

LETTER TO THE CANDIDATES 2022 ELECTIONS

Brazil is known around the world for its cultural, natural, creative and social diversity, and Brazilian museums are the keepers of these repertoires. In this context, museums serve as referential ecosystems, promoting active and conscious citizenship, motivated by the sector's ability to preserve, but also to innovate and point to more equitable, solidary and sustainable, new futures. With the intention of starting a dialogue and ensuring the conditions for museums to fulfill their social role, **the Brazilian museum community invites all candidates: for Presidency of the Republic, State Government, Federal Congress and State Senates, to learn further about it's needs, agendas and the widely debated solutions for culture and the museums field.**

This letter is a call from the Brazilian Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM Brazil). Worldwide, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) brings together more than 44,000 members from 138 countries. The Brazilian committee is one of its most active members. Founded in 1948, ICOM Brazil has been a voice of museum professionals and museum community, helping elaborate and implement public policies, intersectoral actions and activation of professional networks, both in Brazil and overseas.

Widely recognized as institutions that play a relevant social role in the world, museums add real value to the communities in which they are inserted. They are sowers of memories and identities, managers of historical, scientific, artistic, cultural and social heritage. They serve as educational agents, leveraging the development of tourism and of local and global creative economies. Museums connect people, mediate dialogues, build networks and help us understand the necessary changes to address urgent issues of the contemporary world. Museums invite society to think, propose and create new futures.

Today, Brazil has more than 3,800 museums across 27 states. Despite their importance and value, institutions and public policies have been dismantled, resulting in a lack of dialogue and resources, the dissolution of collegiate bodies, and silencing of institutions and workers among others.

Such dismantling weakens a structured institutional ecosystem of governmental and intergovernmental agencies and programs such as the Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM), the Institute of National Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN), the Representation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Brazil, and the Cooperation Program for Museums in Ibero-America (Ibermuseum), as well as sectoral policies established in a participatory way, such as the National Museums Policy, the National Museum Education Policy, the National Museum Sectorial Policy and the National Museums System.

We must stop the dismantling, open the dialogue, and ensure the conditions for museums to fulfill their social role and continue to be relevant service providers to communities. It is imperative to ensure their existence, renewal and sustainability so that they generate positive impact on society, and that together they can inspire and co-create new sustainable futures, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

Facing this scenario and these concerns, ICOM Brazil comes forward to publicly present museum community's desire: to (re)build dialogues, energies and projects capable of (re)placing the strategic space that museums occupy in culture, society and democracy.

It is essential that the universal right to memory, identity, difference and culture be fulfilled as non-negotiable principles for the exercise of citizenship to its fullest. Cultural diversity is the greatest Brazilian heritage, and museums serve as references, promoting active and conscious citizenship, motivated by social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability. Museums are links between the past, the present and the future. They connect society for the common good.

Brazil needs museums: small and large, new and old, community and indigenous, for the arts and for science, university and digital, aimed at diversity and cultural heritage. The country also needs democratic public policies that address social inequality, fight racism, decolonize institutions, tackle socio-environmental issues and contribute to the strengthening of Brazilian cultural citizenship.

For all these reasons, ICOM Brazil invites candidates for executive and legislative positions at the national and state levels to learn further about the needs, agendas and, equally, the solutions that have been widely debated in the field of culture and museums.


What we need is to recreate the Ministry of Culture, strengthen the Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM), the Institute of National Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) and the state and municipal bodies dedicated to museums.

We must resume and advance the development of sectoral national museum policies, recognizing and valuing their practices, investing heavily in the sector's ability to innovate and point to new futures, that are more equitable, solidary and sustainable.

The Brazilian society needs to reconnect with its values and believe again in culture as the crucial link in the construction of a communal and transformative imagination, filled with hope. For this, we must promote a broad debate, join forces and make commitments in favor of culture and democracy.

Let's talk about this?

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