definition finds normative and symbolic aspects, as well as the emotional and cognitive dimensions to be central to ritual. Rappaport, instead, offers a very different approach, which highlights the performativity of ritual, its formality and stability, also insinuating the role of utterances and their institutional encoding. For him, ritual is "the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers" (Rappaport, 1999: 24). Central to his conception of ritual is the specific relation that it builds among all the elements in play.

Following Kertzer I will also understand ritual as "standardized, repetitive action" that is "wrapped in a web of symbolism", which excludes "habit or custom"(Kertzer: 9). To put it differently, standardized action has to involve "transcendent values" (Couldry: 3) to be considered as ritual, that, in this case, have already been specified as deriving from the myths of modernity.

Thus, for the sake of this research, I will attempt to use a mixed definition of ritual as formal, standardized, repetitive and rule-governed performance of acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers, involving transcendent values (myths) and wrapped in a web of symbolism, that draw the attention of their participants to objects of thought and feeling which they hold to be of special significance.

Analysing museums as a ritualised practice, approximately like Couldry does with the ritualization of media (2005), helps situating the activity in relation to a wider social space, particularly in relation to "the practices and beliefs, found right across social life, that make specific ritual actions possible" (Couldry, 2005:12).

The effects of ritual, like of museum practice, should be explained through the relation between the elements that constitute them. The meaning making capacity of museographic and collected objects rely in the fact that they are, like gifts, "quasi-objects" that "(constitute themselves) in relation to the (collective)" (Pyyhtinen, 2014: 6). Although this statement concerns any object inscribed in society, it is of paramount relevance in the understanding of both ritual and museum making. Indeed, reading museum practice as ritual helps us to enhance some relational aspects that are still often neglected. Thus, the perspective of ritual is a relational one that focuses especially on the interaction between all the elements at play which is where their symbolic power arises from, and where the "magic" (Duncan, 1995) of amateur museum practices takes place. The institution of the sacred and the profane as well as the practices of differentiation that result from them, can only be understood in the relations among things, practices and people. Eliade (1957) considers that the sacred expresses itself as such through acts of manifestation:

> By manifesting the sacred, any object becomes something else, yet it continues to remain itself, for it continues to participate in its surrounding cosmic milieu. A sacred stone remains a stone; apparently (or, more precisely, from the profane point of view), nothing distinguishes it from all other stones. But for those to whom a stone reveals itself as sacred, its immediate reality is transmuted into a supernatural reality.
>
> (Eliade, 1957: 12)

And yet sacredness is constituted, enhanced and maintained through myths and rituals.

Ritual is a product of society's structure but it also structures society. It constitutes social integration (Durkheim, 1995) through its cognitive dimension which we can also use to exercise power (Lukes, 1975: 301). Relying on Durkheim, Lukes defines four roles of ritual in contemporary politics that are useful also for the understanding of museum rituals. First, ritual is an "index or evidence of (pre-existing) value integration". Second, it is an "expression of such integration". Third, it is "a mechanism for bringing out that integration". And forth, "it itself constitutes such integration" (Lukes, 1975: 296). With this view, ritual leaves little space to agency, unless we consider that if it constitutes value integration, we can force it to do so with different values that would ultimately enter the circle.

Differently, the complexity of such power issues in ritual practice, is clearly summarized by Bell, in saying that ritual practice is "(1) situational; (2) strategic; (3)

embedded in a misrecognition of what it is in fact doing; and (4) able to reproduce or reconfigure a vision of the order of power in the world" (Bell, 2009: 81). Only the misrecognition of what it is in fact doing is a direct effect of the constraints of social structure, which allows us to reproduce rituals without realizing that we are doing so and of course that we are reproducing their ideological effects. Nevertheless, ritual has the capacity not only to reproduce the order of things, but it can also be used strategically to reconfigure it. Finally, and very importantly, ritual is always situational and thus, in order to understand how it works, and how it is misrecognized and inscribed in a world order, we need to know how it is situated in its specific context. Rituals might produce different effects in different contexts.

Through ritualization we can align ourselves "within a series of relationship linked to the ultimate sources of power" (Bell, 2009: 136). This alignment does not need to be empowering, but on the contrary, it can also be disempowering. It is nevertheless a strategy of differentiation (Bell, 2009: 90) because rituals define and manipulate relationships between things and by that, they are "constantly differentiating and integrating, establishing and subverting the field of social relations [...] distinguishing local identities, ordering social differences, and controlling the contention and negotiation involved in the appropriation of symbols" (Bell, 2009: 130). Because ritual is a practice of differentiation, it can be used to situate oneself within a specific order of things in an active manner or simply as an unaware consequence.

The distribution of symbolic power through ritual is unequal (Couldry, 2005: 137) and steady, but not fixed. In rituals, "beliefs about the universe come to be acquired, reinforced, and eventually changed" (Kertzer, 1988: 9). So ritual tends to serve those in positions of advantage, but it is also a tool for revolution and resistance, allowing the legitimation of other beliefs and ideologies as well as contributing in the position-takings of groups and individuals. For Kertzer the possibility to manipulate symbols is precisely "the material bases for political power" (1988:3). Rituals change, disappear and arise through this conscious or unconscious manipulation, modifying the myths and values that they maintained. Individuals and groups can fight to be included in rites or to change them, as well as to claim the authority to produce new ones (Collins, 2004: 12).

> Rites thus have both a conservative bias and innovatory potential. Paradoxically, it is the very conservatism of ritual forms that can make ritual a potent force in political change.
>
> (Kertzer, 1988: 12).

Yet people "need(s) to be in the flow of prior symbols, or opportunities to be introduced to them" (Collins, 2004: 155). Even in order to resist and transform rituals one needs a certain degree of inclusion, knowledge and acceptance of them. Nevertheless, the participation in rituals and their celebration might not mean commitment to a shared mythical system and its values, but only mere acceptance. Thus, the effect of a ritual on participants cannot be inferred from their participation. In the same manner, Lukes (1975) considers that we cannot read social consensus in the high engagement in ritual practices, in the "continuing compliance of subordinate groups in terms of their members' participation in activities, performance of roles and conformity to norms to which no realistic alternatives are perceived or imagined" (Lukes, 1975: 298). The high acceptance of rituals without social consensus can be partly explained through the ambiguity of symbols. The differences of interpretation of symbols, this is the ambiguity of their meanings, allow every ritual participant to feel them like their own even if there would be no consensus on their exact meaning (Bell, 2009). This allows many people to feel identified with one single symbol and thus to give the illusion of social consensus. This ambiguity of symbols is also behind the massive followers of political proposals that rely on strong symbolic forms, "promoting social solidarity without implying that people share the same values, or even the same interpretation of the ritual" (Kertzer, 1988: 69). In the same manner, the ambiguity of symbols allows others to appropriate the legitimacy and acceptance of symbols and ritual practices in order to increase their symbolic capital. Despite the fact that not all symbols are sacred objects, they may nevertheless serve as physical links towards the sacred.

Collins' model of interactional rituals (R. Collins, 2004) shows how rituals produce "emotional energy", which is a long term steady emotional outcome arising from "various short-term emotional experiences"(129), "a continuum, ranging from a high end of confidence, enthusiasm, good self-feelings; down through a middle range of bland normalcy; and to a low end of depression, lack of initiative, and negative self-feelings"(108). Emotional energy is derived from short-term emotions that are spread and shared among the participants of a ritual through their bodily communication

already discussed in previous pages. Everyone is affected somehow by the interaction with others and the emotional energy resulting from that, has long term effects on further social interaction. An unsuccessful ritual is energy demanding, while a successful one, tends to be energy charging. In any case, what emotional energy changes is group solidarity in a Durnkheimian sense. With a low emotional energy,

> one is not attracted to the group; one is drained or depressed by it; one wants to avoid it. One does not have a good self in the group. And one is not attached to the group's purposes and symbols, but alienated from them.
>
> (Collins, 2004: 108)

High emotional energy is expressed as self-confidence, enthusiasm, pride, attachment to symbols, trust to others, and so on, while low emotional energy manifests itself through a lack of confidence, boredom, depression, shame or sadness beyond the specific ritual situation, this is, in the individuals' long-term and steady view of themselves in relation to the group.

Authority, Legitimacy and Naturalization through Ritual

Legitimacy and naturalization are both condition and consequence of ritual practices and this is where part of its power resides. For Rappaport, one of the consequences of ritualization is "the naturalization of whatever it encodes, being [...] able of stablishing conventions" (Rappaport, 1999: 323).

In his analysis of the rituals of politics Kertzer (1988) argues how political leaders transmit better what they want to represent through rituals, symbols and dramatic presentations in order to engage with a group solidarity that can be easily translated into votes. This is possible, not only because of the ambiguity of symbols that allows masses of persons to feel in harmony already discussed in previous pages, but also because "the political leader [...] is likely to achieve a deeper and more lasting impression by staging a dramatic presentation of this image than he is by simply asserting it verbally" (Kertzer, 1988: 40). Sennett (2003) explains in his historical account of the changes of the public image, behavior and interaction of people in the cities of Paris and London in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries how people came to expect someone's appearance to be transparent or "authentic" and thus the ritual and the symbol became confused with the person, who is directly infused with their meanings. This direct association of people (or organizations) with the symbols that they use in their rituals, provides them

with a stronger symbolic power. The “strong emotional attachment” (40) to symbols and the worldviews that they are inscribed in increases the mystification of both symbols and the people and organizations that use them, increasing as a consequence their legitimacy: “the ruler does not simply take over the legitimating icons by virtue of his office; rather it is his possession of the icons that gives him his legitimacy and his office” (Kertzer, 1988: 46).

For Couldry, the formal features of ritual are the ones that enable the reproduction of their “categories and patterns of thought in a way that bypasses explicit belief [...] (embodying) hierarchies that (silently, as it were) help legitimate [...] power” (Couldry, 2005: 24). In other words, the formality and embodiment of rituals help naturalizing their contents and thus, legitimating the power exerted through them. It is the legitimacy of the institution that holds the ritual, of the ritual maker and of the ritual itself that has naturalizing effects: “Rituals do not so much express order, as naturalize it; they formalize categories, and the differences or boundaries between categories, in performances that help them seem natural, even legitimate” (Couldry, 2005: 27).

Part of this legitimating ability resides in the logic of sacred postulates (Rappaport, 1999) which cannot be empirically verifiable nor directly falsified because they are ideological statements that depend on the values and political agendas of specific societies. They are not empirical truths. Many ideological postulates, like the myths that I exposed in the last chapter, claimed as self-evidences, become social facts as long as someone keeps repeating and reproducing them as in rituals (Rappaport, 1999: 278). These are not only taken for granted ideas, but the basis on which the whole institution rests. Thus, as a self-evidence worth fighting for, any organization or individual that is symbolically ascribed to it, will be imbued with the same aura. But because they are not verifiable self-evidences, they need to be kept alive in the social imaginary, and this is done through rituals. Rituals need the myths in order to have a reason to be, and at the same time, they keep myths alive.

It is again a circular phenomenon: ritualization naturalizes values, ideas and conventions enclosed in myths, and, in turn, the specific ritual practices become naturalized increasing their ideological effect. Ritual makers might not be totally aware of such effects, because rituals can be performed in a naturalized manner. This blindness in ritualization is best explained by Bell in saying that ritual

> tends to see itself as the natural or appropriate thing to do in the circumstances. Ritualization does not see how it actively creates place, force, event, and tradition, how it redefines or generates the circumstances to which it is responding. It does not see how its own actions reorder and reinterpret the circumstances so as to afford the sense of a fit among the main spheres of experience—body, community, and cosmos.
>
> (Bell, 2009: 109)

And she continues:

> It does not see the schemes of privileged opposition, hierarchization, and circular deferment by which ritualized agents produce ritualized agents empowered or disempowered by strategic schemes of practice. Ritualization sees the evocation of a consensus on values, symbols, and behavior that is the end of ritualization. It does not see the way in which the hegemonic social order is appropriated as a redemptive process and reproduced individually through communal participation in the physical orchestration of a variety of taxonomic schemes.
>
> (Bell, 2009: 110)

In order to have the legitimacy to perform a ritual, the performer needs to have been invested with the authority to do so. Kertzer defines authority as "the belief that a person has the right to exercise influence over other's behaviour" (Kertzer, 1988: 12). It is the institution that gives the authority to an individual to perform a ritual. This is done through acts of objectification of legitimacy that are proof of "the explicit qualifications to take the parts that they do or, indeed any part at all" (Rappaport, 1999: 331). This processes also establish what Bourdieu calls a "sense of limits and of the legitimate transgression of limits, which is the basis at once of the ordering of the world [...] and of the ritual actions intended to authorize or facilitate the necessary or unavoidable breaches of that order" (Bourdieu, 2013: 124). The sense of limits prevents us from performing unauthorized rituals and also pushes us to evaluate or judge the legitimate authority of others in the rituals they attempt to perform.

When individuals' legitimacy as performers is objectified often through other rituals and symbolic objects (such as university titles, pledge of alliance ceremonials or swearing in by an oath) they become fused with the institutional message that they are going to enact in performing further rituals:

> (They) conform into the order to which (their) performance give(s) life, the performer becomes indistinguishable from that order for the time being. (They) realize, make real,

> make into a res, that order, providing it with the substance of (their) own breath and body as it, reciprocally, invests (them) with its own form.
>
> (Rappaport, 1999: 284).

As we have already seen, materialization gives shape and makes thought palpable. With the mediation and objectification given by their voices, bodies, and gestures, performers and ritual shape each other. This can be seen as

> a circular phenomenon: the purpose of ritualization is to ritualize persons, who deploy schemes of ritualization in order to dominate (shift or nuance) other, nonritualized situations to render them more coherent with the values of the ritualizing schemes and capable of molding perceptions.
>
> (Bell, 2009: 108)

The circularity goes on in that ritualized agents are the ones that have the authority to invest others with the legitimacy to perform rituals. This leads to the "development of a body of specialized agents who possess or control important mechanisms of objectification, [...], the development of a form of control that can be more total because it is more indirect and invisible" (Bell, 2009: 131). Ritual mastery is thus of limited access, either because of direct limitations (e.g. women as priests in the Catholic Church) or because of structural constraints (difficulty of access to higher education for students with lower incomes). This stratification of access to ritual authority leads to the domination of "the strategies of ritualization" by specific groups, "recognized as official experts" who objectify "the definition of reality (that) works primarily to retain the status and authority of the experts themselves" (Bell, 2009: 131-2). The recognition among those who belong to these groups derives (as we have seen also in other chapters), to stylistic similarities and a shared taste which in turn serve to differentiate them from those who are not official experts:

> The stylistic features which characterize the language of priests, teachers and, more generally, all institutions, like routinization, stereotyping and neutralization, all stem from the position occupied in a competitive field by these persons entrusted with delegated authority.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1991: 109)

The need for legitimacy does not only affect the leaders of ritual practices, but also other ritual participants. Some rituals are limited to participants that have somehow

been ritualistically initiated (for example being able to receive the Holy Communion only after receiving the initiating rite of the First Communion) and thus legitimated to participate in it, but others are limited by gender or age and others, more ambiguously, by education or social class[37]. Because rituals have such an important role in the naturalization and maintenance of values and worldviews, and in creating and maintaining group solidarity, the stratification on which this authority and access limitation cycle relies on, produces yet a more important inequality:

> Differential participation in ritual entails differential access not only to the sacred and sanctified per se but to the construction, maintenance, and modification of meaning and value generally. As such the establishment of exclusionary qualifications for ritual participation not only provides a fundamental ground for social inequality within human societies, but may have been crucial in its primordial development, legitimation and maintenance.
>
> (Rappaport, 1999: 331)

The authority of ritual makers and participants is nevertheless subject to the correct enactment of the ritual. While legitimate ritual performers are exchangeable, formality of ritual procedures must be respected. Specialists are following a script and is the "institutionalized office (that) can control, constrain, and pass judgment on a specialist" (Rappaport, 1999:132). Participants in rituals, even if lacking objectified authority, are able to also judge the specialists' performance and correctness.

Of course, the highest the authority and legitimacy of specialists, the easier it is for them to propose changes to the formal features of ritual[38]. And yet ritual practices performed by unauthorized practitioners still have a very relevant role in their maintenance and naturalization:

> Those rites in which specialists preside are generally seen as more central, powerful, encompassing, and integral to the welfare of the whole than those that employ more locally skilled practitioners or none at all. Although ritual practices on this local and

[37] Western museums are open to virtually any visitor, but the specificities of their rites, the language, the references, the values they transfer, the aesthetic qualities answering to specific tastes, are limiting their actual understanding and participation to those that have already been initiated in it, something in which schools and families have a main role.

[38] In museum making, a well-known, awarded, curator or scholar has more chances to succeed in proposing alternative manners of arranging objects and transmitting meaning than a young inexperienced one or an amateur museum-maker.

> immediate level inevitably have less overt prestige, this should not obscure how they can be the backbone of any effective systemization of ritual practices.
>
> (Bell, 2009: 135)

Furthermore, if someone lacks the authority and legitimacy given by the "institutionalized office" (Bell, 2009: 134), the faithful reproduction of the formal steps of ritual can compensate it and, eventually, if perceived as properly performed, ritual will invest with authority the illegitimate ritual maker. In consequence the legitimating and authoritative practices of ritual invest them with symbolic capital and social centrality, which is among the causes of the strategic use of ritual, the appropriation of its forms and enactments and the resistance exerted through them.

Strategy, Appropriation and Resistance through Ritual

> Ritualized strategies for the symbolic struggles of everyday life, just like the great collective rituals of naming or nomination [...] imply a certain claim to symbolic authority as the socially recognized power to impose a certain vision of the social world, i.e. of the divisions of the social world.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1991: 106)

It is because of the possibility to "claim to symbolic authority" through the performance of rituals, that ritual practices can be used on one's behalf. On the one side we have seen that rituals reinforce the position of whoever is in control of the rite. On the other, although ritualization can subjugate other participants, it also allows them to negotiate their position ultimately empowering themselves (Bell, 2009: 211) or the whole collective to which they belong.

When Bell suggests that "those who control ritualization are in command of a particularly powerful form of objectification" (Bell, 2009: 189), it seems that such command is consciously directed to fulfil one's objectives and purposes. Nevertheless, ritual makers as well as participants might be performing a ritual that naturalizes values that are in fact disempowering them, even if they attempt to do it as a form of resistance. It is also common, that, as we have already seen, they do so without knowing exactly what they are doing and what the structure is that allows them to do so. The power and the limitations of power of the ritual master are also due to the depersonalization of authority, the specialist depending of an "office or formal status" (Bell, 2009:211) but not on its personality. As we have seen before with the circular phenomenon of the

process of transfer of authority to ritual specialists, it constitutes a multiplication of power, which happens to be seen as "vast, legitimate, and accessible only to those in the appropriate offices" (211). In reality, though, ritual makers are always individuals with their own personalities, history, knowledge and intentions, nor totally in control of the forms of objectification and not totally able to resist them. By attaching themselves to the institution and the values it promotes, the ritual specialist is both transferring and being transferred a series of meanings and power. It is in this ambivalence that there is a complex simultaneity between compliance and resistance:

> negotiated compliance offers manifold opportunities for strategic appropriation, depending on one's mastery of social schemes, even to the point of subversion. Nonetheless, any discussion of freedom and resistance in the ritual construction of power, although a corrective to theories of ritual control, should not minimize how ritualization does appropriate and culturally school the social body. Negotiated consent, such as the resisting participant in a totalitarian rally, or the pursuit of alternative ritual activities, such as the home churches of disaffected Catholics, may qualify and nuance the socialization effected by the dominant ritual activities, but this relativizing and its tensions still shape the personhood and the microdynamics of power within and among those involved. The orchestrated construction of power and authority in ritual, which is deeply evocative of the basic divisions of the social order, engage the social body in the objectification of oppositions and the deployment of schemes that effectively reproduce the divisions of the social order. In this objectification lie the resonance of ritual and the consequences of compliance. As Bourdieu and Bloch suggest, one might retain one's limited and negotiated involvement in the activities of ritual, but bowing or singing in unison imperceptibly schools the social body in the pleasures of and schemes for acting in accordance with assumptions that remain far from conscious or articulate.
>
> (Bell, 2009: 215)

We have already seen in the introduction and the first chapter how we appropriate languages in order to be able to code and decode them (Certeau, 1988; Hall, 1980), or how we do it as a political strategy by modification of meanings and purposes (Lefebvre, 2009a, 2009b). Appropriation of a language as well as the appropriation of rituals is possible because of their previous "dispossession" by objectively legitimized professionals and authorities who use and produce the legitimized language (Bourdieu, 1991: 59). Thus, in order to use and take advantage of rituals, individuals who have not

been invested with the authority to do so, need to appropriate them. Of course the appropriation of language involves the appropriation of symbols and symbolic power, which Kertzer calls "symbolic expropriation" (Kertzer, 1988: 43). Ritual allows and facilitates symbolic expropriation because the appropriation of the formalities of the language is relatively easy. Starting from a formal imitation, the legitimacy of rituals and their institutions can be borrowed, "redirected to new purposes" (Kertzer, 1988: 42).

Kertzer's work explains how revolutionary leaders need to expropriate and reuse symbols because they cannot simply erase them: this would mean to "question the basis of their own authority" (Kertzer, 1988: 45). The symbols of traditional museology have been often challenged, but mostly without totally denying them.

When illegitimate ritual practitioners appropriate somebody else's rites, they are not appropriating a mask, this is pretending to be powerful, but they are becoming powerful, they are, at least to a certain extent, mobilizing such power on their behalf.

> One appropriates and thereby constructs a version (usually neither very explicit nor coherent) of the hegemonic order that promises a path of personal redemption, that gives one some sense of relative dominance in the order of things, and thereby some ability to engage and affect that order.
>
> (Bell, 2009: 208)

Museum Rituals

Cultural practices that "we may not usually think of as religious take on the forms of religious practice" (Mahan, 2007: 54) and this is the case of museum practices as well. The ritual features of museums are more or less explicitly present in many museological accounts, but often in a general, suggestive manner instead through a specific analysis that would clarify what exactly of museum practices can be read as ritual or ritualizing and what specific effects they may have as such.

Carol Duncan's (1995) influential analysis of the ritual of public art museums focused on the constitution of art museums in France, the United Kingdom and the United States. Her historical accounts on the birth of certain museums that are still considered the origins of the modern museum such as the Louvre, the National Gallery or the Metropolitan Museum enlighten some ritualistic features of museums like their

buildings as sacred sites, their role in the political agenda of their time, and the ideologically shaping intentionality behind the creation and use of their collections.

Other authors such as Fyfe, Fyfe and Ross and Kirchbert, (Fyfe & Ross, 1996; Fyfe, 1995; Kirchberg, 2007) who developed their theories after the works of Bourdieu and Giddens, do not explicitly interpret museums as partaking in ritual practices, and yet they do detect in them the same practices of differentiation that other authors find in rituals. They coincide also in stating that museums are not the result of certain groups' interest, but that the identities of such groups are built with and through the differentiation schemes of museums.

In the following sections I will approach amateur museums from the point of view of what Duncan named the civic ritual of museums. Afterwards I will analyze in detail the formal features of museum's rituals in amateur museums relying on Macdonald's "museum magic" (Macdonald, 2005). Finally, I will return to the idea of amateur museum practitioners as the main recipients of the rituals that they appropriate and perform.

Museum's Civic Ritual

The general purpose of ritual has been said to be maintaining social order, renewing social solidarity (Durkheim, 1995), allowing group communion and improving emotional energy (Collins, 2004) among others. The messages and thus the intention or the final effect of the museum ritual changed over time and space. Nevertheless, as we have seen in the last chapter, museums derive from and embody the myths of modernity. In her analysis of the origin of the modern museum, Duncan (1995) claims that the model of the late nineteenth century North American museums,

> consciously borrowed from Europe, conceives the public art museum as a ritual that makes visible the ideals of a republican state, frames the 'public' it claims to serve, and dramatizes the unity of the nation. To be an effective civic symbol of this kind, the museum had to construct the visitor as an ideal bourgeois citizen, an individual with interests and needs very different from those of the courtier or aristocratic visitor implicit in older displays of art. As implied by the museum, the visitor was, at its most ideal, a self-improving, autonomous, politically empowered (and therefore male) individual who enters the museum in search of moral and spiritual enlightment. As a

> dramatic field, the public art museum prompts visitors to enact - and thereby ritually assume- this identity.
>
> (Duncan, 1995: 49)

These museums were made "demonstrably public" by building them on public land and with some public funding which allowed them "to claim that museums belong unequivocally to the public realm" (Duncan, 1995). This appearance added two powerful ideas to such museums: first, they seemed legitimated by local or national governments and thus appeared like a result of democracy itself, and second, as public entities, they belonged to "everyone", this being a strong tool for internalization and self-identification with the symbols and messages of the museum. Nevertheless, at that period of time, some considered that ritual magic damaged if lower classes would crowd the museums. The sacredness does not only concern objects but also the ritual participants, or, in other words, ritual participants are also symbolic objects with a part in the play. Some were seen as too profane or museum-illiterate to perform their part without disturbing the general effect of the ritual.

Although Duncan explains in detail how some public museums and their collections were shaped under the ritualistic needs and desires of specific wealthy donors, she claims that "it is the visitors who enact the ritual" (Duncan, 1995: 12), thus the rest being sterile until the visitor's presence activates it. Nevertheless the observation of museum workers and professionals rapidly show how their performances are often also highly ritualized in, for example, their guided tours or in the ceremonial manners of handling valuable objects and in exhibition openings. Duncan also raises the issue of the resistance of the museum visitor to its role of ritual performer: "people continually 'misread' or scramble or resist the museum's cues to some extent; or they actively invent, consciously or unconsciously, their own programs according to all the historical and psychological accidents of who they are" (13). The museum ritual can be resisted, tactically used, re-used (Certeau, 1988) and appropriated in many ways and not only by visitors but also by makers.

The modern museum is a liminal zone (Turner, 1979) where we find a different quality of experience. It proposes a script and a scenario where visitors and workers perform. In this performance, the visitor and the ritual maker change their status. Duncan works with the case of modern art museums, in which visitors assume and become part of the myths that I have discussed in the last chapter such as the myth of progress and of the

nation-state explained, which are justified with a specific lineal reading of art history that makes the society (here the state or nation) that produces the museum discourses the direct heir of the chosen masters (Duncan, 1995: 27): "the supposition was that by walking through this history of art, visitors would live the spiritual development of civilization" (49).

But was it really so? Did the visitors of the 18th and 19th centuries really feel and interiorize the liminal effect of the museum? Did most of them even have the tools and knowledge to interpret what was being told in the museum discourse? Further research might be needed in order to answer these questions, and we certainly have an important lack of documentation on visitors' accounts of their impressions of those first modern museums. Yet we do have this information about contemporary museums and we know that some visitors sometimes follow the expected script, but many others only follow parts of it while reinventing their manners of inhabiting the museums (Lindauer, 2006). We also know that their performance is very different if they go with their school group, with their families, with friends or alone, and furthermore, we know that some of them get angry, bored or confused. And, notwithstanding, we also know that the discourses and accounts that manage to become mainstream transcend the barriers of the museum to enter everyday life and become part of the sets of values of citizens that might have never stepped into that museum.

The civic ritual of modern museums is of course not only constructed through the discourses of art history. Ethnographic museums have been analyzed and criticised for the values transferred in their collections and displays too, (Clifford, 1988) and again a feminist and postcolonial revision has been necessary to put the kind of civic ritual performed through museums in crisis. Nowadays, even if the values behind the rituals of museums have changed, they are still alive in their role of educating citizens and enhancing their sense of belonging to the community.

Sacred beings only exist insofar someone believes or thinks of them, and this reaches a higher intensity during rituals (Durkheim, 1995). Religious rituals serve to renew the faith towards sacred beings which would otherwise slowly disappear. For Durkheim, rituals recreate and renew a moral being which is society, they create cohesion through the renewal of the belief and the feelings for its symbols and sacred objects (Durkheim, 1995: 351-354). Every new visit to the museum, every new opening of an exhibition, every new display of certain object, renews the relationship between museum makers

and visitors with the sacred objects and thus, with the ideology behind them: it renews the engagement with the civic ritual.

Civic Ritual in Amateur museums

In general terms, all the researched amateur museums participate in the civic ritual in that they renew this relationship with sacred objects, no matter which ones, and in that they teach desirable behaviors, something put specially into practice when they receive school groups and families with children.

Nevertheless, in amateur museum practices, the effect of the civic ritual is somehow more obvious from the side of the maker than that of the visitor. One of the reasons for the effort they make in managing their museums can be located in their belief in the civic ritual, which I understand here in relation to the myth of the educational role of the museum as seen in the last chapter. But those who more deeply renew the faith towards the myths and values of their societies are the museum makers themselves in their insisting endeavor.

Such use of the museum practices as rites related to the civic virtues of society – to the values that are sustained by myths (chapter 3)-, can be linked to a generation that lived the democratic Spanish transition in their youths, a period of time when the population was highly engaged in cultural and political life and when individual and collective action was seen as necessary and effective. This is specially the profile of Magda from the Maternal Museum and of Josep, from the Geology and Gypsum Museum. Although Magda started being concerned about the invisibility of women in Spanish museums already in the 1960s, her feminist fight could be said to be related to the political environment that was starting to undermine Franco's regime. On the other side, Josep critically explains that he started building the museum "at the beginning of that which they call democracy" (Josep, the Geology and Gypsum Museum, interview, 2016). He often shows his disappointment with political life and with the manner in which the Spanish democracy finally evolved. He was highly engaged in politics during the first local governments in his village, finally quitting due to his disagreement on how things were done, which produced in him a deep distrust on politics. Disappointed or not, he has very high standards on what democracy and public life should be, and during many years, he has actively participated in it. His museum is a more personal and self-sufficient manner of participating and building that society. This also explains his

sadness and the actual paralysis in his museum practice: a high expectation on his community and on his possibilities to contribute to it, have led to a deep disappointment and feelings of failure.

Of course, not all the amateur museum practitioners have this strong sense of civic engagement. The makers of the Vietnam Museum, The House of Butterflies, The Den of the Shark, and the Bread Museum can be said to participate in the civic ritual in a more indirect manner. Nevertheless their commitment to education is a central purpose to all of them which makes them have a strong civic effect. Their museums seek somehow a liminal effect on the visitors, who might come out from them transformed by the experience and the newly gained knowledge.

Antoni's Coca-Cola Museum is the one standing further from the idea of the civic ritual. It is as well the one that is less engaged with the educational myth of museums as his museum answers to a need of keeping himself busy after his retirement and sharing his passion while preserving his collection. Of course many issues related to a general understanding of the civic ritual are present in the museum (respect for the sacred objects and for historical facts, keeping a proper behavior, and so on), but contributing to the civic ritual is not a main purpose of Antoni.

The Toy Museum of Medellin is, as usual, a different case. The contextual political and social life make a great difference in relation to the civic ritual that the museum is part of. Although the museum answers also to a Western conception of museum, Rafael is obviously not influenced by this commitment to society in the way that the Catalan museum practitioners might be. He is nevertheless committed to his community in the sense that he is aware of how his museum is a node for relationships where people from very different classes (politicians, recyclers, wealthy people…) can feel identified and emotionally engaged. In his approach, and although this was not his original intention, toys serve to recover childhood and one's past, which is as well Medellin's past. The civic ritual that Rafael is engaged with has a lot to do with the memories and relationships that he activates in a city that has a taught recent history of violence and social inequalities. His civic ritual is peaceful and healing, and renews the faith in his community not only through the remembering of childhood happiness but also through the sharing of its sadness and finally through the evidence that history can be reconstructed from the bottom and the collective sharing of stories.

Museum Magic

Macdonald (2005) has also seen museums under the light of ritual, considering that, in museums, science and magic -authoritative knowledge and enchantment-, interplay thanks to the combination between the rhetorics of the exhibition and the authority of disciplinary expertise (Macdonald, 2005: 210-212). In other words, museum magic would be the conjunction between the formal, performative and aesthetic qualities of ritual to which Rappaport (1999) attributes the triggering of emotions and sentiment, which work together with the legitimacy infused by the authority of the institution (Bourdieu, 1991), in this case museography and its objectivizing procedures and art history, natural history, ethnography or any other discipline articulating the discourses of museums. Museum magic and authoritative knowledge appeal to, renew and maintain the myths analyzed in the last chapter.

For Macdonald museum magic

> consists of both the relatively calculated enchantment of museums – the architectural and aesthetic exhibitionary strategies used to attract the visitor – and also the magical excess provided by objects, which allows visitors to read their own 'occult' [...] meanings into that which is displayed.
>
> (Macdonald, 2005: 212-3).

The magic of the museum ritual that allows participants to understand their own meanings partly relies on the ambiguity of symbols. The capacity of symbolic objects to be read differently by any visitor, allows a higher degree of cohesion among the participants in museum rituals. The ambivalence of meanings of symbols permits them to be accepted by a higher amount of persons than if they would be verbally discussed. It is this ambiguity or "blindness in ritualization" that permits its "distinctive efficacy" (Bell, 2009: 109) and allows many people to venerate one same flag, a masterpiece or an old papyrus: "symbols and symbolic action not only fail to communicate clear and shared understandings, but the obvious ambiguity or over determination of much religious symbolism may even be integral to its efficacy" (Bell, 2009: 184).

Macdonald's museum magic relies partly on the aesthetic and rhetoric qualities of museography and the objects themselves, and also on the ambiguity of meaning that characterizes them as symbols. This magical effect can be enhanced or disguised through mediation and exhibition design, exaggerating the dramatic and aesthetic

qualities of objects or attempting to make the visitor feel a direct experience with the magical object (Macdonald, 2005), a dramatic effect in any case.

Of course, this dichotomy between museum magic and authority is only an abstract projection. They cannot be understood separately, because they shape each other and because in any institution science or authoritative knowledge always have a formal rhetoric with aesthetic qualities with their intertwined, institutionally shaped, ideological dimension (Duncan & Wallach, 2004). This is, science makes its own magic, it has its own institutionalized ritual practices and generates, as we have seen, its own myths.

Museum rituals are formally defined by a sacred space, an enactment of a series of ritualized practices by the participants in museum rituals and a play of sacred and profane objects:

> The sheer bringing together of items under the rubric of "collection" is the most basic transformation. By metonymic association, the sacrality of each item is enhanced. The container (whether it be envelope, box, or room) chosen to house the collection defines a sacred space. Conventions for handling the collection and schedules for interacting with it provide the ritual grounding for maintaining its sacredness.
>
> (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, Holbrook, & Roberts, 1988: 550)

All in all, museum rituals create or enhance the sacrality of some objects over the others, which are doors to the invisible and the metaphysical, this is to the mythical system on which museums rely on. Museum magic has to do with those aspects of museum practice that are able to turn them into midwives to the sacred, the invisible or the metaphysical, and that link the ritual participants to their myths.

Amateur museum practitioners are able to reproduce this magical effect through the creation of a sacred space, through the performance of certain practices and through the sacred and profane objects that they put at play. Furthermore, the adherence to the formality of museum ritual practices infuses them with the legitimacy and authority as ritual leaders.

Formality

Museum magic can be best detected through its formality. The importance given to non-practical form in rituals is one of its most distinctive characteristics (Rappaport,

1999). It might be also one of the most obvious manners to ritualize (it is what children imitate when they enact rituals in games) and it is also the easiest hint to detect ritual practices. Such formal features can be of many different kinds, including fixity and repetition of sites and times, movement of the bodies or verbal utterances. A high degree of formality "tends to be linked to the authoritative modelling of ritual" (Rappaport, 1999:92). For Durkheim (1995), ritual formality is the first manifestation of judicial formality, and, I suggest, of the formality of many other institutions like museums. The efficiency of the ritual is a direct consequence of the ritual script, which, strictly reproduced, should always produce the expected result (Durkheim, 1995: 33).

It is through formality that words can become also as clear and convincing as objects and acts, turning from statements into facts: "ritual speech is stereotyped and stylized, composed of specified sequences of words that are often archaic, repeated under particular, usually well-established circumstances (and) precise enunciation" (Rappaport, 1999: 151). With this formulas ordinary language turns into postures and gestures, this is it becomes substantial and it transmits indexical meanings too. Standardization and repetition allow to link rituals to their former enactments through emotions: "emotions experienced in past enactments of the ritual reemerge at subsequent reenactments" (Kertzer, 1988: 42).

Although rituals are often heavily stablished as rules and conventions, there can also be disagreement on how to perform them: "possession of (a) sense of ritual does not mean that members of a community always agree on how to do a ritual or what to make of it. Disagreements over ritual can be as fierce or as casual as those over honor or artistic beauty" (Bell, 2009: 80). This is very common in museology and is accepted by the different museographic trends that can radically oppose to each other.

Museums' ritualistic formality can be found in the ceremonial management of collection items, in the institutional relations between museums, in the attitude of visitors, in the designed itineraries and the obedience in following them, the modulation of voice tone and volume, and so on. The formality of the museum ritual tends to be stricter in modern tradition museums than in museums whose approaches have been affected by the feminist and postcolonialist practices. Such museums are critical with their own formality attempting to ease the movement of the bodies around their spaces and question the formality of display and architecture in order to critically think of it. These proposals include challenges in movement through space (like running and

dancing) or relational activities (like cooking and talking), or the use of catalogued objects by their communities maintaining their original use as religious symbols when at the same time being researched, preserved and shown in and by the museums, or, to give a last example, the inclusion of such communities in the decision making processes on how these objects should be displayed.

It is obvious that in museum practice a higher formality corresponds to a higher ritualization and to a more authoritative model of museum, which is more directly linked to the civic ritual, the inculcation of values and the glorification of ideals and myths.

In the hobby of collecting, such formal features are also common in, for instance, limitations on who is allowed to touch and to even see the objects, their distribution in space, the cleaning and maintenance days or the processes to follow when a new item enters the collection. The establishment and accomplishment of these formal features of ritual performance bring stability to collecting and museum making as hobbies.

Formality in Amateur Museums

The researched amateur museums are formally quite conservative: apparently, they follow certain formal features of museum practices that makes them easily distinguishable as museums to initiated visitors. Such attachment to formality can be easily detected in their displays, their spaces, the performative aspects of showing and visiting, the roles of bodies and objects, and so on. We will see them in detail in the following sections, but I will try now to show what the role of ritual formality is in their museum practice and what kind of importance they give to it.

A way to detect this attachment to ritual formality is through the importance that they give to respecting it, which they often express in the interviews and that can also be detected in their reactions to external agents that alter such formality.

We have already seen in the first chapter how these practitioners are often strict with the formal features of museum practice. Two examples are from The House of Butterflies and the Bread Museum. Agusti's and Joaquim's annoyance when they are interrupted during their tours is visible when the questions asked drift them away from their script. In the case of The House of Butterflies and The Den of the Shark, whose guided tours I attended among larger groups of people, their hosts insisted in everyone

moving together from one room to the other one, leading the rhythm of the visit quite strictly. Joan, from The Den of the Shark, allowed us to touch a lot of items and to take pictures, but he wanted us to keep moving at the rhythm he proposed, keeping us all the time together.

This shows the degree of formality of their guided tours -they are repeated once and again following the same structure- as well as the importance of this formality for them[39]. In a similar manner, their insistence on how things should be done, could also answer not so much to what is more practical in managing their museums, but to how they perceive that the ritual should be enacted. We have seen this in the case of Joaquim from the Bread Museum and his understanding that certain things "have to be well done" (Joaquim, the Bread Museum, interview, 2015. See chapter 1) or on the pressure that Rafael feels for not doing things (like cataloguing and preserving tasks) as authorized ritual makers consider that have to be done.

Being strict with ritual formality gives them some of the legitimacy that they might be missing from their lack of authority. Furthermore, strictness in formality might be an important part of the enjoyment of museum practices –of ritual performance in general-. As a game whose enjoyment depends on performing one's best using the space of freedom left to agency inside the framework limited by the accepted rules (Caillois, 2001), part of the enjoyment in performing ritual might be in the restricted space for self-realization allowed in the interstice between formal rules. The strict rules that most amateur museum practitioners seem to follow in their museums gives them space for creativity in, for example, the selection of objects, their disposition, the choice of displays or the script of their tours.

We will continue seeing hints of this attachment to formality through the analysis of the museums' ritual spaces, the performativity and embodiment of their rituals and in the role of objects in such ritualization.

Space

One of the most outstanding and steady contributors to formality in rituals and in museum practice is physical space. Both Macdonald and Duncan place special

[39] Part of their will keep the group together is also related to the attempt to protect their collections and displays, but it, nevertheless, enhances the sense of sacredness of the place.

emphasis on museums as ritual sites, as "culturally demarcated spaces of concentrated meaning" (Macdonald, 2005: 210), also finding that museum buildings coincide in location and aesthetics with religious sites. For Duncan and Wallach the first modern museums were conceived and built as ceremonial monuments whose architecture is (this kind of museum is still built although this is not the only paradigm of museum any more), as such, ideologically shaping (Duncan & Wallach, 2004). Their space, including decorations, transition spaces, communication between the inside and the outside, symbolic boundaries, size relation to human bodies, lighting, materials, and so on, together with the arrangement of objects, function as an "iconographic program" (Duncan & Wallach, 2004: 484). For them the modern museum is a paradigmatic example of the mingling between sacred and secular spaces. Also Belk and his colleagues consider that "the container (whether it be an envelope, box, or room) chosen to house the collection defines a sacred space" (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, Holbrook, & Roberts, 1988: 550)

Furthermore, the modern tradition gives the museum object the capacity to speak by itself, to transfer its clean meaning to the observer, contributing in naturalizing the ideological role and the meaning making capacity of the space and the display. For Duncan, most modern art museums, and I propose to apply this to any modern museum of any other discipline, answer to bourgeois ideology making their architecture and their spaces "as predictable as that of a medieval church and [...] equally dependent on authoritative doctrine" (Duncan & Wallach, 2004: 484). The repetitive formality of ritual found in the space of museums is what allows this predictability.

The museum space, even if it is an outdoor museum, like any other ritual space, is separated from the daily world; it is symbolically marked (Rappaport, 1999). Modern museums "dramatize the moment of passage from exterior to interior – from the everyday world to a space dedicated to the contemplation of higher values [...]. The entrance invites a first step in a communal rite" (Duncan & Wallach, 2004: 485). This is clear in Duncan's analysis of the modern museum, but more difficult to perceive in the humble spaces of amateur museums or of some contemporary museums that attempt to propose more human scale architecture, with a flexible and porous relation with their contexts and users. Nevertheless, the symbolic transition between the outside and the inside is common of all museums, sometimes even more critically in the cases that it is more subtle and difficult to detect.

Collectors also develop ritualized processes similar to museums' such as symbolically placing the objects, devoting specific rooms to them, controlling the access and forbidding others to touch them, taking reverent care or personifying the objects that sometimes reach the emotional importance and presence such of a family member (Belk et al., 1991). In such spaces the profane and the sacred as well as the public and the private merge through the conversion of the home into a museum-like space. Martin considers independent museums –not specifically amateur- as being "very often personal collections which have crossed the traditionally held divide between profane space (the private collection) and the sacred space (the museum). Once recognized as museums, their collections become validated by that recognition" (1999: 102). In consequence, reproducing the sacralizing ritualized museum practices is a form of validating and legitimizing a collection and I would add, many other practices attached to it, for which the institutional isomorphism that we have already seen in the first chapter (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) might have a very relevant role.

The Sacred Space of Amateur Museums

Amateur museums take this merging of the public and the private, the sacred and the profane much further. From all the cases, only the Geology and Gypsum Museum is purposely build as such, and it is located next to the owner's house. The rest are occupying domestic spaces or, like in the case of The Den of the Shark and the Coca-Cola Museum, adapted commercial premises. This does not mean that there is no ideology behind them, or that these museum sites are less symbolic because they are less monumental. The ideological framework set by their sites is directly derived from the architectures of their homes. All the visited amateur museums have a specifically delimitated space even if inside the homes of their makers: they are always a full floor of their homes, either separated with a door from the rest (Vietnam Museum), with a stairway (The House of Butterflies and the Toy Museum) or with both stairs and doors (The Bread Museum)[40]. The Maternal Museum, The Den of the Shark, the Coca-Cola Museum and the Geology and Gypsum Museum have a direct entrance from the street. As regards the rest of the museums, their entrances to the museum spaces have not been

[40] This is different in private collecting because collectors often display their objects also within their homes but not necessarily separated from living areas. Smaller symbolic spaces might be created with lightning, labels or cabinets, but they are not architectonic spaces.

built on purpose. Yet in all cases the museum practitioners have set a symbolic entrance that clearly tells the visitors that they are entering the symbolic space.

Visitors reach the Bread Museum going through the family bakery on the ground floor. Lead by Joaquim, through a staircase decorated with old objects, they cross his home vertically through the first and second floors. Finally, at the third floor Joaquim opens the door at the end of the staircase to let the visitors in, while at the same time switching on the lights. With the lights on, the interior of the museum is infused with life. There are no windows on that floor, and the inclined roof almost meets the floor at one side of the room. This isolation from the outside world, common in many museums, intensifies a feeling of cognitive isolation, an impression that the museum space is a space of retreat and stillness.

The Den of the Shark prepares its visitors for the symbolic world already from the street where the spectacle starts with the display of a reproduction of a megalodon jaw into which visitors tend to take pictures of themselves and of a painting of a shark with a hole to put the head in, also to be photographed as having one's face inside the sharks mouth. The entrance doors and walls are decorated as the bottom of the sea, and while entering it, the visitor crosses a boundary towards the bottom of the sea and its wild life. The interior is also totally decorated, from floor to ceiling, with painted plaster rocks, fishes and sea plants as it were the sea bottom. Again, only the doors remind of the outside. Without them, The Den of the Shark would be a totally closed space, like a bubble of oxygen under the water.

Entering The House of Butterflies is quite different. Always as part of a group, the visitor is lead inside a detached house through its garden. The feeling of being at somebody's home is increased by the familiar tone of the visit, led by father and son, and the presence, only for a moment, of Agustí's wife. She only welcomes visitors on the ground floor where the living area is, and to which we can only take a fast glimpse from the hall. Visitors are directed right away to the first floor through a staircase, already surrounded by preserved and photographed butterflies. While reaching the upper level, visitors are asked to wait in its small distribution area in order to watch a video on the life cycle of butterflies. This video works as a symbolic entrance to the space, during which all the visitors are emotionally synchronized and prepared for the visit. Once the video is over, the expectation is higher, the moods are synchronized, and visitors are finally led through the first door. The House of Butterflies is nevertheless

not isolated from the outside. Apart from the first floor hall, the three rooms that compose the museum, have windows to the outside, in general with nice views to the mountains. The visitor has somehow gone through an enclosed initiation space to be lead to the realm of nature whose presence is reminded through the windows. The link between the museum and the mountains is often reminded by Agustí and Agustí Jr, because an important part of their collection of butterflies is representative of that area. In this case the museum acts as a magnifying glass, a lens from which to watch and read the natural environment.

The Coca-Cola Museum is signaled from the outside with signs that read "Museu de l'Antoni" and with the Coca-Cola corporative image. There is no transition space: once the door is crossed, visitors find themselves in a single space packed with Coca-Cola items. The space can be perceived as symbolic in this case because of the visual density and the recognizable Coca-Cola corporative image, which has also a high symbolic power, being everywhere.

The space of the Maternal Museum occupies the ground floor of an old and restored two floor building in a small village. There is a small sign saying "Museu d'Art Matern" (Museum of maternal art) above the large door that is permanently open when the museum opens. Next to it there is a table that serves as some kind of reception counter. It is also behind this table that Magda and her daughter sit when there are no visitors. It is also full of Magda's books for sale. The space has no windows and although it is subdivided into two spaces, the lack of walls makes it look like one single space.

In contrast, in order to enter the Vietnam Museum, the visitor needs to ring a bell on a small door which looks like a door to the private patio of a house with no external signs. The patio needs to be crossed in order to enter the ground floor of the house, where the museum is. A ticket box, which is no longer in use, serves as a symbolic door. The four rooms and the small distribution hall with the ticket box is obviously a house structure emptied of its past uses and filled with cabinets. The lack of windows again isolates the visitor within the symbolic world of the museum.

The Geology and Gypsum Museum is one of the most different spaces. First, it was built on purpose next to the house of Josep, on the land where the family's gypsum factory used to be. Although it looks like another detached house in the village, there are two external elements that signal it. The first one is a sign reading "Museu de

Geologia i del Guix". The second one is an old mill stone wheel, standing next to the entrance and surrounded by flowers. The visitor crosses the garden with Josep in order to reach the door of the building: a single floor distributed in four main rooms and a small distribution hall. In this case, the distribution hall serves as an introduction to the museum, but there are no reception counters or ticket boxes. Although the spaces of the Geology and Gypsum Museum do not look like domestic spaces adapted into exhibition spaces, they do not look like traditional museum spaces either. They are in some space between one and the other one. Another relevant difference is that this museum has stained glass windows to the outside, all of them with colorful translucent glass which filters the light in, but does not let the visitor look outside. Although this light does in fact link the inside with the outside, it does it in a similar manner than rose windows in churches, creating a different atmosphere inside which does not belong to the world of domestic spaces or to the natural or urban spaces. There is a still and quiet environment in the rooms and the light from the outside is only complemented with the fluorescent lighting inside the cabinets.

Finally, the Toy Museum of Medellin also passes unadvertised among the repair shops of the neighborhood. Although Rafael has built a sign to hang outside, he has not installed it yet. A staircase separates the museum from his studio on the ground floor. Nevertheless he often shows his studio to visitors since he has also some toys there too. In fact, the environment of the whole place is outstanding because it is packed with toys, tools and sculptures, laying on and hanging from every possible spot. Also, compared with the bright light of Medellin, the place seems somehow dark and mysterious. The floor in which the museum is installed is a bit brighter because it has bigger openings to the outside. Nevertheless, these windows also let the light in, but do not allow to see what lies outside. The sounds from the noisy street also fill the place, constantly reminding us of its location and the city outside the walls and, although the magical atmosphere that Rafael has created, linking the visitor to the outer life. Furthermore, the constant visits that Rafael receives from neighbors or street sellers, also break with the usual quiet museum environment. A table and some armchairs where Rafael invites his visitors to sit and talk, as well as a fridge filled with drinks that he offers to his visitors, turn the museum into a very relaxing space. It appears as a magical space that makes visitors time travel to the past, but at the same time it is a space of confidences and play.

Because in general the researched amateur museum practitioners cannot afford to build a building on purpose, they are forced to adapt whatever they already have. This molding into the space, which happens also in purposely build museums (anecdotes about how curators have to fight against the architecture's restrictions in museums build by star architects are very common among museum professionals) forces also the museographic script and the aesthetic characteristics of the display. Adding also their lack of means to be invested in aesthetic and spectacular improvements, amateur museums might seem ideologically less powerful because they are emotionally less moving (Duncan & Wallach, 2004). Nevertheless the spaces symbolically marked by amateur museums have other qualities able to trigger emotions, which can be the visibly handmade materials, the personal implication and the obvious effort that they invested in them. The fact that the amateur museums are located within their homes is also ideologically charging these architectures, the persons that live there and everything they contain, in a similar manner than the way museums affect symbolically and ideologically the cities where they are located.

Another similarity between sacred spaces and the modern museum space is that they are sites of pilgrimage, highly accentuated with the popularization of tourism during the last decades. Amateur museums are not this kind of massive pilgrimage sites. Nevertheless, in a very small scale, they reproduce this same phenomenon: for example, local schools repeat their yearly visit to the Bread Museum and to the Museum of Geology, and groups of families repeat every now and then their visit to The Den of the Shark, often as a part of their own ritualized excursion that includes a visit to the usual restaurant and a walk around the village.

Because our movements around space are ritualistically arranged in museums helping "us to experience constructed features of the environment as real, and thereby reproduce(ing) the symbolic authority at stake in the categorizations on which ritual draws" (Couldry, 2005: 29), I will analyze the role of performance and embodiment in amateur museums' ritual.

Performance and Embodiment

The symbolic features of the museum site lead us to the understanding of the museum as a "stage setting that prompts visitors to enact a performance of some kind, whether or not actual visitors would describe it as such" (Duncan, 1995: 1-2). As visitors, with

different degrees of strictness and consciousness, we perform ritualized series of actions that unfold and activate the "ritual content of (the) secular ceremony" of the museum (Duncan, 1995: 8) that "structure" its "central meanings" (2).

Although architects might not be totally aware of the effects of what they build, their decisions do have effects on the experience of the visitor who follows the scripts within their spaces (Duncan & Wallach, 2004). Whereas the museum space is open and with high ceilings like a catholic cathedral, a human size dark black box, a white cube, a never ending labyrinth of rooms without windows or a domestic space, the visitors that know that they are entering a museum (this is, the visitors that have already been initiated in museum behavior) enact their role as visitors. Participants must be trained or taught to understand the messages that rituals transmit, this is to decode them, and they must be trained to behave in a ritual too, this is to perform their part as participants.

Performativity is central to ritual because it is the manner in which values become embodied, they become real and interiorized by the participants. Even if physical acts, objects and energy are used in ritual, it is the communicative effect of their use and arrangement that achieve the transformative power of ritual (Rappaport, 1999: 112). It is when they are performed that "institutional facts" become "brute facts" (Searle quoted in Rappaport, 1999: 117). Because a ritual is a "sequence of formal acts and utterances" (24), it only becomes accomplished when such acts and utterances are performed and voiced. Factive utterances or acts transform or give a quality to someone ("I pronounce you husband and wife"): "these facts seemingly become facts of nature and can be described or reported […] in sentences that differ little from the factives that in fact created them" (Rappaport, 1999: 167).

The participants of museum rituals perform different roles which depend on the positions that they occupy in relation to the institution. Some lead the ritual, like curators, guides and other museum professionals that might be present or not during the visit. Others participate in the ritual as visitors. I have already discussed in the first chapter how the distinction between producers and consumers is mainly a distinction of power positions. In a similar manner the difference between certain kinds of ritual performers is in the degree of authority and legitimacy that, as we will see later on, results in inequalities in power relations. Thus, it is interesting to keep in mind certain differentiation between ritual leaders, ritual participants and those who cannot even gain access to become participants.

Contrary to what it might seem, the persons apparently in control, the ritual masters, might have greater difficulties to oppose resistance to the institution and to the proper enactment of their roles, while visitors might have greater chances to do so. The former are restrained with contractual obligations, with a pressure to follow the formalities of the ritual and under the scrutiny and evaluation of both the institutional office that invests them with the authority to perform their rituals and of the visitors as ritual participants. Visitors instead, are usually free to participate in museum rituals (with some exceptions like schoolchildren), and their obligation to faithfully follow the formalities of the ritual are much less strict, being the consequences of not doing so much lighter. Of course visitors can be expelled from a museum if their resistance to formality surpasses certain limits stated by the museum and can have legal and economic consequences (damaging catalogued items, having violent behavior), but they still have many more opportunities for resistance and subversion.

In any case, ritual performers (leaders and participants) are not only "transmitting messages [that they] find encoded […] [but they are] participating in – that is, *becoming part of*- the order to which [their] own body and breath give life" (Rappaport, 1999:118). Furthermore, "transmitter-receivers become fused with the messages they are transmitting and receiving […], performers become indistinguishable from these orders" (119). Participating in a ritual such as the museum ritual requires the acceptance of "whatever is encoded in the canon of that order" (119). Acceptance, though, does not imply belief or even approval, and insincerity is possible in the performance. This is, the performance and participation in a rite, even if insincere, involves certain degree of acceptance and thus of legitimation (131-4). Because of the relative invariance of the performative acts and the high degree of formality of most rituals, ritualization preserves conventions from the transformative effect of "ordinary practice" (Rappaport, 1999:130), maintaining their form steady in time.

The enactment or performance of ritual shapes and facilitates the transfer of its encoded meanings to the self. This happens especially through the mediation of the body, through the embodied enactment of the symbolic material:

> The strategies of ritualization are particularly rooted in the body, specifically, the interaction of the social body within a symbolically constituted spatial and temporal environment. Essential to ritualization is the circular production of a ritualized body which in turn produces ritualized practices.

(Bell, 2009: 93)

In this bodily enactment, that can be done through spoken word, screaming, singing, walking, dancing, approaching or keeping distances to give a few examples, we give shape to abstract thought and internalize the social values related to it. For Bell, this transformation through performativity is not a consequence but an end of ritual:

> The implicit dynamic and 'end' of ritualization—that which it does not see itself doing—can be said to be the production of a 'ritualized body.' A ritualized body is a body invested with a 'sense' of ritual. This sense of ritual exists as an implicit variety of schemes whose deployment works to produce sociocultural situations that the ritualized body can dominate in some way.

(Bell, 2009: 98)

For Collins (2004), the effect of the embodiment of ritual is multiplied when performed collectively, when our body behaves in synchrony with the others and when we can perceive through our senses –specially sight and hearing- the bodily enactment of the others. It is the embodiment of the ritual that transforms and increases the feelings related to a specific conceptual knowledge turned into bodily knowledge (Scheer, 2012). Rituals' effect is enhanced when shared with others because "other people's bodies" induce "effects (that) are stored in the habitus, which provides socially anchored responses" (Scheer, 2012: 211).

But the museum ritual also exposes the bodies of its participants to the gaze of others. Bennett (1995) emphasizes the role of nineteenth century architecture in the ordering of the bodies and in visually exposing them as a tool towards a self-regulating society. It was by exposing people to each other in arcades, museums or in amphitheaters that people could observe, enjoy and control each other. "The ideal of scopic reciprocity […] was as much an instrument of social discipline as it was a means of celebrating the citizenry's co-presence to and within itself" (Bennett, 1995: 51). Museums thus are not organized only to prioritize the vision of its objects, but also the exhibition of the visitors to each other. Without this effect of the gaze of others, the museum would not have the civic and educational role that it has. The gaze produced the orderliness on the objects and also on the bodies framed within the architecture.

While collecting is more obviously an individual rite – one could even collect in secret- museum practices imply a more collective kind of action, a rite that needs the presence

of others and which creates what Collins calls “heightened intersubjectivity”, a “process of intensification of shared experience” (Collins, 2004: 35) This intersubjectivity is based in shared and simultaneous action that transmits a feeling of communion between participants as well as it shows shared emotions that in turn become intensified in a circular manner. In museum practices such collective action through the presence of other bodies in the same space following the same rite might seem quite discreet: there’s no simultaneous moving, nor dancing nor reciting of sentences. There are, nevertheless many performative elements as we have already seen, like an accepted walking speed limit and voice tone, or even facial expressions that can enhance or reduce the experience of other visitors. Visiting a museum with someone that feels moved by the pieces exhibited, even if that person is not talking to us, is much different than coinciding with a group of schoolchildren that are laughing at the same objects. If everybody shows reverence we might feel more inclined to show and feel reverence too.

We can state a failure of ritual also through the bodies: their absence in empty museums, visible signs of boredom or of lack of respect to the implicitly agreed behavior, lack of respect for the symbols, or “even depression, interaction fatigue, a desire to escape” (Collins, 2004:51). These signs of failure are very common in contemporary museums, where children are dragged by force and where there has been a rising distance between the interests of museum management and those of potential visitors. Those who have worked as educators or guides in museums have often felt this failure while trying to keep a conversation with uninterested groups, or, which is the same, we have felt the failure of the museum ritual that we were hired to perform.

The relevance of the interaction through the body in ritual spaces is the reason why many artists who critically work with a critique of the artistic and museological institution, work with the estrangement of the body and its behavior inside the museum space (like Andrea Fraser or James Luna) or why some pedagogical proposals make visitors run or dance inside the museum space: in order to denaturalize and make the movement of the body and its meanings a critical tool for thought and communication. Often, what is attempted through that, is the failure of the ritual as it is, even if it is for the sake of its renewal.

The sense of ritual is intensified in those amateur museums in which visitors are received in groups. In these cases visitors see each other moving around the space and relating to each other and to the objects, making their performance part of the ritual in each other's eyes. On the contrary, when I visited some of the museums by myself, the sense of ritual was minimized because the tour seemed closer to a one to one conversation, more personal and responsive to my acts. In the case of groups, the visitors are transformed into a less personal entity, even if they actively interact with the museum maker or with each other.

The visitor's body is also very relevant in amateur museums in that their presence is what symbolically turns these spaces into museums. It is when a visitor enters the space, whether it is through a formal guided tour or an informal conversation that his or her presence activates all the other relations that turn that displayed collection into a museum. It is through their bodies that visitors relate to the objects in display.

Amateur museum practitioners perform almost all the roles of the museum ritual as they gather almost all the roles of museum making. Their most visible ritual performance is certainly when they lead the museum visit, because it is there were all the ritual crystalizes and is made present by its communication to others. The performativity of museum's ritual is most visible through the guided tour.

The researched amateur museum practitioners guide visitors around their museums in different manners. Some conduct planned and structured guided tours and others accompany visitors in a more open conversational approach, as has been elaborated upon in the first chapter of this work. In all cases they act as leaders and as hosts of their symbolic spaces. From the first moment of the reception of their visitors, amateur museum practitioners appear as binding all the symbolism of the museum together, as they are usually known by the visitors to be the one and only authors and makers of that small symbolic realm. They appear thus as the legitimate key to that space and as the authorized leaders of the tour, as it is their own world that they are about to show.

Agustí and Agustí Jr, from The House of Butterflies are an example of a strictly planned and performed ritual. They only receive visitors in groups, which as we will soon see, enhances their sense of being part of a ritual. They insist in keeping the group together room after room and they are a bit annoyed when visitors try to alter the course of the

tour with too many questions, which they prefer answering at the end of the visit. They also reserve themselves a high control of their product by forbidding taking pictures, and most displayed objects are impossible to be touched. Although the main reason for these restrictions is the fact that butterflies are very delicate, it also has the side effect of making visitors be aware of the threat of their own performance for the conservation of the sacred objects. It is thus a highly visual museum, in contrast to the Toy Museum or The Den of the Shark, which allow to touch and use their objects.

Despite this, the performances of visitors and museum makers in The Den of the Shark and the Bread Museum are similar to those of The House of Butterflies. Joan also receives visitors in groups and conducts a guided tour that is little affected by visitors' performance. Although Joan from The Den of the Shark attempts to make visitors participate more actively than the other two, his is quite a constructed and strict script in which he is the expert who gives ordered information to the obedient visitors. Joaquim, from the Bread Museum, receives also individuals, but nevertheless, he conducts quite a strict tour. He seems to be also annoyed by interruptions to his performance.

In the Vietnam Museum, the Maternal Museum, the Toy Museum, the Coca-Cola Museum and Geology and Gypsum Museum, visitors are received also individually and the visit resembles an informal conversation rather than a guided tour. In such cases, ritual formality seems less strict and the roles of the different performers (ritual leaders and visitors) seem closer and more diffused. In fact, in these cases, the museum maker tends to lead the beginning of the visit, allowing the visitors to slowly find their way around the museum, paying attention to what they are interested in and answering their questions. In this sense, every visit tends to be different from the others. This does not mean that the performances of visitors and makers is less ritualistic, only that their formal features are less strict. It is expected from the visitors to act accordingly to their roles, for example by keeping a certain rhythm around the space, not using the space for other activities that do not concern the appreciation of the exhibition, showing respect and interest and keeping the noise volume under certain limits. The fact that Rafael from the Toy Museum allows his visitors to play with many of his toys or that he invites them to have a drink comfortably sitting at the central table does not undermine the ritual performance. Even if it is not a common aspect of the traditional

museum visiting ritual, it manages to enhance Rafael's rituality with the intersection of other rituals: those involved in the hosting and care of visitors and those of play.

As we can see, the role of ritual leaders is determined by the use of their authority in leading visitors, in their control of the conversations, but also in their relations with the exhibited objects. Museum practitioners are the ones that set the distance that others can have with the objects that they exhibit.

Objects

We have already seen in the first chapter that Pomian (1990) highlights how objects of different kinds were intermediaries to the invisible, the unknown, to the gods, the dead or to nature in different civilizations and different practices of collecting, especially as religious relics and offerings (Pomian, 1990). These kind of objects are sometimes meant to be seen and others, like Christian relics, are also meant to be touched. This touching was not a common one, it was a ritualized kind of touch, made in order to receive the benefits of the unknown through the tact of the object. In the same manner, it is the gaze that turns the object into a sacred one too, this is, that sees it as an intermediary to the invisible:

> [...] it is the gaze, given a linguistic extension, either tacit or explicit, which establishes an invisible relationship between the object and an invisible element. While the thing fulfils itself by modifying that to which it is applied, and by becoming gradually worn out, the semiophore reveals its meaning when it goes on display
>
> (Pomian, 1990:30)

In order to direct and provoke this sacralising gaze, other objects are also put at play in a ritualized activation of the sacred object. Ritual communication is partly possible through objects, including sacred and symbolic objects and the objects that, without being sacred in themselves, infer with meaning and assist the performance. It is through symbols and sacred objects that the effects of ritual can be prolonged in time (R. Collins, 2004). Although Pyyhtinen is referring to the gift when he claims that "any community becomes visible in the objects circulating between its members" (Pyyhtinen, 2014: 7), the assertion is true when applied to ritual and museum objects. Furthermore, such symbolic and sacred objects and also other secondary, indexical objects used in any ritual, "can be grasped only in the specific relations and circumstances they are entangled with" (Pyyhtinen, 2014: 59). Ritual capacity to influence life and maintain

group solidarity arises from the specific relations between all the elements that take part in it.

Abstract values need to be materially presented because "corporeal representation gives weight to the incorporeal and gives visible substance to aspects of existence which are themselves impalpable, but of great importance in the ordering of social life" (Rappaport, 1999: 141). Ritualized objects, like ritual performative acts, do not represent or signify something else: they "are" and they "become", this is, their significance is perceived as natural. More than performative utterances, that have a "purely conventional or institutional effect", materiality makes the "institutional fact" palpable, physical, turns it "into res, and as such achieve(s) an apparent naturalness equal to that of flowers or wind, if not rock" (Rappaport, 1999: 143).

Rituals differentiate between sacred objects and profane objects, which are put in relation to each other and to the participants that also have different degrees of sanctity or legitimation. Thus, some objects are forbidden to people that have not been initiated, and even some relations between objects are limited or mediated as well. Profane persons and sacred objects need to be put in relation to each other in order to be meaningful. This relation can be understood as some kind of controlled relation, which is allowed and mediated by legitimate sacred individuals (Durkheim: 342). As we have seen before, only authorized ritual makers through ritualized practice can allow the moments of contact between profane participants and sacred objects. In the same manner, being allowed to be in physical contact with sacred objects determines or shows the position of authority of an individual:

> In visiting museums other than their own, for example, curators are invisible as professionals unless they so declare themselves by playing out a particular ritual that secures specific privileges such as being taken 'behind the scenes', being allowed to handle or get closer to objects, or perhaps even give an opinion about the identity of an object.
>
> (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 7)

These issues might seem of special importance in museum ritual as it especially and explicitly revolves around material culture. Museum objects are properly classified and differentiated and the access to them is under strict control and traditionally limited to the gaze of the visitor that through glass cabinets cannot damage them. The museum's public space, its galleries, are the place where ritual participants get into contact with

sacred objects that are carefully signaled both with written and spoken language as well as with other symbolic and indexical forms. Furthermore, the sacred objects are signified and their symbolic value is enhanced with the use of other objects that, despite not being sacred themselves, have the discursive capacity to sacralise. These are for instance, glass cabinets, visible conservation measures like low lighting or humidity and temperature control, visible security systems like movement sensors, cameras or catenaries, and so on. These objects not only materialize the sacredness of the objects that they contain and protect, but they serve as indices, pointing at whatever gives them a reason to be there.

Some authors have paid special attention to museum objects and spaces' ability to unfold affects that are part of a symbolic system, embodying meanings rather than (re)presenting them. Objects trigger emotions especially through their magical link to certain myths, like a better past or national and group myths that are part of one's adopted memory (Gregory & Witcomb, 2007; Witcomb, 2010).

Also the production of ritual objects is itself ritualized. Rappaport suggests that art made in the Palaeolithic could have been observed and produced as ritual (Rappaport, 1999). Ritual objects and places are often works of art that intend to move emotions. In the Western modern art tradition, the symbolic relevance given to artistic and creative processes are often as important as their final product. Something similar happens in museum practices: not only the visit to a museum should be considered as a ritual, but the process of producing the museum product too, such as the processes of conservation of objects, or the mounting of a new exhibition. Of course, the degree and kind of ritualization of such processes that involve a contact with sacred objects changes depending on the symbolic value of the objects, being much different to manipulate copies of cinema posters than manipulating a mummified Egyptian emperor. As we have seen in the last chapter, several myths articulate the symbolic values of such objects, mainly mythical history and the myths of heritage and its preservation.

Collectors put at least the same emphasis in the process of finding, acquiring or collecting, restoring, classifying, storing and displaying than in the experience of contemplating and showing their collections (Martin, 1999). In a similar manner, the practices involved in the process of creating a museum can provide the same amount of joy and self-realization and be as ritualized as the finished ritual product. This ritual that precedes the "main" ritual might be performed for personal needs (prayers and

superstitious acts of football players before a match) or to infuse with value and validate the objects and performers involved in the ritual (blessing the water to be used in a baptism).

In museum rituals the value, meaning and interpretation of an object derives from the formality (decorum) around it, which includes the relations with other objects and the performances of the bodies around them. The relation of that object with the other objects is shown in formal symbolic forms. In the process of museum making, objects receive different treatments depending on apparently objective reasons like their economic value, their scarcity and their reproducibility, but also on their aura, on their symbolic value which is in turn magnified, transmitted and stabilized through symbolic actions and symbolic relationships established by the museum ritual itself.

Furthermore, objects are chosen not only as objectified carriers of meaning, or because of their symbolic qualities, but also because of their aesthetic qualities: if two objects have the same symbolic qualities and are believed to carry the same information, the most probable is that the one with better aesthetic qualities will be chosen for display or to join a collection. Furthermore, these objects will be displayed with the support of many other objects (frames, cabinets, light, and so on) that have their own aesthetic qualities and that can build totally different kinds of environment and interpretation lenses around the central objects. The museum practitioner can choose which kind of aesthetic will surround and indicate the objects, but there will always be some, even if the most austere kind, infusing with meaning and playing an active part in the discourse.

While sacred objects are generally understood to be strong carriers of meaning and to have a powerful moving effect on the persons that worship them, the meanings and effects of what I have called indexical objects are usually disguised. Their grammatical functioning can be unnoticed by the initiated visitors who, nevertheless, will understand their meanings (those not initiated in such language will not understand them at all). The more taken for granted such objects are, the stronger their interiorizing and naturalizing effects on visitors, this is, the more powerful their sacralising effect.

Objects in Amateur Museums

It is easy for an initiated museum visitor to distinguish sacred from indexical objects in the researched amateur museums. All of them rely on the same kind of indexical objects that are very common in museum practice: glass cabinets, labels, lighting, and frames.

These are keeping, safeguarding and signalling the sacred objects: tools, breads, butterflies, minerals, toys, sharks, bottles and merchandizing products, military objects, and so on. Even if visitors would not know in advance what kind of objects the museum is preserving and showing, they would be able to easily know it –as long as they are initiated in the museum ritual- because the juxtaposition of elements and their arrangement answers to the commonly used conventions that they have learned from other experiences.

The relation of visitors with such objects is as ritualistic as in any other museum. With the exception of The Den of the Shark and the Toy Museum, visitors are not allowed to touch objects. In some cases this is not made explicit, like in the case of the Bread Museum or the Maternal Museum, but the presence of the museum maker and the learned conventions of behavior in museums, impel visitors to respect those limits unless told otherwise. Nevertheless, even in the cases of The Den of the Shark and the Toy Museum, visitors wait respectfully to be invited by the museum maker before touching any object. In general, only the objects that are given to visitors are touched, and the visitors, including children, tend to avoid taking the initiative in holding an exhibited object with their hands. This means that it is the legitimate ritual leader the one that has the key to the contact between the sacred object and the other ritual performers; the contact is never done randomly or by the initiative of the others.

Objects are exhibited in similar manners in all the researched museums. For example all of them use glass cabinets. They differ in materials, shape, style, and conservation in manners that affect the meanings that they infer to the objects that they keep. In The House of Butterflies, butterflies and beetles are kept and shown inside impressive cabinets made by Agustí and Agustí Jr who have a furniture company. The cabinets are both classical in that they follow the traditional style of exhibition of this kind of specimen: flat vertical and horizontal cases that show a high density of specimen, including many layers of drawers with even more specimen. The cabinets can be totally closed so that no light comes in, or open, like the open wings of the butterflies they keep, showing a huge amount of specimen. Because of the quality of the materials used to make the cabinets, the elegance of the design, their perfect maintenance, and the perfectly clean glasses, the specimen kept in them look like jewels. Furthermore, the cabinet reminds us that the sacred objects that they keep need to be protected; this is that they are both delicate – could be easily destroyed by the breath of the visitors- and

relevant, sometimes even unique. The signs reminding us not to touch and not to take pictures only enhance these sensations.

Cabinets are different in the Bread Museum. Joaquim has been mainly reusing old dining cabinets all of which are different from each other. In them, he keeps most of the foreign breads, those that are more difficult to achieve for him or more difficult to remake. These cabinets do not have the same qualities than those of The House of Butterflies: they do not have such a professional appearance, they do not seem as save and protective of the objects that they keep and they are obviously old. Nevertheless, this reused appearance and their age is also adding some meaning to the breads that they keep. Sacred objects might not look so much like priceless jewels in them, but the cabinets infer a sense of the past and a historical posit on the breads they keep. Other breads are kept on open shelves or on tables made with the disposition of old baking tools. Such breads are at the reach of visitors who could easily hold them. In fact during our visit, Joaquim held some of them to show us some details of the deterioration of the breads. Although he does not invite visitors to do the same, the fact that he touched them and held them closer to our eyes also reaffirms him as the ritual leader, someone closer to the magic of the object, with authority to touch it and with the knowledge to do it properly in order to avoid damaging it. These differences in the relationships among ritual performers with the sacred objects enhance the special characteristics of the objects: the kind of access to sacred objects is a proof of someone's position within a ritual structure.

Another very different example is that of the Coca-Cola Museum. Although Antoni uses glass cabinets that he and his family ordered especially for the museum, their effect is a bit different from the ones of the Bread Museum and The House of Butterflies. The cabinets are made of white metal, they have glass doors, and some of them are kept open. This is an important fact, because the cabinets do not seem to be protecting the objects, but only holding them. Antoni keeps taking objects and putting them back inside the cabinets while talking. Furthermore, the shelves of the cabinets are totally packed with objects. In contrast to the examples above, these objects do not have labels to specifically signal them. Although they could not be depicted as dirty, the shelves and cabinets of the Coca-Cola Museum are a bit dustier than those of the other museums. All this, together with the fact that the exhibited objects –bottles, cans, merchandizing- are of cheap and mostly massive production, does not give a strong impression of

sacredness. This impression might also be enhanced by the fact that Antoni exchanges and sells a lot of his material to visitors; this is, he acts more like an active collector than like a museum practitioner. The museum looks like a collector's warehouse more than like a museum. I observed that this made it very appealing to the visitors that were Coca-Cola collectors as well. Although most visitors did not touch the exhibited objects, the feeling transmitted by this disposition of elements made them appear quite accessible, almost like the objects for sale in a collectors market. These objects might have a sacred aspect that makes them collectable and worth preserving, but appear to the viewer as achievable.

Martí from the Vietnam Museum also shows most of the objects inside glass cabinets. They have also been made on purpose for this concrete space. They are scattered all over the walls of the exhibition rooms leaving only a few meters of wall free for two-dimensional objects such as framed pictures and documents or flags. Like in most cases, the objects are not accessible to the visitors' touch. During the visit Martí does not touch them either. The objects within the cabinets are grouped by origin, this is all the objects belonging to the same person –usually a soldier- are kept together and accompanied with the letter or the certificate with which the sale, donation or exchange was formalized. Often a picture of that object in use during the war is also attached to this documentation. This personified grouping of objects has a specific effect on their sacralisation, especially because everything revolves around such a dramatic topic as a war. The display appears to be halfway between an exhibition and a mortuary offering. The sacredness of the objects here is enhanced with the sacredness of death and suffering and the mythology of a war such as the Vietnam War.

The case of the Geology and Gypsum Museum is similar to that of the Vietnam Museum in that all the minerals and fossils are locked inside glass cabinets out of the visitor's reach. Only if visitors are granted access to the last room, still under construction, of the Geology and Gypsum Museum, they shall see all the minerals lying on the floor. Hence the objects can seem to change status from sacred to profane. A ritual is still missing for them to be converted: Josep needs to put them inside the cabinets, give them an order and write the label –as he has done with all the others- and they will, in the gaze of visitors, become sacred and differentiated from the indexical objects that will be signaling them.

In the Toy Museum, most toys are also displayed in cabinets with no labels. Although the disposition of the objects in the space is similar to that of the Coca-Cola Museum, Rafael's toys seem to be stronger bridges to the invisible, in this case, to the past of the visitors and specifically to their childhoods. And yet Rafael, also acting as the ritual facilitator, allows visitors to touch them, even to actively play with them. Far from deactivating their sacredness, this chance makes the connection between visitor/player and the toy much stronger. The stories that Rafael explains about some of the toys also contribute to creating a magical aura around the objects, not because they seem expensive and unachievable, but because they prove themselves able of magic events. As Rafael said in relation to a man that, by a total coincidence happened to find his father's handmade toys in Rafael's museum, he "seemed to have been taken by the hand" (Rafael, the Toy Museum, interview, 2015) to reencounter his own past. The toys are seen thus as having certain magic, sometimes healing effects.

Finally, there are very little indexical objects in the Maternal Museum. Only a couple of cabinets keep the smaller objects –from small sculptures to medical tools- away from the visitors' reach. Most of them do not have labels either, and many paintings are leaning on each other against the walls because of the lack of space. Objects in the Maternal Museum are the least sacralised of all the objects in the researched amateur museums, and yet, Magda is the one to have a stronger intention to maybe not sacralise, but to give value to the objects that were once related to certain women. In the Maternal Museum objects are physical proofs of the existence of these women and of the relevance of their lives, and the stories that Magda and her daughter explain about them infuse them with symbolic value.

If all these museum practitioners are able to turn profane objects into sacred objects it is because they rely on the one hand on the formality of museum rituals and, on the other, on the myths that such sacredness relies on, together with the authority of museums to manage it.

Recipients of Museum's Ritual

The fact that the effects of amateur museum practice return to benefit museum practitioners has already been shown in different manners. This fact has further implications when analyzing museum making as a ritual practice. The effects of ritual are not only directed to participants, but also to the ritual authority, leader or main

performer. In fact, “the transmitters of ritual’s messages are always among their most important receivers” (Rappaport, 1999: 51). Rituals might even be performed in total solitude for the sake of the person who enacts them.

In collecting and museum making this is also quite perceptible. Most ritualized collecting is performed in solitude and nevertheless, collectors report a high range of personal benefits like pleasure, satisfaction, identity formation, increasing self-esteem, a sense of personal accomplishment and emotional involvement among others (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, & Holbrook, 1991; Bloch & Bruce, 1984; Cohen-Gewerc & Stebbins, 2013; Danet & Katriel, 1994; Formanek, 1994). Collecting is quite obviously an activity with a strong and self-aware return to that who practices it, as the product (the collection) is experienced and enjoyed repeatedly and mainly by collectors themselves. But when collecting leads to museum making, this ritualized activity is more widely communicated and shared with other participants, mostly visitors, becoming a collective experience. Nevertheless, even in the cases when rituals are collective, like is the case of some museum practices, ritual performers are receiving the effects of ritual practices, being emotionally affected, experiencing liminality and even increasing their symbolic capital. The person in the center of the action, like the museum practitioner leading the visit, is the one most affected by the liminality of museums’ ritual (Collins, 2004: 116).

As we have already seen a few pages above, rituals affect the emotional energy of their participants towards the group (R. Collins, 2004). For example, the ritualized practice of the reception of visitors has the outcome of a specific emotional energy that can differ in every visit depending on the starting moods and emotions of the participants, and on the unfolding of events during the visit. The emotions felt by the participants (boredom, enthusiasm, fun, anger) affects them in the long run in different intensities, resulting for example in a reaffirmed will to visit other museums or to learn more about the topic, in confusion about one’s own beliefs and values or in a reaffirmation of them, and thus a stronger feeling of group belonging.

The increase of personal symbolic capital through museums’ rituals is in the roots of the idea of the modern museum as explained by Duncan (1995) when she delves into the intentions of the donors of the first public collections of modern art museums. In the first years of these museums, during the nineteenth century, museum committees were highly subedited to the will of private donors because they were totally dependent

on their donations. Therefore, the collections of British and North American museums were built according to decisions that derived from the private taste of very wealthy aristocrats, landowners and industrialists that, in turn, gathered their collections as signs of status: "among English aristocrats and landowners, art collections were prominent artefacts in a ritual that marked the boundary between polite and vulgar society, which is to say, the boundary of legitimated power" (Duncan, 1995: 38). Even the collections of decorative art, already considered of second order, originated in public museums in the attempt to build "aristocratic identities" from the accumulation and display of manufactured goods. This need for distinction through aristocratic objects displayed as if they were distributed inside an inhabited palace, shaped the American collections of museums. If these donors were interested in this kind of personal display, it was because museums had already gained certain legitimacy, which they could use in order to legitimate themselves and their families. This is the reason why they so often forced museums to keep their collections together and linked to their names, even in separate rooms that often resembled their own homes or idealized representations of home interiors. In a moment when public collections were already arranged under an art historical, modern, scientific approach that fit the political agenda of the period, the demands of private donors were still linked to the individualistic imagery of the princely or gentlemanly arrangements of private collections. They were contravening the "civic ritual" (Duncan, 1995: 61) in content, form and purpose. Only by changing the arrangement of the objects the museum ritual had a totally different meaning and thus, a different transformative power. If the public museum ritual aimed at affecting the feelings of pertinence of citizens to their nationhood, as well as to promote certain civic values of the liberal capitalist ideology of the time, the museums or museum wings resulting from the demands of such private donors were ritual sites for the construction and enhancement of their own mythology and legitimacy. These displays were representations of an idealized personality, which tried to improve or build a specific image of the collector (an image of power and wealth, refinement and sensibility, but also of generosity and paternalism). Their taste and aesthetic values, as well as the ideological implications behind them, were legitimated by the authority of public museums. The arrangement and display of past social identities through their objects and cultural products was made "for the benefit of the living" (Duncan, 1995: 68). To sum up, the museum ritual was in benefit of the individuals who were promoting them and who were ultimately converted into absent sacred symbols.

Amateur Museum Practitioners as Recipients of their Own Rituals

Emotional energy is very essential to amateur museum practitioners because they do not have other objective motivations like a salary or institutional support. As we have seen in the section about motivations, rewards and costs (in the second chapter of this work), one of the things that initially seemed most outstanding to me about amateur museum practitioners, was their continuous complaint about how difficult it is for them to continue doing their tasks and how little support they got from their communities. Then why do they continue doing it? From every rite that involves their museum making they can get reinforced or deceived, and thus pushed to continue working or discouraged to do so. Although some parts of museum practices lower their emotional energy, others have to be heightening it enough to cover the whole emotional energy needs. As we saw in the second chapter, it does not seem that it is in museum practices that they get the higher increases of emotional energy, but in the most private tasks of collecting and researching. This can be stated not only from what they claim that their preferences are, but also from the amount of passion that they put into talking about these practices and how little they want to talk about others.

Emotional energy affects all the following interactions and thus, we need to be aware that the specific emotional energy level that the interviewees had at the specific moments of the interviews, could substantially change the emotions expressed in them. Nevertheless Collins insists in distinguishing between short-term emotions (that tend to be more dramatic) and long-term ones, which are the ones that are steady enough to steer the direction of our long-term decisions. Thus we can infer from their statements about what *usually* makes them sad or angry and what *usually* satisfies them most what is actually heightening their emotional energy and thus what is reinforcing their commitment to future rituals.

From the interviews with the amateur museum practitioners (as we have seen in detail in chapter 2), we can state that they seem to generally obtain very positive emotional energy from the encounters with their peers, this is again similar to collectors, and from those visits that show interest and respect towards their work (The Den of the Shark, The Bread Museum, the Vietnam Museum, the Coca-Cola Museum, Geology and Gypsum Museum). On the other hand, their emotional energy decreases when they receive visitors who are visibly not interested, do not listen or interrupt the flow of the

visit (Geology and Gypsum Museum, The Den of the Shark, the Bread Museum, The House of Butterflies).

In many of the cases, the higher emotional energy comes from activities performed in private, most notably the research on new items included in the collection (Joan from The Den of the Shark, Joaquim from the Bread Museum, Rafael from the Toy Museum, Agustí from The House of Butterflies, Martí from the Vietnam Museum). Other moments highlighted by the interviewees are those in which specialists or very interested persons share experiences with them, be it in a conversation or through a shared research purpose (Joan, Agustí, Josep). This seems to contradict Collins proposal, as it is based on the need for interaction within rituals and thus seems to discard individual rituals and the emotional energy that can be obtained through them. An individual rite might also raise emotional energy and in consequence group solidarity, making individuals have the will to share their energy by keeping on pursuing their objectives.

All in all, there is a relevant circularity in museums as rituals in that their effects are generated by the ritual participants, especially their leaders, allowing further rituals to be held.

But amateur museum practice can also be seen at least partially as an altruistic activity. All of the researched museum practitioners invest a lot of their time and material resources to sharing their knowledge and collections in the shape of museums. When asked, the answer is quite common: once they realize that they have something valuable they start thinking that they "have to share it with others" (Joan, The Den of the Shark, interview, 2016), usually in a manner that can be explained through the myth of the educational role of museums (see chapter 3). In some cases they have explicit pedagogical intentions as to improve the popular opinion on certain animals (sharks) and protect them from extinction (sharks and butterflies) or keep the common past alive through memory (toys, bread baking). The sacrifice that they do in the benefit of the community might seem excessive unless it is compensated with something else. In Collins' terms, "there is a power payoff" (Collins: 169) for the participation in altruistic activities, and it is reached through an initial sacrifice of power. It is through their sacrifices that they situate themselves in the center of the collective attention, at least at specific moments and situations. This centrality, again, increases their emotional energy. Even if their projects are small in terms of resonance and public recognition,

they have created a system of symbols that situates them in the center, and gaining symbolic capital.

But once their projects become established, they risk taking "a life of their own" because "the ritual legitimizes the power and institutionalizes it, but at the same time the role of power holder itself becomes transferable, no longer the property of any particular individual" (Kertzer, 1988: 51). This fear is present in the amateur museum practitioners' accounts of their relations with public administrations or possible as we have seen in the first chapter.

Museums "sacralise objects and sites" through ritual and symbolic action (Macdonald, 2005:224), but they also imbue with meaning and value those persons (collectors, donors, curators, artists, museum practitioners) linked to them and the discourses and worldviews that they articulate. Amateur museum practitioners produce discourses about their selection of sacralised objects and, treating them as such with the more or less conventional language of the museum rite, they communicate them to others. It is difficult to compare these amateur museum practitioners to the wealthy donors of the modern museums, but the general structure that made their legitimation through museum-making possible is still at play in their case.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Museum rituals are central to understand the role of amateur museum practices in museum practitioner's position-takings. Myths, values and worldviews become materialized through the sacred objects and formal actions performed in museum rituals, gaining natural appearance and becoming embodied both in the objects and in the ritual participants. Ritual orders present conventions without alternative, which can be easily taken as inevitable and natural. We saw in the first chapter that amateur museum practitioners tend to reproduce many museological conventions, which is what allows them to reproduce the formality of museum rituals. It is through these rituals that they are able to link themselves to the mythical system of museums and to increase their symbolic capital.

Amateur museums' magic, which I have been able to observe through the formal features of museum rituals, is achieved by a quasi-mimetic application of museum's formality. By reproducing the conventions of museum rituals, amateur museum

practitioners are able to (re)produce the ritual effects of the museum even if they do not have the objective authority to do so. Despite not having certified knowledge and not having followed the paths towards legitimate institutional authorisation to conduct museum rituals, following ritual formality faithfully has the effect of investing them with the authority that they originally lacked. Amateur museum practitioners gain part of their authority and symbolic capital by appropriating museums' mythical system through ritualized practices.

The manners in which we have seen -in this chapter but also on the first one- that they use and talk about certain formalities of the museum ritual are proofs of their entanglement with the rite: they seem to consider themselves illegitimate ritual makers and yet they receive the benefits of the legitimacy of the rite itself and its institution. They do not have the objectified authority to perform such rites, but they do it nevertheless and pay special attention to the proper performance of the rite's formality, which, in turn, legitimizes their performance. By doing their amateur performance of the museum ritual, they show a high degree of naturalization of the forms, meanings and worldviews that are maintained through them. And yet they are able to appropriate the ritual, for which they do not have certified authority, and take advantage of its symbolic, sacralising effects.

Amateur museum practitioners are part of and reproduce the civic ritual of the museum, through which visitors are socialized into the values that are considered socially desirable. They especially participate in the civic ritual when they receive school groups and families due to the fact that the educational effects of the institution "museum" are especially directed to children – a dimension and a role that we analyzed in the last chapter and which is at the core of amateur museum practitioners' motivations.

The performance of museum participants and the embodiment of certain values related to the myths that give meaning to museum rituals take place in amateur museum as well as in any other kind of museum. And yet what is most outstanding regarding amateur museums is the fact that the civic ritual seems to be mostly directed to the amateur museum practitioners themselves. In opening their museums to the public and giving guided tours they renew their civic engagement even if the emotional energy obtained from these ritual interactions is often negative.

Amateur museum practitioners seem to obtain more emotional energy from the rituals held in private than from those shared with other participants, mainly visitors and potential museum collaborators. It is outstanding that the rites that help them increase the most their symbolic capital –leading guided tours, receiving visitors, sharing their knowledge, showing their collection of sacred objects- seem to be little fulfilling in terms of emotional energy. In contrast those rites that invest them with more emotional energy are those held more privately such as collecting and researching. And yet many of them consider that the chance to share the results of their work increases their enjoyment.

Through museum ritualization, amateur museum practitioners are able to situate themselves and their worldviews under the effect of museum's mythical system. This means that they convert the profane objects of their choice to sacred objects, which, as such, become vehicles of the metaphysical. If profane objects are presented as sacred, they become internalized as carrying the virtues and values of the mythical system that they are linked to. Through this operation, amateur museum practices disperse the symbolic capital of authorized museum rituals by appropriating their practices.

It remains to be seen how effective political resistance through ritual and symbolic forms is when compared to other kinds of more practical or pragmatic opposition with the dominant ideologies (Bell, 2009: 71). This kind of resistance is probably one that produces long-term slight changes in the social structure but more immediate ones for the individual. Amateur museum practitioners do not radically change the museographic institution (it is not their intention either), but their proposals together with many other similar kinds of appropriations of museum's authority humbly influence what we understand for museum practices and most importantly the directionality in which these are proposed. The most important effect of the appropriation of ritual practices is on the individuals that practice them and their relations with the objects and persons surrounding them.

CONCLUSIONS

To be able to answer the questions regarding the reasons why people become amateur museum practitioners and of how their practices and positions affect each other within their fields, I have conducted research on eight amateur museums as case studies. I have structured the analysis of their practices in two main blocks. The first is concerned with the positions from which these museum practitioners work and how they affect their practices. The second focuses on how amateur museum practices increase museum practitioners' symbolic capital and improve their positions in their fields.

The literature on the sociology of practice and museology has helped me to build a framework for the whole analysis, while leisure studies and myth and ritual theories allowed me to focus on the specific aspects of their practices.

After offering, in Part I, thick descriptions of the eight amateur museums, their practitioners and the personal relations that were established during my research, I have argued, in the first chapter of Part II, that the practices of these museum practitioners are shaped by the disadvantaged positions that they occupy within their fields, caused especially by a lack of cultural, social, economic and symbolic capital. The distinct manners in which they all struggle with such practices are directly related to their positions and their struggle with legitimate and authorized museum practices. Sometimes they take these practices for granted, while other times they resist such naturalization, and even question or reject their enforcement. This chapter has allowed me also to show that the differentiation between museum producers and consumers veils the unequal accumulation of capitals and positions of practitioners as well as of those who observe their practices. This leads to the crystallization of symbolic values, capable of legitimizing and authorizing some practices over others. Finally, I have also introduced another all-across idea traversing the whole thesis: that the benefits of museum practices return to their practitioners in different ways, and that museum practices can have a strategic value.

In the second chapter of Part II, I have continued to analyze the position from which these museum practitioners operate but, this time, through the lens of leisure theory. I have defended the importance of acknowledging that they situate their museum practices within the context of leisure. I have also emphasized the importance of understanding the way in which Western societies oppose leisure and work, tending to diminish the value of the former and enhance that of the later. In consequence, being understood as amateur often worsens the positions of museum practitioners,

diminishing their authority and the legitimacy of their work. And yet, notwithstanding, it is because of the chances offered by the leisure world that they can appropriate the authorizing and legitimating museum practices the way they do. Furthermore, it is through leisure that we can understand an important part of the motivations to pursue such costly endeavors, but also the benefits that museum practices can return to them. And finally, I have shown how their practices can be understood as a leisure occupation. The sense that they can exercise freedom of choice when pursuing museum practices, the self-identification with their museums and fields of research, the balance between collecting, museum practices and their fields of interest, their learning processes and the expertise that they achieve, the costs, motivations and benefits of their leisure practices, and, finally, the relation with other amateurs, professionals and their visitors, have helped me to highlight how leisure is positioning their practices and allowing them to obtain advantages and disadvantages.

Section II of Part II allowed me to explain, using myth and ritual theories, how museum practices have an effect on the position-takings of their practitioners. Both the authority and legitimacy of the museum institution are heavily derived from the myths that sustain it, which the museum maintains through its ritualized practices. To be able to claim oneself part of that system can have an ultimate effect on the participants (practitioners) of museums. This effect is that of increasing their symbolic capital, by situating them in a central, even if humble, position within the ritualizing of the institution.

Thus, the third chapter of Part II has shown that all the amateur museum practitioners relate their practices to the mythical system on which the museum institution relies. Because of the links that amateur museum practitioners draw with these myths and the values that they enclose, they can infuse with symbolic value their worldviews and themselves as individuals. And yet, because of the position from which they do it, they also contribute to the reconfiguration of the mythic system or, more precisely, to the manners in which museums engage with it.

The fourth chapter allows me to show in what ways amateur museum practitioners relate to such myths, in other words, the specific ritual practices that help turn the profane into the sacred and thus link it to the higher values enclosed in the mythical system of museums. As a result of performing such ritualized museum practices, amateur practitioners manage to invest themselves with the authority and the legitimacy

they previously lack because access to the quasi-circular path to ritual mastery is hard to achieve. This last chapter has thus closed a question that I had left open since the first chapter, that of the return of the effects of museum practices to museum practitioners as a tactic –even if unaware- to increase one's symbolic capital and, as a consequence, as a tool for position-takings.

Why Do People Become Amateur Museum Practitioners?

Although this research is far from exhausting all the analytical approaches to this question, it has allowed me to point out some of the reasons behind amateur museum practices. The first and obvious answer to this question is that people become amateur museum practitioners because it yields them enough benefits, some of which are consciously proclaimed by those same museum practitioners and others are related to the increase of symbolic capital in the play of position-takings that take place within that field.

The motivations that amateur museum practitioners explicitly state can be divided into two main groups: those that bring them personal enjoyment, and those that allege commitments to society. Although all amateur museum practitioners easily talk about the enjoyment, the fun and even the love or passion that they feel for their museum-related practices, these explanations sometimes seem to veil those deeper issues that are ultimately the ones triggering these emotions. It is also relevant to say that not all the practices that amateur museum practitioners perform are a source of enjoyment to them. Some like specific practices that others highly dislike. And yet, the overall outcome has to be positive in order, for them, to continue their practice. The balance between positive and negative effects leads to specific levels of emotional energy. While the emotional energy of some museum practitioners was very high when they were interviewed, a fact that made them highlight their enjoyment, the emotional energy of others was much lower, thus showing that the benefits raised from their activities were/are no longer higher than the costs, leading them to frustration and disappointment. The reasons behind this tilt of the scales are always external and mostly related to the opinions of others, be it visitors, family members, members of the community, public servants or potential collaborators. If the response of others is much more negative than expected, as I have shown in relation to the emotional energy derived from rituals, the enjoyment of museum practices can be completely obliterated.

It is obvious, therefore, that amateur museum practitioners enjoy their leisure projects and increase their satisfaction by sharing the results of their efforts with others. Justification based on a commitment to society tends to belong to the mythological system that supports museums and feeds their *raison d'être*. In this sense, with their museum practices, amateur museum practitioners feel that they are contributing to their social contexts, offering educational opportunities, preserving heritage or sharing with others the source of their enjoyment. In general, the effect of those contributions to society return as benefits that are then converted into emotional energy. As said, these are the benefits that they consciously perceive, but I can conclude that a relevant part of their benefits is related to the increase of symbolic capital, brought forward by the opportunities that museum practices open to the struggle for position-takings.

Amateur museum practitioners perceive, above all, the improvement of their positions and/or the increase of their symbolic capital through ritualized practices. Individual ritualized practices –those held in private and more related to research and collecting purposes– tend to increase the emotional involvement of these practitioners, in other words, they collect the benefits and perceive them as enjoyable. Shared ritual practices in which they are positioned as ritual leaders situate them in the center of the action and of the symbolic world of their museums. These shared rituals might also increase their emotional energy and any membership feelings to the group. When the ritual goes as expected and other participants –mainly visitors but also any other person with whom they interact– take a respectful part of it, amateur museums practitioners are recognized as legitimate.

Amateur museum practitioners also feel a strong self-identification with their museums, especially with their collections and their fields of interest. This is also an important reason to become an amateur museum maker, because, as other people do with other cultural practices, it helps them build their own identities and show themselves to the world.

Because of this strong identification with their practices, the reactions of others exert a powerful influence on them. If they are negative, as mentioned above, their emotional energy and symbolic capital decrease, but, if they are positive, they both raise. This is why objective evidence of any external recognition, especially if coming from some kind of authority, is such a relevant source of symbolic capital and, consequently, such a source of joy and motivation to continue their demanding pursuits. In consequence,

their position improvement and the increase of their symbolic power should be considered also important underlying reasons why people make amateur museums.

What Positions do Amateur Museum Practitioners Occupy Within their Fields?

Amateur museum practitioners act from disadvantaged positions because they are short on the kinds of capital that are valued within the fields in which they perform their museum practices. They are relatively short of cultural capital because, in general, they do not have objective or certified education on museology or on their fields of expertise. They are also short of economic capital, which is what often allows private collectors, with no cultural capital, to gain legitimacy and symbolic value. Although they are economically endowed to pursue their relatively costly museum practices, they do it with some difficulty. Their economic capital is, furthermore, much smaller than the economic capital usually at play in private museum practices that manage to gain a certain degree of legitimacy. Amateur museum practitioners are also short of social capital, although they take advantage of it as much as they can, mobilizing voluntary help from friends and peers. As consequence of the shortage of these kinds of capitals, they have, to top it all, a low symbolic capital when compared to those perceived as legitimate or authoritative museum practitioners.

These positions of disadvantage have several consequences, two of which I have sought to highlight in this research. The first consequence is that they are forced to proof their capacities and to struggle against the forces that delegitimize and devalue their work. The second is that the perception of their disadvantage shapes their practices in very specific ways, not only through their habitus but also through their will to overcome their sense of limits, which is most exemplarily shown in their use of the word "museum" and extends to other common practices as well.

How Do their Positions Affect and Are Affected by their Museum Practices?

Because the positions that we occupy shape our habitus and thus our practices, museum making of all kinds should be expected to be shaped partly in relation to the positions from which practitioners act. Positions of disadvantage from which amateur museum

practitioners work shape, therefore, their practices and the manner in which they relate to them. This dynamic has been exposed several times all along the four main analytical chapters. Amateur museum practitioners often see themselves as illegitimate or unauthorized, forcing them to often act with a lack of confidence and pushing them to mimic the practices of those that they consider more professional and authoritative.

However, they fight against their diminished authority, overcoming their lack of confidence and the sense of limits that inhibits them to perform those activities that seem to belong to others. Through this struggle, they appropriate and adapt those legitimate practices to their needs and capacities, helping them accomplish positive returns.

It is thanks to the articulation of symbolic capital through their museum practices –as resources in the field– that they manage to feed it, accruing, as a result, more symbolic power and situating them closer to a social center – which they achieve in two stages. First, they place themselves at the center of action –a ritualized event capable of getting all participants emotionally involved–, which infuse them, since these are highly accepted ritualized practices, with the authority and the legitimacy that they originally lacked. Second, because they act within museum's myth-ritual system, they invest with value their worldviews –in which they, again, occupy a central position–, contributing to "the production of common sense" (Bourdieu, 1989:21). These worldviews, needless to say, are those with which they feel a strong self-identification. They consider them a part of themselves. In consequence, their museum practices put them right at the center of such worldviews, while contributing, furthermore, to the centrality of such worldviews. The overall effect is the increase of museum practitioner's symbolic capital. Yet this increase of symbolic capital is difficult to measure and it is not the same for all amateur museum practitioners. The perceived relevance of the values that they attach to their projects and the importance that their communities give to the topics and the myths that they are articulating can make the struggle for position-takings too difficult –too costly– and eventually force them to abandon it. The amount of effort invested in this struggle is so steep that its outcome, even if positive, might frustrate them.

It can be said, then, that amateur museum practices, probably like any other museum practices grown from other positions, are a resource for position-takings, a tool that allows putting symbolic capital at play while benefiting those that develop them, but

only if they keep themselves relatively faithful to the rituals and myths that maintain those practices themselves.

Limitations and Thoughts for Further Research

I consider that the limitations of this research are, above all, related to the limited fieldwork I was able to conduct in the reduced frame of time that I had at my disposition. The short amount of cases that I could consider, as well as the short-span observation that I could conduct on their practices, do not allow the results of this research to be generalized.

The analytical approach that I have proposed is, furthermore, not exhaustive and risks enhancing some of my previous biases. Other approaches to amateur museum practices should further complement this research so as to uncover the complexity of the causes and consequences of such practices. This research, therefore, leaves many open questions that need further research. I want to highlight those that I find most relevant.

In order to deepen in the importance of the position from which museum practitioners work when establishing their legitimate and authoritative voices, it would be relevant to compare these practices to amateur museum practices conducted by individuals with different economic, social, cultural and symbolic capitals. In Catalonia, there are cases of private collectors that have turned their collections into museums with the support of public institutions. My hypothesis is that, in many of these cases, this support seems directly related to the symbolic and economic capital of the collector/museum practitioner. Thus, a private collector with high economic capital is able to gather a collection that also has a superior economic value, something that is intricately intertwined and sometimes mistaken as an overarching value. Also, individuals that cannot spend large economic sums in their collections, but who have a high social and symbolic capital, have more chances of achieving public support, especially if what they collect is related to the field in which their capitals are valuable. In fact, the high symbolic capital of collectors or museum practitioners seems to be easily transferred to their objects and practices. These individuals, furthermore, often accumulate all these kinds of economic, social and symbolic capital that tend to be relational and that multiply thanks to the opening of a museum or the inclusion of their collections into public museums. If I have detected that museum practices and the bond with certain

myths are tools for some amateur museum practitioners to increase their symbolic capital, my hypothesis is that in cases where the museum practitioners have a high symbolic capital, the effect is inverse: it is their symbolic capital that infuses with value their museum practices and, at some point, they start feeding each other.

Moreover, in order to better understand the position-taking capacity that amateur museums offer to their makers, it would be relevant to research the perception of visitors and the communities of influence of each museum. The way in which members of their communities see amateur museum practitioners would be very revealing, especially in a time-based approach. Some museum practitioners seem to have the impression that opening a museum changes the way others relate to them like, for example, donating them their personal items. Being able to follow full processes of transformation of private collections into amateur museums would help seeing how these changes take place.

Another issue that I consider deserving further research is the gender differences that I have detected in amateur museum practices in Catalonia. As I have already explained, it has been very hard for me to find amateur museums headed by women. Many reasons could explain this lack of balance, and many are commonly found in other leisure practices. Women are socialized differently than men in the uses of their free time, which seems to push them to dedicate more time to the care of others. They also tend to have meager economic resources at their disposal. Considering that many surveys identify, in Spain, museum visitors and museum workers as being mainly women, the reasons for such lack of amateur museums headed by women are, at least, not obvious.

These issues could as well be related to class and ethnic inequalities because, as we have seen, most of the museum practitioners that I could find could be roughly said to be men belonging to middle or lower middle classes and not only white but most of them descendants of Catalan or Spanish families. This could be better researched in countries that have had a longer multicultural trajectory than Catalonia. The practice of amateur museums in non-western countries, if compared to that of Western cultures, could also bring interesting insights on the processes of appropriation and position-takings as they take place within the notion of museum, and how this is adapted and modified. Cross-cultural comparisons could also help detect contextual differences in amateur museum practices.

The lack of data about this kind of museums and their fragile permanence also makes me consider that further research could be conducted on finding, documenting and obtaining more data from amateur museums. An example of such kind of task is being pursued by Fiona Candlin in the UK, who had been gathering a permanently growing archive of micromuseums in that country. This kind of archive could not only give a general overview of amateur museums in Catalonia or in Spain but also serve as documentation to facilitate, that way, further research on them. Such kind of work could also have more direct applications for museum practitioners, serving as some sort of network or as a reference for public policy makers, which they could consult before deciding their cultural policies.

Finally, I think that comparing amateur museum practices to other amateur practices, like that of cinema, would be very promising because it would allow uncovering the specificities of each field, as well as, the commonalities inherent in leisure activities.

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