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Official Memories of Violence at the National Museum of Colombia, 1980-2000: Cocktails, Art, or Social Criticism?

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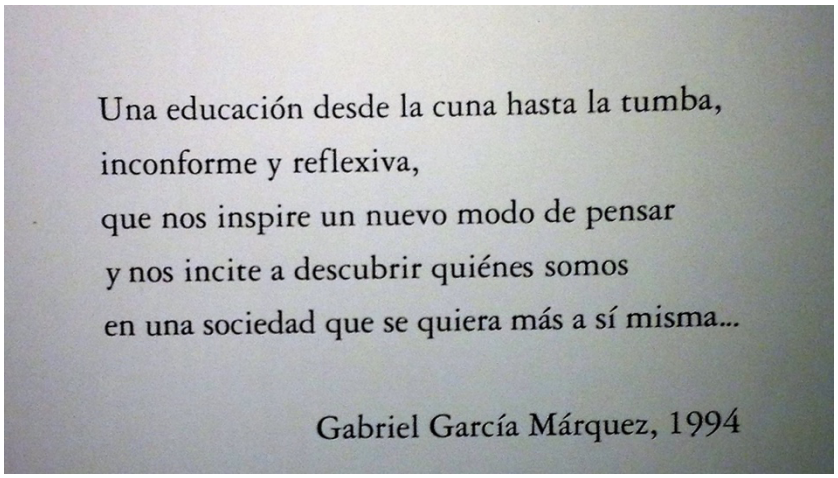
At the doorway of the first floor of the National Museum of Colombia, visitors are met by this statement: "An education from the crib to the grave, non-conformist and sensible, which inspires a new way of thinking and encourages us to discover who we are within a society that comes to appreciate itself more. . . " This remark, penned by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, succinctly summarizes the aim of the museum.



Picture by Jimena Perry, Museo Nacional, Bogotá, Colombia, 2017.

These words deserve attention because they underscore the purpose of this specific venue, and of museums as a whole: to educate. The ways in which this education is carried out, however, constitutes one of the institution's challenges. Since the 1990s, the National Museum of Colombia has undergone a renovation project, calling for the rewriting of the country's history. As expressed by one of its directors in 2001, the new script should focus less on chronologic and linear accounts and more on lesser-known personalities and local processes of survival focusing on themes such as: memory; land; diversity; inclusion; participation; violence; everyday life; minorities; and reconciliation.[1] With inclusivity as their focus, the institution's specialists aim to answer two significant questions: How do we recount Colombia's recent history of violence while its main protagonists are still alive? How do we avoid telling traditional stories of winners and heroes?

This article explores how the National Museum of Colombia's team of curators and other specialists encourage new reflections about citizenship through the current renovation project by including narratives of the violence of the, 1980s, 90s, and early 2000s.[2] Drawing on four pieces displayed at the Memory and Nation Hall (which opened on 11 December 2014); undisplayed artefacts; documents from the National Museum's archive; interviews with museum officials; and periodical sources, I discuss how the museum's new narrative strives to be more diverse, inclusive, and participatory. I visited the Memory and Nation Hall in 2017 and found that its script, along with the pieces displayed there, are examples of the effort made by the venue's curators to render the institution's accounts more comprehensive. Along these lines, I choose the four artifacts analyzed here—two tapestries, a photograph, and a wall composed of more than 500 images of Colombian people and landscapes—because they represent Colombia's recent armed conflict, privileging the victims' voices. The two tapestries are located at the entrance end of the Hall, and the pictures are affixed to two large walls that are visible to all visitors. Clearly, the intention of the museum curators was to convey to the public that the venue is current within the framework of Colombia's recent history. I also interviewed the last three directors to understand how the renovation project has evolved since the mid-1990s, and examined documents related to the Hall at the National Museum of Colombia's Archive. Additionally, I consulted internal working documents of the Hall produced by curators and researchers, several

[1] Cuervo de Jaramillo, Elvira. March 1, 2001. "¿Qué mostramos, ¿qué escondemos?" *El Espectador*. National Museum of Colombia Archive.

[2] Castro, Daniel. Interview by Jimena Perry. Bogotá, Colombia, February 21, 2017.

drafts of the Hall's script, and blueprints of the space. Since the Hall was the first exhibition space opened under the renovation project and will only last for ten years, its production and assembly were experimental and confined to the space's 65 x 36 foot dimensions.[3] Finally, I explore the museum staff's continued efforts, following the mandate of the 1991 Constitution, to turn the site into a culturally relevant space for Colombian citizens. They hope that the museum can be a space in which visitors can find their own story, however painful, and not feel like detached observers of their country's past. In doing so, the designers hope that Colombians may be able to develop a better sense of participatory citizenship. The National Museum of Colombia's recent renovation project can be traced back to 1992, when Elvira Cuervo de Jaramillo was appointed director. She had two clear objectives in mind when taking on the position. First, she sought to gain international attention on the institution itself. With this in mind, she organized exhibitions of high impact, such as the sample of Henry Moore's monumental bronze sculptures (1997); forty-five Pablo Picasso paintings (2000); the Gustav Rau collection, composed of approximately 800 paintings of famous European artists (2002); seventy-three pieces, including sculptures, of the Terracotta Army of Qin Shi Huang, Emperor of China (2006); and one hundred artefacts of The Lord of Sipán, Moche mummy found at Huaca Rajada, Peru (2007). Cuervo de Jaramillo also arranged for preservation specialists from the Louvre Museum to train the Colombian museum staff.

Cuervo de Jaramillo's second objective was to incorporate current and timely topics such as forced displacement, attempts at peace treaties in Colombia, and historic battles in the institution's scripts and exhibitions. To that end, she created the annual historic Chair Ernesto Restrepo Tirado, in which academics and specialists gather to analyze current cultural and social affairs. This Chair paved the way for including topics such as the recent political violence in the museum's narratives. Cuervo de Jaramillo left the museum in 2005 to become Minister of Culture, retiring two years later. The next two directors of the institution, María Victoria Angulo de Robayo (2005-2014), and Daniel Castro Benítez (2015-), have kept and promoted the Chair.

Cuervo de Jaramillo wanted the museum to become a critical and sensible actor in the ongoing political affairs of the country. As she stated in a column for the Colombian newspaper *El Espectador*,

[3] Toro Vesga, María Alejandra. 2014. Sala 'Memoria y nación' del Museo Nacional, un tributo a la diversidad. *El Tiempo*. Available at http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-14974082. Accessed August 7, 2016.

> One of the museum's challenges is aiding to elucidate the problems that concern a society. In the midst in war, what kind of museum do Colombians want? Can we only conceive a museum of winners, heroes, a sanctuary of past glories? Are we willing to tell a story that represents us all? Are we able to narrate contemporary history whilst we are alive?[4]

Cuervo de Jaramillo was referring to the National Museum's strategic plan. She was not using the museum to encourage political militancy, but rather promoting an inclusive history, which includes dark and painful episodes. She wanted to enhance the museum's collections by acquiring diverse objects, but she also wanted to educate people on Colombia's internal conflict. In war museums, following historian Jay Winter, objects represent the history to be told.[5] The National Museum of Colombia, however, is not a war museum; it is regarded as a space where people go to learn. It is also considered a sterile, sacred space where objects are safe and guarded. Aesthetic choices come into play here. Since war is impossible to represent in its complexity, objects must tell the story. In doing so, they tell a sanitized narrative.[6] Cuervo de Jaramillo sought to challenge these conventional ideas about what a museum should be.

The last three directors of the National Museum, together with numerous scholars, have agreed that historical selectivity in remembering and forgetting are core aspects of memory production.[7] In this sense, the National Museum's initiatives of enriching the collections with diverse objects and stories, and perhaps displaying them, have produced silences that still need to be filled. Such self-censorship has led historian Gyan Prakash to assert that museums must tell "inappropriate things," challenging traditional conceptualizations of authority, power, and knowledge production. Instead, museums should portray histories of conflict, interactions, domination, displacement, and resistance.[8]

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[4] Cuervo de Jaramillo, Elvira. March 1, 2001. "¿Qué mostramos, ¿qué escondemos?" *El Espectador*. National Museum of Colombia Archive.

[5] Jay Winter, "Museums and the Representation of War". In *Does War Belong in Museums? The Representation of Violence in Exhibitions*. Muchitsch, W. (Ed.). Pp. 21-41. (Bielefeld: Museumsakademie Joanneum, 2014): 24.

[6] Ibid., 26.

[7] D. Cohen, *The Combing of History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); M. Halbwachs, *Memoria Colectiva* (Anthropos: Barcelona, 2004); B. Sarlo, *Tiempo pasado: cultura de la memoria y giro subjetivo* (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2005); M. Roth, *Memory, Trauma, and History: Essays on Living with the Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); M. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

[8] Gyan Prakash, "Museum Matters". In *Museum Studies. An Anthology of Contexts*. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 214-215.

Inspired by these ideas, which are part of the new museology, the renovation project of the National Museum began in 1992. The new museology can be traced back to 1930s, when museum theorists such as T.R. Adams asserted that museums have or needed to have a relationship with social justice. The author argued that museums must play a significant role in the struggle to maintain and encourage social freedom.[9] This paved the way for a discussion about the social and political roles of museums, encouraging new communication and styles of expression in contrast to classic, collection-centered museum models.[10] Librarian and curator Deirdre Stam, however, claims that despite the possibility of finding continuity in the narrative of 1930s and the 1990s, few new museologists are aware of the history of the discipline, assuming that it started during the 1980s and 1990s. She also states that much of the new museology foundations can be found in historical theory.[11] Stam shows how the 'Annales' school of historians, in the 1950s and beyond, devoted their attention to material culture, everyday life, and political and economic interpretations of objects.[12] Therefore, during the 1970s and 1980s the approach of historians such as Thomas J. Schlereth, in *Artifacts and the American Past*, provides insights into how to use objects as historical sources.[13]

The new museology addresses issues such as value, meaning, control, interpretation, authority, and authenticity in museums. This entails the redistribution of curatorial power, challenging the relationship among venues, and the communities represented.[14] The nature of this change calls for more interaction between diverse marginal groups and museum staff, allowing for increased visibility among regular people and viewers. This shift has also incorporated terms like 'cultural empowerment', 'social re-definition', 'dialogue' and 'emotion' into the museum narratives as a means of rendering the institution more participatory and appreciative of people's lives. This in turn comes with an awareness of social accountability and responsibility in the museum.[15] Yet, it was not until 1989, with the publication of the book *The New*

[9] T. R. Adam, *The Museum and Popular Culture* (New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1939): 28.

[10] Vicki McCall and Clive Gray, "Museums and the 'new museology': Theory, Practice and Organisational Change," *Management and Curatorship,* Vol. 29, No. 1 (2013): 1-17.

[11] Deirdre C. Stam, "The Informed Muse: The Implications of 'The New Museology' for Museum Practice," *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 12 (1993): 267-283.

[12] There are also many other historians that have influenced the development of the new museology such as Fernand Braudel, Philippe Arias, Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, E. A. Wrigley, Keith V. Thomas and Peter Gay.

[13] Stam, 267-283.

[14] MacCall and Gray, 1-17.

[15] Ibid.

Museology, edited by Paul Vergo, that the new museology started to be considered as a solid academic field. In this compilation of articles, the authors address the methodological and theoretical challenges to the field becoming an established discipline. Vergo asserts that conventional museum studies were too much about methods and too little about the purposes of the venues.[16] By claiming this, he implied that that the "old" museology tended to assign preconceived or previous questions about how and why exhibitions are produced, and in what context.[17] As museum scholar Edwina Taborski notes, meanings are arbitrarily assigned, making them a part of a social narrative that allows for interpretation.[18] In this context, new museologists focus on presenting stories to the public that represent them and with which they can identify. The new museology is an approach that highlights accessibility and interpretation.

Inspired by the guidelines of the new museology, in 2001, Cuervo de Jaramillo and the museum underwent an institutional controversy due to the director's proposal to enrich the venue's collections with an object that belonged to a well-known leader of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo, FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army). This led to a debate about what a museum is or should be. Historically, curators, directors, museum professionals, and audiences have thought about these institutions as places of certainties, definitions, and authority.[19] For instance, sociologist Tony Bennett, following Michel Foucault's premise about power and control, states that museums emerged in Britain as a way of controlling people's behavior. This can help us think about the National Museum of Colombia and the history of the building, which itself was a panopticon jail. Bennett

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[16] Peter Vergo, *The New Museology*. (London: Reaktion Books, 1989), 3.

[17] Other publications worth mentioning are two essay collections of the Smithsonian Institution: *Exhibiting Cultures; The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (1991), and *Museums and Communities; The Politics of Public Culture* (1992), which analyzed in detail how the relationships between museum professionals and communities needed to be, ethics of display, and how the participation and collaboration of the people could not be ignored. Other contributions are *Different Voices: A Social, Cultural, and Historical Framework for Change in the American Art* Museum (1992), the United Kingdom entitled New Research in Museum Studies, Vol. 1 (1990), and *The Epistemic Museum* by David Chapin and Stephen Klein in the summer of 1992. In addition, seminal pieces in the new museology field are James Clifford's, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (1997), in which he discusses museums as contact zones and *The Museum in Transition* (2000), by Hilde S. Hein, where the author talks about how contemporary museum professionals are not centered anymore in displaying objects but narratives, sometimes marginal, which is one of the objectives of the new museology.

[18] Edwina Taborsky. 1990. "The Discursive Object." In (Susan Pearce, ed.) *Objects of Knowledge, New Research in Museum Studies 1* (London and Atlantic Highlands: The Athlone Press, 1990), 52.

[19] Karsten Schubert, *The Curator's Egg. The Evolution of the Museum Concept from the French Revolution to the Present Day* (London: Ridling House, 2009), 15.

claims that it was in the nineteenth century that the relation between culture and government was developed through museums. He highlights the capacity attributed to high culture and museums to transform or influence the inner lives of the population and alter their way of life and behavior. Museums were meant to help govern the populace, functioning as regulating mechanism.[20] It was about discipline and surveillance.

Art dealer Karsten Schubert notes, however, that every generation goes through a museum crisis. During these periods, societies and individuals question what these institutions are for, who they serve, and what their purpose or nature ought to be. Since their foundation in the eighteenth century, museums have undergone changes in their policies and objectives. In Paris and London, from 1760 until 1870, museums were spaces for the elite or ruling class; their access was restricted and they had strict guidelines for etiquette and protocol.[21] In Germany, specifically Berlin from 1900 to 1930, museums did not have as many collections but were globally known for their ethnographic and art exhibits. In addition, museum designers devoted time and effort to make German museums cutting-edge venues regarding curatorial practices. Museums were supposed to be full of light and space. After the Second World War, they became spaces that were protected from destruction on the basis of ideological difference.[22] In the United States, museums like the Charleston Museum in South Carolina (1770s) had a goal of reaching the wider public. Public museums in the United States existed years before the great private collections of Europe consolidated into museums. North American museums were more civic than nationalist, emphasizing education over the politics of social reform.[23] Cuervo de Jaramillo's position can be characterized as a middle ground between these the European and North American traditions. She wanted to enrich the museum's collections by acquiring diverse objects, but she also wanted to educate people about the Colombian internal conflict.

After Elvira Cuervo de Jaramillo's retirement in 2005, her subdirector Maria Victoria de Angulo de Robayo took over the leadership of the museum until 2014. De Angulo de Robayo mandated the establishment of an exhibition about the life and death of a demobilized guerrilla leader of the Movimiento 19 de abril, M-19 (April 19th Movement). The display was part of the ongoing renewal project that sought, among

[20] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995).
[21] Karsten Schubert, 17.
[22] Ibid., 38.
[23] Ibid., 39-40.

other things, to "renovate the current curatorial script of the National Museum of Colombia, with the objective to promote dialogues between the collections, regarding universal topics. A script that will offer to the visitors an inclusive, participative, and dynamic narrative, which invites to reflect about the past and the present within a diverse country in constant construction."[24] The curators of this particular exhibit, following the directives' guidelines of the 1990s, wanted to promote a space that allowed people to remember the violent acts of the end of the Twentieth century in a critical way. The Minister of Culture highlighted the significance of the display, stating that is was the "first time that an exhibition about an ex-revolutionary takes place in an official institution."[25] Angulo de Robayo thought that it was necessary for the museum to include polemic figures like former guerrilla fighters in its narrative. She said to the Minister of Culture: "If we do exhibitions about great men and politicians how come we can do the same with other significant personalities of the country, like former *guerrilleros*."[26]

The current director of the National Museum of Colombia, Daniel Castro, has also positioned new museology concepts at the institution:

> Which is our responsibility with Colombia's recent history, which has several scenarios, conflicts? Our challenge is to display phenomena such as the armed conflict. One of my concerns is our focus in the objects whilst we should devote more attention to the circumstances of the historic moment. We should concentrate on that and if we have material culture to support it, well, fine. Museum professionals have excessively regarded the objects but we do not have to it anymore. I like to think that there are other narratives to tell the same stories from different angles and perspectives. I believe that our responsibility is to talk about the Colombian armed conflict but not with a hidden moral agenda but as a way to dialogue, to participate. I am very interested in this issue and want to keep working on it. The museum displays must allow us to approach controversial topics as a conversation and not trying to impose one point of view over another. What is violence? What generates violence? What generates non-conformism? What causes confrontations? I believe we have been doing this in museums for a while. What we need to do know is to reinforce that much more.[27]

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[24] Proyecto de renovación del guión y del montaje museográfico del Museo Nacional de Colombia. National Museum of Colombia Archive. February 20, 2013.

[25] María José Pizarro abre en el Museo Nacional de Colombia la exposición sobre su padre muerto. December 22, 2010. *Casa América Catalunya*. Available at: http://americat.barcelona/es/septiembre-21-maria-jose-pizarro-abre-en-el-museo-nacional-de-colombia-la-exposicion-sobre-su-padre-muerto-

[26] Interview by Jimena Perry to María Victoria de Angulo de Robayo, Director of the National Museum of Colombia, February 14, 2017.

[27] Interview by Jimena Perry to Daniel Castro Benítez, Director of the National Museum of Colombia, February 21, 2017.

The last three directors of the National Museum of Colombia agree with and have followed the new museology, which constitutes a break with the tradition of the institution since its foundation until the early 1990s.

The National Museum of Colombia Storied Tradition

After the ratification of the Colombian Constitution of 1991, the directors of the Museum emphasized the institution's duty of including recent violent events in its narrative. This decision challenged the conventional account of the museum, which mainly focused on stories of battles and great men. Founded in 1823, the institution was created as a natural history museum and mining school supporting ideas of civilization and progress.[28] The first objects that formed a collection were some minerals imported from Europe, fragments of a meteor, insects, mammals, reptiles, fish, scientific tools, bone fragments, and a mummy.[29] During the nineteenth century, its displays and exhibits sought to prove, especially to Europe, that Colombia could become a civilized and developed country. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the museum experienced financial difficulties and deteriorated. In the early twentieth century, the institution recovered, and its directors started to include historic and artistic pieces in its collections. Paintings of independence-era heroes, portraits of distinguished people, and historically significant documents became part of its collections.[30] It was not until the second half of the twentieth century that museum designers included other topics, such as violence, gender, and the economy, in its narrative. From 1946 until the present, the museum has housed more than 20,000 archaeological, ethnographic, historic, and artistic objects, from which only 2,500 are on display. It was, however, during the decade of the 1990s that the directors of the Museum emphasized the institution's duty of including the country's recent history of violence in its accounts.

The National Museum has had several headquarters over the years, rendering it difficult for curators and directors to expand, research its collections, and create a narrative for telling Colombia's history. However, in March 1946, the Ministry of

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[28] María Paola Rodríguez Prada, "Origen de la institución museal en Colombia: entidad científica para el desarrollo y progreso", *Cuadernos de Curaduría. Aproximaciones a la historia del Museo Naciona* (Edición Especial. Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 2008). Available at: www.museonacional.gov.co/cuadernos.html

[29] Clara Isabel Botero Cuervo, *El redescubrimiento del pasado prehispánico de Colombia: viajeros, arqueólogos y coleccionistas, 1820-1945*. (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, Universidad de Los Andes, 2006), 104.

[30] Martha Segura, *Itinerario del Museo Nacional*. Tomo I (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, Museo Nacional de Colombia, 1995).

Education and the organizers of the IX Pan-American Conference in Bogotá[31] decided that the institution should have its headquarters at the Cundinamarca Central Penitentiary, the Panopticon—known for the cruelty and inhumane conditions in which prisoners were kept in from 1874 until 1946[32]—and have its prisoners moved to the Picota Jail.[33]

The National Museum of Colombia's first building was located at the Botanical House (Casa Botánica), in downtown Bogota, where the mining school operated. It had two halls, one devoted to natural objects and another to history, the arts, and the sciences. The Botanical House was sold in 1842 and the museum moved to a room in the Department of Interior and War, until 1845. In 1850, city planners demolished the house.[34] In 1845, the museum went to the House of Classrooms (Casa de las aulas), headquarters of the National Library of Colombia, also founded in 1823. Until 1913, the year the National Museum relocated, both institutions competed for a space of their own within the same building. While they shared the House of Classrooms, the directors of the museum had to negotiate where to exhibit its collections, sometimes shortening displays and spending exorbitant funds on local repairs. From 1913 to 1922 the National Museum operated at the Rufino Cuervo Passage, also in downtown Bogotá. Throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century, Bogotá still had a colonial urban structure of city blocks—with spaces for commerce or offices on the periphery and dead zones in the center. Therefore, urban planners wanted to use the empty spaces and designed "commercial passages" for profit.[35] Here, the museum seemed to be dismembered and dispersed since the passage had several premises. There was not enough room for its collections and exhibits. In 1922, the National Museum moved yet again, with its main collection held at the National Capitol, the Rufino Cuervo Passage, the National Library, and its minor collections sent to diverse

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[31] The Conferences of American States, commonly referred to as the Pan-American Conferences, were meetings of the Pan-American Union, an international organization for cooperation on trade. James G. Blaine, a United States politician, Secretary of State and presidential contender, first proposed establishment of closer ties between the United States and its southern neighbors and proposed international conferences. Blaine hoped that ties between the United States and its southern counterparts would open Latin American markets to US trade.

[32] Adolfo León Gómez, *Los Secretos del Panóptico* (Bogotá: Imprenta de M. Rivas & Cía, 1905).

[33] "El Museo Nacional, el panóptico que cumple 140 años de historia," *El Tiempo* (October 3, 2014). National Museum of Colombia Archive.

[34] Segura, 7-18.

[35] Germán Téllez Castañeda, *La arquitectura y el urbanismo en la época republicana, 1830-40/1930-35*. Nueva Historia de Colombia. (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta,1989), 280.

institutions such as the National University of Colombia, the Ministry of Education, and the Presidential Palace.[36]

In 1946, the directors and curators of the National Museum of Colombia reorganized the institution and sought to reintegrate and reunite it with the historical collections of the Archaeological, Natural Sciences, and Fine Arts Museums. The Panopticon was renovated according to the museum's needs, but its inauguration, planned for April 9, 1948, had to be cancelled after the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán.[37] In 1946, the appointed director was Teresa Cuervo. Elvira Cuervo de Jaramillo, niece of Teresa Cuervo, remembers her aunt and the violent events of 1948, when she was a schoolgirl:

> Teresa was getting ready for reopening the museum. I did not have school, so I went there with two friends to help with cleaning. While doing this, I saw my father running towards us and the museum workers and yelling '¡Gaitán has been killed!' Approximately 300 workers that were at the museum disappeared and some police officers also vanished. Only between 12 and 14 people stayed, including me, Teresa, and my father. I remember fire, looting, and people running. Some rioters came towards the museum to liberate the prisoners they thought were still there, but Teresa and my father confronted them and told them that the building was not a prison anymore, but a historic place that deserved respect. The agitators only took the flagpoles displayed at the entrances and burned them. They did not enter. Teresa, my father, and me stayed at the museum until midnight. That memory has never left me. Teresa was the director of the institution until 1984, she worked there for 28 years. She took care of it, catalogued every single object, and I witnessed all that.[38]

The National Museum opened on 2 May 1948. Its first floor was devoted to archaeology and ethnography, the second story to history, and the third to the fine arts.[39] One of Cuervo de Jaramillo's first recollections about the museum is that there were "a bunch of boxes in a basement. Teresa had to direct that."[40]

From 1946 to 1992, the year Elvira Cuervo de Jaramillo was appointed director of the institution, the efforts of its directors and curators focused on creating a script that privileged histories of battles, of great men, and state historical accounts. By 1992,

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[36] Segura, 57-65.

[37] Jorge Eliécer Gaitán Ayala (January 23, 1903-April 9, 1948) was a politician, leader of a populist movement in Colombia, a former Education Minister (1940) and Labor Minister (1943–1944), mayor of Bogotá (1936) and one of the most charismatic leaders of the Liberal Party. He was killed during his second presidential campaign in 1948, setting off the *Bogotazo* that led to a violent period of political unrest in Colombian history known as "La Violencia" (1948-1958).

[38] Elvira Cuervo de Jaramillo. Interview by Jimena Perry. Bogotá - Colombia, February 9, 2017.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

also, the site still had its issues. "The place was in really bad shape. The waste water of a nearby school was stagnant at the main entrance lobby, it was humid, dirty, very neglected. Kids had to enter with rubber boots to avoid getting impregnated with the sewage waters."[41] That year, a restoration process began that coincided with the crafting of a new script by Cuervo de Jaramillo and a well-known Colombian painter, Beatriz González, who already worked at the museum. Since then, 1992, and following the guidelines of the new museology, the National Museum's last three directors have devoted a great deal of their attention to making the venue less of a sacred and authoritarian place and more of a cite for social criticism.

Museo Nacional de Colombia. Picture: ©Museo Nacional de Colombia / Samuel Monsalve Parra

Memory and Nation Hall

The 1991 Colombian Constitution, due to its multiethnic and multicultural nature, paved the way for traditionally marginalized voices to surface and demand their inclusion in the nation-making project. The Constitution also promoted reflections about Colombia's heterogeneous composition, opening spaces for women, Afro-descendants, and Indigenous people to actively participate in the national government.

[41] Ibid.

This acknowledgement of diverse social groups stimulated discussions about autobiographical and collective[42] memory and the nation-state.[43]

In 1997, Law 397, a development of articles 70, 71, and 72 of the Constitution, defined the National Museum of Colombia's mission of enriching its collections with historical, artistic, and scientific pieces.[44] To fulfill this constitutional mandate, directors, curators, and other professionals of the institution have engaged in its ongoing renovation project. The Memory and Nation Hall is part of this effort, inviting Colombians to think about the country's cultural diversity, and diverse voices could be included in the venue.[45] A key purpose of the Hall and the museum is to stimulate people to perceive themselves as active citizens, dynamic participants, and protagonists of the nation's history.

The Hall's script includes ten broad topics, each intended to incorporate as many historical actors and events as possible. These include: 1) Voices and Memories, 2) Tensions and Fusions in the Sacred World, 3) To Think and Name with the Other's Voice, 4) Orality and Writing: Knowledge Construction and Transmission, 5) Conceiving and Representing Nature, 6) Territory, Geography, and Culture in Border Sites, 7) War and Memory, 8) Art Perspectives, 9) Faces, Fragments, and Images, and the 10) Wall of Diversity, which in turn encompass themes such as experiential landscapes; colonized landscapes; activities, fairs, and trades; Women's Issues (faces, memories), Social Fabric, and Men's Issues (combatants, faces, memories).[46]

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[42] D. Cohen, *The Combing of History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[43] Benedict Anderson, *Comunidades imaginadas: reflexiones sobre el origen y la difusión del nacionalismo* (México: FCE, 1993); Julio Arias Vanegas, *Nación y diferencia en el siglo XIX colombiano: orden nacional, racialismo y taxonomías poblacionales* (Bogotá: Universidad de Los Andes-CESO-Departamento de Antropología, 2007); Homi K. Bhabha, "Introduction: narrating the nation". In *Nation and Narration*. London - New York: Routledge, 1990); Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: inventing traditions". In *The Invention of Tradition*. Eds. Hobsbawm, E. J, and T. O Ranger (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Simon J. Knell, "National Museums and the National Imagination". In Knell (ed.), *National Museums: New Studies from around the World* (London; New York: Routledge, 2011). Amanda Carolina Pérez Benavides, "Nosotros y los otros las representaciones de la nación y sus habitantes, Colombia, 1880-1910" (Tesis doctoral en historia, Colegio de México, 2011); Víctor Manuel Rodríguez, "La fundación del Museo Nacional de Colombia: ambivalencias en la narración de la nación colombiana moderna", *Nómadas*, No. 08 (1998); María Emma Wills Obregón,. "De la nación católica a la nación multicultural: rupturas y desafíos." In *Museo, Memoria y nación. Misión de los museos nacionales para los ciudadanos del futuro*. Edited by Gonzalo Sánchez Gómez and María Emma Wills Obregón (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2000).

[44] Ley 397 de 1997. Bogotá, Colombia.

[45] Museo Nacional de Colombia (February 2014). *Proyecto "Renovación del guión y el montaje museográfico del Museo Nacional de Colombia." Guión Sala 7. Memoria y Nación.* Bogotá.

[46] Ibid.

An innovative aspect of Memory and Nation is its representation of a non-chronological, non-linear, history. Instead, the directors and curators went for a thematic script that allows people to appreciate several past events besides recent representations of violence.[47] This Hall, intended to last for ten years, was conceived as a sample of topics that future halls will address On March 2, 2016, another hall named Land as Resource was opened to the public.

The team of museum designers who led the National Museum's renovation project envisioned a multidisciplinary dialogue between its artistic, historic, ethnographic, archaeological, scientific, and contemporary collections. The script comprises selections made by the team of specialists who agreed in the impossibility of telling an all-encompassing history. In Memory and Nation, people encounter pieces with which they can argue, remember, think about the future, or simply ignore.[48] The hall acknowledges subjects avoided in traditional linear and chronological scripts, such as victims of violence and afro-descendants. Or at least it tries. Its intentions concur with Colombia's postconflict transition following the peace treaty of November 24, 2016.

The first piece people can see when entering the space is a large tapestry made by Mampuján women. It is called Mampuján*, día del llanto* (Mampuján's Crying Day). This object is emblematic of the grieving processes some communities undertake, and of the memories they have of their violent past. It not only gives voice to a local community affected deeply by violence, but it also represents the horror most rural citizens of Colombia experienced during the decades of the 1980s, 90s, and early 2000s.

The artifact depicts a massacre and forced displacement that took place in Mampuján in the Montes de María region, in the Colombian Caribbean. On 10-11 March 2000, right-wing paramilitaries entered Mampuján and gathered all its inhabitants in the town's main square. Twelve peasants were accused of being guerrilla informants and killed. These tragic days remain vivid in the survivors' memory. When recalling their assassinated neighbors, they emphasize the falsehood of the paramilitaries' claims about the victims' relationship with leftist guerrilla members.[49]

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[47] Rodríguez Prada, María Paola. Interview by Jimena Perry. Bogotá, Colombia, July 12, 2016.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Museo Nacional de Colombia (February 2014). *Proyecto "Renovación del guión y el montaje museográfico del Museo Nacional de Colombia." Guión Sala 7. Memoria y Nación.* Bogotá.

Asociación de Mujeres Tejiendo Sueños y Sabores de Paz, *Mampuján 11 de marzo de 2000. Día del llanto, 2006*. Collection Museo Nacional de Colombia, reg. 7809. Picture: ©Museo Nacional de Colombia / Samuel Monsalve Parra.

Mampuján tapestries are woven by women. According to the National Center for Historical Memory of Colombia, more than 50% of the narratives that recall atrocities of the 1980s, 90s, and early 2000s belong to and are created by women.[50] Most of the efforts and projects of reparation, remembrance, grief, and endurance are also led or carried out by women. This observation can be easily supported by the fact that the vast majority of the war casualties were men. This statement, however, is more complicated than that, as recent research from the National Center for Historical Memory has shown that there were also many dead women, LGBTQ people, and

[50] Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (2017), "Mujeres que hacen memoria". Available at: http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/noticias/noticias-cmh/mujeres-que-hacen-memoria

children. However, the media did not always emphasize gender when reporting a massacre.

Argentinian scholar Elizabeth Jelin states that there is qualitative evidence to support that men and women remember differently. Women, she argues, tend to remember more intimate details: the situation of the family when a violent event happened, the daily activities that were interrupted, and memories that are directly related to their affection. Men, Jelin argues, often remember in a more factual way, being more precise with data and specific details of events and atrocities.[51]

When thinking about gender, memory, and the ways in which people and communities remember, the cultural differences that stand out when recalling a violent past or event, or the memories created by men and women, it is clear that memory is not unilinear. It would perhaps be more convenient to talk about memories in the plural. In this matter, I concur with scholar Michael Rothberg assertion in his book *Multidirectional Memory*, published in 2009, that we must challenge dominant accounts of memory. In the case of Colombia, these dominant accounts are official representations of the violence of the late-20th century. Memory, Rothberg observes, has no intrinsic meaning, but rather acquires significance in relationship to other memories in a network of associations. Recognizing that not all articulations of memory are equal, he calls for a multidirectional memory, a concept which states that memories should not be competitive. Rothberg claims that, historically, memories about a violent past compete among each other when searching for the truth and for recognition. Instead, he states that memories should be acknowledged as different, without a hierarchy.[52] This leads us to thinking about memory as a process in which there is no ownership over remembrances by social groups because they are part of ongoing social dynamics and continuously shifting. There are no losers or winners when it comes to memory, and this sense, the ways in which men, women, LGBTQ communities, and children remember should receive the same amount of attention and validation.

The Mampuján women weavers use the tapestries, its creation process, and the collective community space surrounding objects to express their memories of Crying Days. Both environments, the community and museum, allow for social and individual healing processes. Tapestries additionally promote reflection on what happened to

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[51] Jelin, Elizabeth, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

[52] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory. Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

avoid its repetition and encourage new senses of citizenship, understood as belonging, in which these women demand to be heard and to participate in the nation. Their tapestries represent traumatic experiences related with historical events to better understand why violence persists in Colombia.

The forced displacement experienced by the Mampuján community is told in another tapestry, also exhibited in the Memory and Nation Hall. It is called *Travesía*, which means travel or journey.

Asociación Mujeres Tejiendo Sueños y Sabores de Paz, Mampuján, Bolívar. *Travesía No. 2, 2014*. Collection Museo Nacional de Colombia, reg. 7954. Picture: ©Museo Nacional de Colombia/Samuel Monsalve Parra.

This piece has many connotations. It refers to the massacre, forced displacement, and slavery of Mampuján inhabitants' African descent. This tapestry is an allegory of their own history. In the piece, women wove the past and the present together to make sense of what happened during the Crying Day. Instead of telling a long gone, distant, history of slavery (represented in the ship full of displaced people), for example, Mampuján weavers integrate their past to their current situation, which makes the narrative more relatable to protagonists and spectators. This is also one of the purposes of Memory and Nation, to engage citizens with their past, to make them feel they are part of the stories displayed.

The Crying Day survivors feel fortunate to be alive because they could have suffered the same fate of El Salado, another massacre that occurred in the Montes de María region in the same year. It received extensive media coverage because it was the

one of the bloodiest, a "chronicle of a death foretold."[53] Local authorities alerted the National Government of the presence of paramilitary groups but Army officials failed to act. This allowed for one of the worst massacres in the history of Colombian violence. It took place between 16-21 February 2000, and more than 100 peasants of the area were killed by 450 paramilitary fighters.[54]

Another object that catches the eye of those who attend Memory and Nation's display is the picture named *David No. 6*.

David No. 6 AP 2, 2005. Digital Print on Paper. Collection Museo Nacional de Colombia, reg. 7843. Picture: Miguel Ángel Rojas (1946-).

This picture, taken by Miguel Ángel Rojas, a Colombian artist, is modeled after Michelangelo's masterpiece. It depicts soldier José Antonio Ramos, who, after losing

[53] *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (*Crónica de una muerte anunciada*), is a novella by the Nobel Prize winner Gabriel García Márquez (1927-2014), published in 1981.

[54] Gonzalo Sánchez, *La masacre de El Salado: esa guerra no era nuestra* (Bogotá: Centro de Memoria Histórica, 2009), 24-27.

his leg below the knee due to a landmine, agreed to pose as the *David*. Rojas met Ramos in Caldas, Department in the Colombian coffee region. The artist asked Ramos to pose as *David* not expecting his answer: "Which David?" Rojas and Ramos have grown close and see each other when the soldier visits Bogotá.[55]

David No. 6 represents landmines victims. Rojas wanted viewers to see a young, good-looking man with limited education, an average citizen, and to be shocked by his amputation. Even though the victim survived the attack, his life was deeply impacted and changed dramatically. This piece also represents the contrast of a victim who is not only a soldier but also a common person. In 2015, Colombia ranked second in the world, after Afghanistan, in the number of landmines.[56] When the more recent conflict started, during the 1980s, guerrillas planted these devices all over the countryside. Since 2000, most of the victims of these explosives have been peasants and indigenous peoples, who have unsuccessfully tried not to be involved in war and not take any side. Having a landmine victim at the National Museum makes a profound statement. It conveys the institution's acknowledgement and commitment to feature **a**n extensive, problematic issue.

An innovative display of Memory and Nation is its Wall of Diversity, at the room's posterior end. This is a wall composed of 29 easel paintings and 508 projected images.

Memory and Nation Hall. The Diversity Wall is at the back of the room.
Picture: ©Museo Nacional de Colombia / Samuel Monsalve Parra.

[55] Alejandra López, "El Rojas de Miguel Ángel". *El Tiempo*. Bogotá (2014).

[56] Ana Luisa González, "Colombia, with 2nd largest number of landmines in world, struggles to remove them". *Fox News* (2016). Available at: http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/10/28/colombia-is-2nd-on-list-countries-with-most-land-mines-behind-afghanistan.html

This picture is a view of the Wall of Diversity. Even though it is at the back part of the space, when one enters the hall, it is immediately visible. At the lower right corner of the image is the Mampuján tapestry. The Wall of Diversity shows images and faces of diverse Colombian landscapes and inhabitants. When viewers stand in front of the Wall, they can press on certain pictures or paintings to see their description and even alternate images.

Contentious Non-Exhibited Objects

The inclusion of these pieces in the National Museum's narrative is relevant because it demonstrates the willingness of museum professionals and curators to keep the institution current. The effort also contrasts with some failed attempts to exhibit certain objects in the past, such as a 2001 initiative to display an item belonging to a FARC-EP leader. In the collections of the National Museum, there are other polemical pieces, which have not been displayed to the public yet and therefore have not been historicized.[57] Such pieces include the shirt that Jorge Eliécer Gaitán wore when he was murdered in April 9, 1948—an event that triggered the riots of *El Bogotazo*, the peak of Liberal-Conservative violence. It was one of the most dramatic situations of Colombian nationhood. Gaitán's homicide led to a mass movement in Bogotá and other cities such as Barrancabermeja, Bucaramanga, Cali, Ibagué, and some towns of Tolima and Cundinamarca. Other riots took place on the Atlantic Coast, and in the Departments of Antioquia, Boyacá, and Nariño. The *Bogotazo* initiated ten years (1948-1958) of violence between Liberals and Conservatives, mostly in rural areas. This period, called *La Violencia*, is known for the vicious attacks Conservatives and Liberals committed against each other. At the core of the conflict was land ownership. Conservative politicians encouraged peasants to seize the lands of Liberals. This provoked intense armed confrontation throughout Colombia. Massacres, burning of villages, kidnapping, robbery, rape, and all kinds of atrocities took over the country. Many people fled to the mountains and formed guerrilla bands to defend themselves.[58]

The museum collections also hold the suit worn by Luis Carlos Galán[59], a Liberal presidential candidate who was murdered by order of the infamous drug dealer

[57] Fernando Salamanca, "Lo que el Museo Nacional no ha podido exhibir". *Kienyke*. National Museum of Colombia Archive, 2013.

[58] J. Ocampo López, "Gobierno de Mariano Ospina Pérez", *Historia*, Tomo 2 (1976). Available at: http:// www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/biografias/ospimari.htm.

[59] Luis Carlos Galán Sarmiento (29 September 1943-18 August 1989). Colombian journalist and liberal politician who founded the party New Liberalism in 1979. The first time

Pablo Escobar, in 1989. Galán's wife donated the shirt to the Museum in 1999.[60] The museum collections also include the dress coat of Marshal José Antonio Sucre, the candidate to follow in Simón Bolívar's steps, shot at point-blank range in the back in 1830. Despite the latter items being symbols of violence in Colombia and pertaining to recognized victims, their display has not been possible because they raise mixed feelings of anger, sadness, and impunity among the survivors, and concerns that their exposure would suggest equivalency between killers and martyrs.

The non-exhibited artifacts of the National Museum of Colombia reveal continuity in its conventional historical narrative, which tells only one side of the story, exalting victims by encouraging feelings of unfairness and which completely obliterates any presence of violence perpetrators. This sentiment was evident in the results of a survey conducted by museum leaders in 2001. When Colombians were asked which historic personalities should be represented in the institution, Simón Bolívar received the most nominations. Other historical figures such as Jaime Garzón[61], Luis Carlos Galán, and Fernando Botero also received nominations.[62] Guerrillas, paramilitary fighters and drug traffickers were conspicuously absent. Nonetheless, some curators think that images of Pablo Escobar, for instance, should be displayed at the museum, precisely to show what Colombians do not want to be.[63]

One merit of the Memory and Nation Hall is that it has paved the way for including some accounts of the country's recent violence. Related to this endeavor is

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he ran for the presidency, however, was for the Liberal Party, but he lost to the Conservative Belisario Betancur. The second time, he ran as a member of the New Liberalism but was killed by Pablo Escobar during his campaign. Galán supported the extradition treaty with the US and for this he received several dead threats from the drug cartels. On 1989, he was shot by a hitman hired by Pablo Escobar in a public demonstration near Bogotá. Galán was leading the polls. The investigation into his assassination remains partially unsolved.

[60] Salamanca, "Lo que el Museo Nacional no ha podido exhibir".

[61] Jaime Garzón (October 24, 1960-August 13, 1999, Bogotá). Colombian journalist, comedian, lawyer, peace activist, and negotiator in the release of FARC-EP guerrillas' hostages. He was popular on television during the 1990s for his political satire. After seventeen years of believing he was murdered by the paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño, the Fiscalía General de la Nación (Office of the Attorney General) determined that Garzón was assassinated by the criminal band "La terraza," (terrace) from Medellín, following orders of Diego Fernando Murillo, alias Don Berna, and the support of members of the National Army. ("¿Quiénes asesinaron a Jaime Garzón?", *Revista Semana* (Bogotá, March 3, 2016).

[62] Fernando Botero (April 19, 1932). Colombian figurative artist and sculptor. His signature style, known as "Boterismo," depicts people and figures in large, exaggerated volume, which represent political criticism or humor. He is considered one of the most recognized living Latin American artists. In 1999, Botero depicted Tirofijo. In the painting, the guerrilla leader is wearing his red towel. The piece can be seen at the Museo Botero in Bogotá.

[63] Paola Villamarín, "La Colombia de colecció, *El Tiempo*. National Museum of Colombia Archive, 2001.

the matter of who remembers. Scholar Elizabeth Jelin describes the different ways of discarding memories of torture. She argues that sometimes silence serves as a coping strategy for the maintenance of a certain social order when painful memories resurface.[64] This evasive memory, as Jelin calls it, is what some curators are challenging when they seek to paint a more comprehensive picture of Colombia's contemporary history.[65] Evasive memory, she states, "prevails in historical periods following large social catastrophes, massacres, and genocides, which may engender among those who suffered them directly and survived them the desire to not know, to avoid painful remembrances as a means to continue living," which in many instances could be the Colombian case.[66]

The Memory and Nation Hall has received many criticisms from other museum workers and academics. Its detractors argue that the Hall is messy, tells a story in pieces, confuses the public, and attempts to squeeze too many themes together in a small space. Before the Wall of Diversity, the exhibition space housed a chronological and linear history of Colombian independence, with large paintings and figureheads of the country's heroes. Dismounting this exhibit was controversial because the new proposal was experimental and the former script had been there for years. Conceiving a new script was challenging and not without problems. However, it is an attempt to make the Museum part of the new project of nation building that is taking place in the wake of the November 2016 peace agreement. Its fragmented nature can be understood as representative of the disorder in which the country currently finds itself. Memory and Nation is a starting point. There are many social groups that were left out, many stories yet to be told, but presenting every violent account in the country is impossible to do in any museum. This is why choices need to be thoughtful.

Conclusions

Since the 1990s, the team of organizers of the National Museum of Colombia have been working and promoting a renovation project to make the institution's narrative more inclusive and participatory. This is evident in the efforts made by the last three directors regarding why and how to display certain objects. Inspired by the new museology principles, the museum's specialists have attempted to desacralize the museum, incorporating voices of marginal communities and events that relate to regular

[64] Jelin, 19.
[65] Ibid, 19.
[66] Ibid, 19.

citizens. They have focused on making the venue a place that speaks to all Colombians. In this context, one significant element that is becoming an active part of the venue's scripts are the brutalities committed within the context of the country's armed conflict. The voices of survivors, for instance, have been privileged.

Of course, curatorial decisions still need to be made. In this sense, museum professionals are aware that not all of the marginal voices can be included. Colombia's painful recent past is still raw in its citizens' minds. Not enough time has passed and there has not been an official healing process. This makes representations of atrocities highly contentious, which awakens mixed feelings. In addition, there were so many brutalities committed not only by the guerrillas but also by paramilitaries and the National Army that it is impossible for the National Museum to display them all. Curatorial decisions must be made, which can become a matter of sensitivity. Who remembers, how do they remember, and why? These are questions that Colombians are starting to ask themselves. Thus far, many answers have acquired the shape of local memory sites, museums, and exhibitions. The National Museum is only one part of the collective endeavor of creating memories that speak to as many citizens as possible, especially to future generations.

The choices of the four aforementioned objects, each related to representations of violence, are a valuable effort to change the conventional narrative of the National Museum of Colombia away from great men and official wars. The *David no. 6*, is an example of this. By displaying this powerful picture, the audience can realize the effect of landmines in people's lives. In addition, the tapestries are a sample of marginal communities' efforts to heal and restore their social fabric. The Diversity Wall reflects the museum organizers' curatorial decisions. Despite including more than 508 images, the still does not account for every social group of the country. In Colombia, most rural populations have suffered the brutalities of war. Yet, for reasons such as lack of resources and space, many of their portrayals escape the venue's narrative. The issue of what to display, and what to exclude when curating museum displays, is endless. The Memory and Nation Hall is an example of that negotiation. It is too soon, however, to evaluate or decide if these attempts were fruitful.

The National Museum of Colombia is developing toward a more interactive space. As the current director, Daniel Castro, said, "I do not like to use the term evolution because it is weird in a museum context, we are dealing with cultural projects

here. In this sense, we are insisting a lot in the participation component."[67] In this sense, Castro thinks that small or local venues can teach the National Museum certain things about what to display. He feels that for a long time, the general perception was that the National Museum of Colombia had to lead the way in determining what other institutions should exhibit. Now, he feels that there must be a sense of collaboration between local and national venues. This exchange of knowledge, Castro emphasizes, is what promotes and encourages participation.[68]

The museum's renovation, a project that began in the 1990s, is ambitious and demonstrates the willingness of the curators and directors to make the institution a place that keeps up with the country's history. Influenced by the principles of the new museology mentioned above, the coordinators of the institution have also engaged in discussions about what a museum ought to be. For instance, Elvira Cuervo de Jaramillo was aware of the need to tell the recent (post-1980s) history of Colombia by including actors such as drug traffickers, paramilitary fighters, and guerillas. The museum's director was also very critical of the institution's historic role in telling stories full of "green ribbons and white doves".[69] She wanted a museum in which Colombians could find references of an all-encompassing history, not fractured or biased tales.

María Victoria de Angulo de Robayo, Cuervo de Jaramillo's successor, also thought that the National Museum had the responsibility to represent all Colombians. In this sense, she and the curators introduced other voices in the venue's narrative, such as temporary exhibits of the murders of Luis Carlos Galán and Carlos Pizarro Leongómez, two politicians gunned down by drug dealers and paramilitaries during their presidential campaigns.

> We started to produce temporary exhibits in the Museum halls, which I thought was very contemporary because museums always have the problem, with their permanent displays, of becoming static. People go once and never return, these exhibits tend to be perceived as mausoleums. Therefore, we tried to make the museum more dynamic and a significant actor in Colombia's recent violent history.[70]

The museum organizers backed by Angulo de Robayo tackled historically difficult topics for Colombians, topics that are still fresh in their memory. The challenge of

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[67] Daniel Castro. Interview by Jimena Perry. Bogotá, Colombia, February 21, 2017.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Víctor Paz Otero, "Éste es otro paseo", *El Espectador*. National Museum of Colombia Archive. March 3, 2001.

[70] Interview by Jimena Perry with María Victoria de Angulo de Robayo, Director of the National Museum of Colombia, February 14, 2017.

telling a story while some of the protagonists are still alive was a legacy inherited from Cuervo de Jaramillo, which Angulo de Robayo could put into practice with her team and the support of the Ministry of Culture.

An advantage for the museum's renovation process has been the continuity in policies and conceptualizations of the last three directors. Daniel Castro, the current director, has built on Cuervo de Jaramillo and Angulo de Robayo's strategies. For him, a museum should narrate the ethnic diversity of the country, avoid traditions, and include formerly excluded and silenced narratives.[71] The Memory and Nation Hall is an illustration of these efforts. It is experimental and innovative, but it is only a starting point. Its ultimate goal is to demonstrate that Colombian history is made up of everyday people—victims, survivors, women, indigenous communities, afro-descendants, and other marginal groups—who, until recently, had never seen themselves represented at the National Museum of Colombia.

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[71] Pilar Chato, "Repensar un país, deconstruir un museo", *Colombia plural. Otro país, otro periodismo*. 2017. Available at: https://colombiaplural.com/repensar-pais-deconstruir-museo/

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