***Documentality and Display: Archiving and curating the violent past in contemporary Argentina, Chile and Colombia***

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**I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Institution: **Museo Casa de la Memoria, Parque Bicentenario, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia**

Names and positions:

* María Cristina Paton, Resource Center for Memory Activation
* Cathalina Sanchez, Museum Director Casa de la Memoria Medellin
* Sara García, Visibility and Transference of Memory

Interviewers: Vikki Bell, Jaime Hernández, María Paula

Location: Medellín, Colombia

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Duration: 79:47

**II. TRANSCRIPTION**

María Cristina: There is a research group dedicated solely and exclusively to the subject of human rights archives. They were essential, because I think they were the ones who developed all the lines for the construction of public policy on human rights archives in Colombia. The group is called ‘Memoria y Sociedad’, and the ones who are there are Marta Jiraldo, who I don't know if she is in Medellín or Barcelona at the moment, because she is doing her PhD in Barcelona on the subject of archives. Luis Carlos Torres and Sandra Arenas. Sandra works on the subject of places and altars of memory, but they have also been doing an inventory and for the last 2 years they have directed the master's degree in archival studies with an emphasis on human rights.

They already have a first cohort of graduated students, and they have produced some very interesting projects. Now they are opening the call for the second cohort of that master's degree. They carry a very big work and as I say, they worked a long time on the creation of that policy together with the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, with the División de Archivos.

And the other case that is very interesting, that also comes from the universities, it is the Laboratorio de Fuentes de la Facultad de Ciencias Humanas of the Universidad Nacional, which for different circumstances, has been strengthening with these archives, more by chance than by vocation. Finally, the archive of Fabiola Lalinde is there, which is an emblematic archive on forced disappearance. They have it at this time. And they are supporting the organisation of other archives that are essentials on these issues in Medellín, as they are making the audio-visual archive of the Corporation Region. They are working with the Archivo de la Diócesis on the communities of the lower part [inaudible 00:02:01:09], which have quite a lot of information. The contact there is the professor Oscar Calvo, if you need it, I can give you the phone numbers of all of them. Because we work very close together, they gave us the support of the Museum for the whole issue of archives. We have organized congresses and events with them, let's say that we are very connected.

[The interview is interrupted and introductions are made]

María Cristina: Yes, because they are the ones who have worked the most on this subject. They do research on this subject. And they have the support of the universities. I think is very important to talk to them.

Jaime: If you want we can introduce ourselves quickly, so you can also tell us a bit about the museum, and later...

Vikki: Well, I'm a professor of sociology at Goldsmiths College in London, and I have many interests, but one is related to museums and memory, and I've written about cases in Argentina, and also, but not very much, about Chile, and this is my first time in Medellín. So I want to hear about the relationship between the archives and the museum. I understand that it is not easy as we have written in the project programme. Because there is no archive and many museums that use it. So, how are those relationships understood and what is the museum project look like? And how is the place of a museum, how is it different from the archives, for example, the relationship with the city, the relationship with the people who visit it. Something like that.

María Paula: My name is María Paula, I am a political scientist and I am currently working with Jaime and Vikki on the project.

Jaime: Well, my name is Jaime Hernández, I am a professor at the Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá, in the Departamento de Estética. And my background is as an urban architect but more in issues of territory, informal space.

María Cristina Have you worked with Carlos Hernández?

Jaime: I haven't worked with him...

María Cristina: So you have not intervened in the projects he has carried out?

Jaime: No, no, no. We're friends, we have the same last name, and my office is next door to his, but no.

María Cristina: When you told about those projects in the territory, I thought about him because he also had those...

Jaime: Yes, yes, it's interesting. I know him very and we are colleagues at the Javeriana. I'm involved in this project whose principal investigator is Vikki. As I was telling you a moment ago, it is a project that explores the subject in Chile, Argentina and Colombia. The other colleagues did not come because they were in Bogotá all week and returned to Chile. But let's just say that we are part of the project.

And I also mentioned at the beginning that there is a project that intersects, in a certain way, with this one, in which some of the same people, of the same researchers, participate, but it focuses on human rights violations of forced disappearance and disappeared detainees in the Cono Sur. This research includes Mexico, which, as you know, has a very particular issue there. From the Javeriana, Jefferson Jaramillo and I work in that one too.

María Paula: Have you already introduced yourself? [Laughs]

María Cristina: My name is María Cristina, I have been working here at the museum since 2015, and I am in charge of the Centro de Documentación which is where all the archives converge. We have been doing a special job in this sense, and this year we hope to leave at least the consolidated basis for a museum collection. I will tell you more about how we are organizing our archives in a bit.

And in alliance with these other institutions precisely to support the issue of human rights archives in the city. Maria Cristina Paton.

Sara García: Well, I'm Sara García, I'm a historian and I have a master's degree in Construcción de Paz and I'm currently leading the area of construction and circulation of the museum’s content.

Catalina: I am Catalina Sánchez Escobar. I've been the director of the museum since January of this year. I am a lawyer, with a master and a PhD in law with an emphasis on history of law. In the past 5 years I was focused in teaching and doing research in law, specifically in the human rights field. And I also work in legal sociology. I have been always interested in the relationship between law and other social sciences and in the perception, not only as a normative dogma, but the perception and effect that law actually has on society. And I have done different research on issues of migration, teenage pregnancy, child marriage and with organisations of women who are victims. Those have been my three areas of research.

Jaime: Which university?

Catalina: At the Universidad Pontífice Bolivariana.

Jaime: And in what group?... from that faculty...

Catalina: In the Faculty of Law. And I usually did my research with the Social Work Faculty in order to achieve this socio-legal work. It is not that we could not do it in law, but the idea was to nourish from the different disciplines. The group, in fact, achieved alliances between the research group in law and the research group in social work, which until that moment was not [possible]… because we were only two law professors who worked in that, and the rest remained very dogmatic and very legal ... And we opened to those other disciplines.

Jaime: Yes. So the idea would be if you tell us a little bit from the museum's perspective how you worked on these issues, and if there would be an opportunity, maybe we can go down and talked a little bit about the field.

María Cristina: From the field and the archives we have. I'll just lock myself in the archive [inaudible 00:10:34:00] because we keep some files here that I'll tell you about now. But we still have others which are in the system. First I'm going to go down and ask for the keys while you do the introduction, because there are a couple of archives that are interesting.

[Indistinct conversation about where the files are]

Catalina: So you hadn't had the chance to come to the museum?

Vikki: Yesterday a little bit.

Sara: Then we will talk to you about the museum. The museum emerged as a project in 2006, following the disarmament process of the [inaudible 00:11:24:00] in Colombia. It is an initiative of the victims' organisations in Medellín, which is one of the museum's baselines. And this is something that has also marked the museum's journey over the last few years. It begins as a program attached to the victim’s program of the Alcaldía de Medellín. The museum is a decentralized entity of the Alcaldía de Medellín.

And it starts as a project on 2010, 2011. In 2010 a citizen consultation is made to see how people imagined that space of the museum. 500 people that belonged to different groups from the city (journalists, academics, victims' organisations) were asked to participate in this consultation. And together with the Museo de Antioquia and the Parque Explora, it began the construction of the museological and museographic scripts of the museum, which is what we are going to see now. It is specifically in the museum's central hall entitled Medellín, Memorias de Violencia y Resistencia.

The museum opens its doors to the public with this exhibition in 2015, 2014.

Catalina: 2013.

Sara: But not with entrance halls.

Catalina: Yes. As it is, yes. You're absolutely right. But there were already some experiences around, but yes, it was in 2015.

Sara: In 2015 and since then we have worked on different themes associated with the mission of the museum, which is related to those memory processes that are built with the community, how to contribute to the transformation of the violent logics that today are still present in the Colombian society, and also in the society and the city of Medellin. That's something important about how the museum works, too. Because it is also a political position, the museum assumes that there is an armed conflict in Colombia which is still alive, and that is not different from the dictatorships of the Cono Sur. It is a memory that is built while the armed conflict is still present both in Colombia and in the city of Medellin, because let's say that here in Medellin the dynamics of the armed conflict and the actors of the armed conflict have been present since the late 70's.

And also, in that sense, the memory that the museum builds is a living memory. We call it a living memory because ultimately the work that is done with the community is something that continues to happen, it is about memories of violence that are present and happening while we do the work of memory.

Catalina: Sorry Sara. That's the main difference between this Museum and the museums you know in Chile and Argentina. Because in their cases, they generated their memory exercise after the precise conflict or event ended, but we are doing it while the conflict is still alive. And that will make a difference in everything, in the narrative, in the way that archives are handled, in the exhibition system. And it is important to take this into account. Because although we can compare ourselves, we must always keep that characteristic in mind.

Sara: Yes, I think that the topic of care is very important for both, to the research topic of the area that? I lead, and the pedagogical and museographic processes of the Museum, and also to the archive. Because the topic of care is very important when is related to handle those memories and the construction of memory in complex scenarios. So, considering that we are constructing memories that are living memories, we have a methodological pillar for those processes of memory construction that we use when we do research, which is the participatory construction of memories.

The memories that you will see in the exhibitions that we have in the Museum today, which are the permanent room and the exhibition that we inaugurated yesterday, are processes built with the community. And, therefore, it seeks to give priority to the fact that it is not the voice of the community mediated through the Museum, but the community as a first person speaking from the museum space. And in that sense the Museum is like a mediator of the memories of the people and the visiting public.

And in that sense, from the participative construction of memories, we start from social research methodologies, to address those processes with communities. And specifically from the territories, because our mission area is Medellín, but the conflict cannot be understood only as Medellin, so we also work with municipalities in Antioquia and Colombia in general, as far as our mandate allows it from the public sector.

Catalina: What Sarah says is important because the fact of belonging to the municipal administration restricts our capacity to use resources. As they are resources of the city of Medellín, they should only be used for memory processes in the municipality of Medellín. However, we have 3 places we have worked with that are outside of Medellin. They are municipalities of Antioquia, but it is because they are municipalities that, due to their own characteristics, have had some memory exercises before the Museum and the Museum has always accompanied them.

This does not mean that the Museum cannot advise or accompany other processes. I think it means that they should ask us for help, that is to say that they should come to us and not the other way around. At this moment we are accompanying an additional process in Girardota, which is a municipality at the north of Medellín that need to know how to become aware and to constitute their own places of memory. So we provide them advice, we share the methodology, and provide training and accompaniment. But we cannot go and offer that accompaniment by ourselves. If they look for us, we have no problem in helping them.

But in principle, the fact of being public institution implies that there is a limited allocation of resources geographically. That is important, but it does not mean... We have been sought out by the people of Buenaventura from the Montes de María. So we accompany them too, we give them advice and we help them in different initiatives. We are allowed to do that. But we cannot go and say … [inaudible 00:19:02:00]. If we're invited, we'll go, but we can't have the initiative to go there.

Sara: Yes, with respect to what Cata says, the museum accompanies the Red de Lugares de Memoria in Colombia and in Latin America as well.

María Cristina: We have voice, but not a vote… [inaudible 00:19:24:00]

Sara: Yes. In 2015 or 2016, I think that by a decision of that assembly, with the change of administrations it was decided that the places of memory that depended on official instances, the Centro Nacional de Memoria Historia, Paz y Reconciliación and us, would participate. However, as we depend on the governments, the interference is limited. I think it was decided there at that time. Voice, but no vote.

Vikki: It's something we would like to understand. Because last year, we were told that all the places of memory in the country were going to give their information and archives to the Centro Nacional, to be digitalized. But I understand that there has been a hesitation now, and some of the places took their archives. So where are the safest places for the people?

Catalina: In a beginning, the centre is supposed to be created for that, to be the guardian of that national memory. This year when a new director is appointed, the groups that already had their archives there said they are going to remove them, but in fact they could not do it because they were not allowed to take the archives. I mean, they didn’t allow it. The initial idea or fear was for the guidelines of the new direction, however, this direction cannot ignore that the centre was created under that purpose of collecting, storing, securing and distributing, and starting circulating that memory.

And then the ideas that were initially held were somehow reversed, because that is the mission and the objective of the centre. So, beyond an individual perception or a particular administration, the centre has that function and that function is given by the law. And they cannot ignore that.

Maybe I don't like the colour red, but if they say by law that it's red, I have to accept it. I might prefer purple, but it's not me as a director who decides whether it's red or purple. So in a moment, there was a lot of noise, a lot of unrest and at some point even misrepresentations of what it could happen. But after an analysis, the centre is called by law and by constitutional rule the place where the archives should converge and remain. And in a beginning the centre is considered to be a safe place. However, the memory exercises that are done here, have also been individual, and people have given their archives to research centres and universities.

We have the case here of the Universidad de Antioquia, or the Universidad Nacional which have archives of people or families, who in a moment, wanted to give those archives to us, but we did not have the physical conditions and qualities to preserve them. So we propose them to take them to the Archivo de la Universidad Nacional which has all the requirements. This is a shortcoming that we have as a museum and that we hope to overcome soon. But for the moment those archives are still in the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica because they, and Cris correct me if I am wrong, work in alliance with the Archivo Nacional which is the place where all the archives from the time of the colony rest. So they will contribute to the national history.

And there is also the Biblioteca Nacional, which is part of a triangle that cannot have one of its edges open, but has to be truly connected.

Vikki: Thanks, that’s very important.

Jaime: And in what sense you as a museum are connected with the Centro Nacional de la Memoria? Are you articulated in a certain way or is there an idea of doing it?

Catalina: Yes, and no. Yes, as we were born before and started working before, we already had a background, a history and a developed work. When the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica emerges, it was thought that we would work closely, but there is still centralism in that sense. So they continue to look at us as a province, however, we have here the largest bank of testimonies on the conflict, that people gave us voluntarily. Because what is nice about this, and Sara was emphatic, but something she did not say is that in the citizen surveys, the same victims are the ones who decide that this is a museum, or the same victims are the ones who decide what will be here, and that consider it as a home. They give us their testimonies, tell us their stories and even give us documents to be here.

When the National Centre of Historical Memory was created, this archive already existed, we already had that material. If at some point, they ask us for that material, there are some of them we can give and some we cannot, because we have summary reservations, by court order and by superior regulations. But we would have no problem handing over the archive to them to be part of that big archive if is needed.

The centre has been working [inaudible 00:25:40:00] in a judicious way on the elaboration of reports, especially on places where the museum could not reach. Then we would have like a chapter of all that report that the centre has been working on. We don't work in a disjointed way but we don't work closely together either.

We go on the same way, sometimes we meet, sometimes we share, we even have publications where they were going to publish research or work that we had done here. But it's been handled very centrally. We have joint interventions in places, for example, research, events such as book fairs, meetings or conventions, but at the moment we are not doing any joint work. We use them as a reference, we are always there, we participate in some events they call, but we don’t do it constantly or we don’t share an agenda throughout the year.

María Cristina: We don’t have it. We participate with them in the process of building the public policy of human rights archives, which is a process we started in 2014-2015, where the museum participates. We went to the events, and last year or before that, I don't remember, the socialization of that public policy in Medellín was done by us and the Universidad de Antioquia, which, we would say, was one of the institutions in Medellín that had participated in that process in a more official way, so together we did all the socialization. And we are part of the Registro Único de Archivos that they have. The Centro Nacional worked all over the country, recording, but it made a very general record. It's like: institution name and document that they own. And it’s also very descriptive. But as Catalina said, they don't have any copies or anything from us.

We have tried to do some articulation work, especially on the subject of archives because, as Catherine said, we do not have such scope yet. Starting with the physical conditions of our place, since we do not have the capacity to keep a large archive as they do. But since all the administrative changes, it has been seen a little slowed down, also while they reconfigure with others that also we articulate and that, I believe that are key actors, because finally they gathered the work of the centre, it is the Archivo General de la Nación.

Because when this whole issue of the office happened, there was a very strange clash in the Dirección de Archivos de Derechos Humanos of the centre. They began to ask themselves: where the Archivo Nacional goes, and where the Dirección de Archivos goes. Well, finally all this stayed in the hands of the Archivo General which is the governing body in these issues.

But this is the line where our work with them finishes, we haven't gone deeply in what would be the ideal scenario given the scope they have in the country. Let's just say they would be a very interesting door for us here in the department.

Jaime: I think it's still a little complicated inside, isn't it? I am telling you this because last year we talked to the employees who were there, who are no longer there, and this year, on this visit, we talked to one, precisely the director of the Museum, Rafael Tamayo. And he told me very frankly, but off the record, he told us that there are tensions. But what I understand from Catalina, is that these tensions are, in a way, being resolved.

María Cristina: Yes. And what we do here is to keep working. And that is a big difference between the centre and us. We have no obligation to receive archives, so we do not have that power that they and other organizations have.

Jaime: But sorry to interrupt you there. Now we remember [inaudible 29:45:00] with Vikki, that when we talked to them last year, they told us: ‘all our files are digital, we don't have things, we will have some. We have some documents, but everything is digital and we don't ask communities or people to give them to us, but to keep them there. We rather help them to...’

María Cristina: In the process of training.

Jaime: To digitize them. Yes, and that's what I mention it a little. Because we insisted so much last year, that we wanted, especially our Chilean colleagues and Vikki, we wanted to see that.

Vikki: Archive fever.

María Cristina: Off the record. No, that relationship between the centre and the archives, I mean, I accompanied Fabiolita's process, more from the academy, and the tensions around how the archives are constructed or at least that type of archive are evident, and those are archives that are built up in the day-to-day life of a person, who is looking for his or her missing relative. And all the work that was done with the centre was very interesting and helped to start giving it a meaning and an organisation, and it allowed to see the impact and the power that this archive has for national history.

But then it is also the version of the family, of the person who builds and cares for the archive, and the vision of the state or of the people who are already working on the issue of archives. These are very interesting tensions. The archive was going to go to the centre, but finally it was decided to not, because why was it going to leave Medellín if it is was an archive that should be in Antioquia? So several fights took place over a period of about three years. Some of them pretty tough.

Finally, this made the archive turn around and end up in the Universidad Nacional, which was the group we were with... So, let's say, the Centro Nacional arrived and organized a part of the archive, which is the part that is UNESCO's heritage, but there was still a large amount of documents to be organized, which we then organized with a group from the National, as a civil society. And there's … [inaudible 00:32:14:00] How are we going to do it? Because all these tensions between the families and the Centro Nacional begin to appear, and how can those tensions be resolved?

And I think that the university has a very important role to play, because of what it symbolizes, which in some way is a little more distant from all these political junctures. So I think that that was a great advantage. Besides, the Nacional have all the means to treat it as needed, because it is a pretty big and complex archive, with pictures, videos and cassettes. So that also needs a very important number of resources for its conservation, and for them it’s easier.

Sometimes to us… [inaudible 00:33:04:00] is more difficult, especially with all the contingencies that arise year by year. So we … [inaudible 00:33:08:00]

Jaime: And with the … [inaudible 00:33:11:00]

María Cristina: Paz y Reconciliación? We worked with them until 2015. We appreciate it very much, especially in relation to the subject of the Centro de Documentación. Paz y Reconciliación was very unstable throughout the Peñaloza’s administration, so the work could not continue. That's what we've done at a national level’.

In a local level, we have done more advisory and support work, because sometimes our resources are limited, so we give training, sensitisation, and workshops about the importance of archives with organizations, but we have also done a lot with other local government agencies that do not know the treasure they have. And then you find that they are archives, because the typical archive work, is like if you work in a bathroom. Because it's the only space they can be put in. Well, the bathroom, the kitchen, you can find them in the weirdest places today.

And then, we also begin to tell them how to organise them, how to look at them and how to try to conserve them because they are very important archives for the future, which are keeping that memory of what has been done in Medellín. We do that a lot. The other thing is our inner work. I brought you these, because here is the origin of our archive. Not even the evolution of us, this comes from when the museum was a very distant idea, but the Mayor's Office in Medellín, begins to work the whole issue of memory. And the whole issue of rebuilding what has happened in Medellín during these years of violence.

And so this has been pinned to two processes which is the violence that Medellín has experienced, both within the city and the one received. And this is part of the project that Catalina just told you about, which was a collection of testimonies. This was done from the Secretaría de Gobierno. It was a voluntary testimony gathering. People who wanted to tell their story of what they had experienced, how they had experienced it, how it affected them, went there and this interview was conducted. It was an interview with a base officer that was recorded on a cassette, and well, after that, a whole process of producing a backup and a transcript begin. I have the transcript there, you can find it there, I’ll look for it. But this whole archive is preserved. There are approximately 380 something testimonies that are authorized to be consulted and others that have [inaudible 00:36:08:00]. It should be around 55. That material was used for several researches, for example, the report that the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica made about Medellín, they used a lot. It was also used in the regions and by researchers. For example, Pablo Montoya, who is a writer that is making a novel about Comuna 3, is using the material that is recorded. What we do is to lend them only the CD.

We do not lend the transcripts because we want this to be a purely oral archive, for all that the listening exercise means, right? [We only lend them] in a very extreme case, in the case of a researcher who leaves, but we don’t lend copies just because. Only the audio is lent so the person also does all the exercise of a conversation with the testimonies. Then, it is used in different experiences of the Museo Casa de la Memoria. For the one in the entrance, fragments from here are used. And that’s like the most beloved one.

This was the origin, in fact, of the creation of the Museum, because it is established that everything is going to be preserved here and used here, only for researchers and obviously for respect for the people who gave us their testimony, because it has a public access process. Obviously, we are also interested in what people are going to do with that testimony, trying to take care of them, we carry on those little protocols to take care of them.

And the other interesting archive that we have is this [inaudible 00:37:55:00] of memory, which was also done by the Secretaría de Gobierno when it carried out the entire process of accompanying the families of San Carlos who were displaced in Medellín, and began the process of returning to their municipalities. So it was a whole exercise of historical memory in which the families told their stories. What is recorded here are the workshops that they held on the life story that they had, where they lived, what happened that they are here, and [inaudible 00:38:27:00], with pictures, they are lending us the [inaudible 00:38:37:00]. They're making their own albums.

Vikki: And how was the process of collecting all the different donations?

María Cristina: All this was done during those workshops of accompaniment and Secretaría del Gobierno brought all this information to the Museo Casa de la Memoria when born. That is the place, because otherwise this is stored here on a shelf in the municipal archive, where nobody consults it and nobody goes, or it is left there on the desk of a public official who possibly starts to throw it away because they need to make more space. So when the Museo Casa de la Memoria project appeared, those documents and those albums are hand it over by the Secretaría del Gobierno to the Museo Casa de la Memoria. Those are very consulted. People are fascinated by them.

Maria Paula: And who made, for example, the designs of the sheets and that?

María Cristina: From the Secretaría’s workshops.

Vikki: Maybe you can explain them a little bit that one of the aims of our project is to build a short report for other countries. Something very practical. To give them...

Jaime: Recommendations, yes. From other countries that are living similar processes.

María Paula: As a kind of methodology, like tips of good practices.

Jaime: Yes, like good practice and bad practice [laughs].

Catalina: In fact, yes, when one says good practices, it is also saying: Never try to do this, because it did not work or the result was disastrous. Good practice is also the wrong things that you should not do.

María Cristina: Don't keep them [the archives] in the bathroom [laughs]. It always traumatizes me. And is that I always find them in the bathroom, always. I mean, there isn't an archive that hasn't been through a bathroom, in this country at least. Yes, since they are placed in offices and the showers aren't used in there...

Jaime: Under the sink water can suddenly fall on it.

Maria Cristina: Sure, but showers are never used in offices, so that’s why people begin to... But showers still work, so there can be a leak, I don't know, the sink can leak. I mean, anything can happen, it's like the worst place [to keep it]. And I've found that practice in very precarious organizations that you say: 'well, they didn't have anywhere else', but I've also found them in very prestigious foundations that you say: 'really? You can buy an archive cabinet, can't you?

Vikki: For example, I was at [inaudible 00:41:39:00], invited by the United Nations Department and people want to talk about their stories, but there are no organizations in the community, there are very few, but, I think maybe it's important to give very particular advises like that one, if they want to tell their stories, on how and why.

María Cristina: There are some very interesting projects that we have developed in the last few years, [inaudible 00:42:17:00]. I will send you the YouTube links. This one is very based on the model of Memoria Abierta, you probably know them. They have a giant oral archive, and after several conversations and having shared with them, we decided that we wanted to start that project here in Medellín too. Taking into account that we already had a little information on oral history, we needed to reinforce it. I was concerned, because in Medellin memory is very, as we have so many situations, is ephemeral. We needed to develop an archive where these city stories can be preserved. Then the audio visual testimonies archive project appeared. These are the memories in which we return the testimony to the people, which has always been marked because we have not been able to locate them on these days. But then what we do is to collect these testimonies that are life stories and there appears the oral stories, which is so important, not only the conversation, but also all the body language. I mean, how do you capture that? And then when you talk to the person you can also see all that body language and gesture that is so, so, important when it comes to 'witnessing'.

Here we have collected 55 testimonies in these years, it is a very nice project, we have used it in our exhibitions and it is for consultation of researchers. We just need to do 4 more, which are the ones we are going to close with this year. And they are of different subjects. Here, for example, that limitation that we have of doing work in the municipalities, we can do it through this, because I can collect the testimony of a person, nothing prevents me from doing it.

Vikki: Can I take a picture?

María Cristina: I can give you a copy of this one if you want. I will see if I have another Memoria de Medellín and you can take it as well, so you can see the format we use, or I can copy one of the Arte y Reconciliación. These are particularly very interesting. We have upload some capsules of them on YouTube, but we do not upload the full testimony.

Catalina: And this one is interesting, it always shows which exhibition and research it relates to. Medellin is 70', 80', 90', the other temporary exhibition is from 18 and 2017. This year has...

María Cristina: Arte y Reconciliación. And the first ones that are like Geographies of...

Catalina: The box is always the same, but the name always changes because it's linked to a research or an exhibition. Then it is also the way to locate the testimony, what it nurtured that testimony.

María Cristina: A database is being formed. I think it is one of the most interesting works we have done in the museum, because it started as a pilot, very small, and then it grew and now we have seen in the different areas how important it is to be able to preserve these memories, in this format. The one I was telling about the four we are going to do, is a job that is being done by the area of social liaison with indigenous communities in the city. So, that was presented to them by chance, for example, by doing exercises of testimony. And they said: ‘Ah, we want to have our testimony there’. We want the testimony of the four indigenous open councils in Medellín.

So that's the job that follows. It's very interesting how communities link to this. A copy is left at the museum, which is the reference for researchers. This has no editing process. It is the same format used by Memoria Abierta, by Villa Grimaldi, by the Memorial. That is the very long history used by Spilberg's work, with no cuts, except if the person asks us to. It's like the only exception we make, if they don't want a part to come out, well, it's edited. The rest is shown completely so that we can see everything that happens during that exercise of 'witnessing', of re-enumeration, of interpretation of one's own experience.

Then there is a copy left in the museum and a copy, which are these little boxes, that are returned to people. If they are part of an organization, we gave them one to the person and one to the organization, so they can also share those stories and have their own archive.

We have done this one, with an interesting and beautiful production, we have a smaller version that is like a 'do it yourself'. In other words, and we did this with the area of pedagogy, how we can people record their own testimony with a cell phone, with a camera, we give them some 'tips'. That's a publication that's going to come out [soon], I think it arrives in 15 days. We can give one to you, it's easier in Bogotá. We can send you the PDF, because there we have the methodology, the step by step of these archives of testimonies and of this other work that is done with pedagogy, which is more for reflections, smaller testimonies, what happened when they saw the exhibition, what was generated in the visitors. It's a very interesting exercise of narratives. And that's also building its own archive. These are the archives that the museum is already building.

Jaime: One question. You mentioned that these archives you have are mainly used for exhibitions and by researchers. Have there been cases where they have been used for legal proceedings as well? I don't know, the GEP for example...

Catalina: No, just by the Comisión de la Verdad. The Comisión de la Verdad asked us for one of the testimonies.

Maria Cristina: The GEP has not asked us yet but they can do it. Except by 2 of the cases, in which we have reservations, they could not even use a court order. They must ask for people’s testimonies again. In those cases, it must be taken by them. But the GEP could require us, and we must tell them...

Jaime: I mean, there has been some project...

Maria Cristina: No. I mean, once somebody came from the prosecution’s office, but he was a little lost. [inaudible 00:49:02:00] the Centro Nacional, but we told him we had this information. But the Comisión de la Verdad asked us for them.

Catalina: I think that we, because the process of transitional justice was still very incipient, were just crossing an initial part. And as sometimes the procedure is so complex and so extensive, if they know that there are testimonies that have already been given or that we have stored them, for the sake of procedural brevity, they could ask us for them, but so far they haven’t done it. But it is also because the GEP has not begun yet, the process is barely going on.

Jaime: And that’s connect to another question, which, in a way, is also immersed a little bit in everything you have said. Within this theme that Vikki is saying about the recommendations or good practices. The question is, why do people do or want to give their testimony, want to give information or want to hand it over an object? Why do people do this?

Kate: I have no idea, but it's so important to them.

Catalina: Just yesterday, Chris you hadn't arrived, someone came here carrying his own file in his backpack, and he told me: ‘Justicia y Paz told me to bring this here to 'testify'. I need this to be kept in here. I need this to be known’. Even if they are going through a process or they have already finished the process, they need it to be known, to be kept, to be saved, to be part of a general archive where they can consult, because they are aware that their history is only a little piece of a great history that we need to know. Some for truth, some for justice processes, others simply because they want a symbolic reparation. So people's motivations are as many as there are people.

Even before I joined the museum, while I talked to people from different spheres, they said to me: 'We want people to know what happened so that it won't happen again'. Beyond seeking justice and reparation, they need their voice to be heard, stored and preserved.

María Cristina: These testimonies that, I would say, are longer, always have a cool process of preparation beforehand. I mean, you have previous meetings with them to put together the story and give them the guidelines so they can build it. And I think that usually around 90% of the people in this project, always close with a reflection, like an analysis of that history that they lived, but linked to the present. Let's say, the first ones we did were geographies of the truth, which was before the plebiscite. All of them, unquestionably, closed with the peace process, and with that plebiscite. They all talked about what peace meant to them, that it was something incredible. People from Medellín, talked about what they reflect about drug trafficking in the city and how we are working it. Those are projects that are released from the Alcaldía de Medellín.

So it's very interesting to see how people have their history, but always related to the present, and they always make that reflection. I think it is very important for them that their experience and their history is known, and that the rest of the people know that it is also part of this broader story, this historical account. Because is impressive how everyone, except for maybe 3 or 4 people that did not end with that closure, but everyone ends with that reflection. And that analysis is supremely rich because it allows you to understand the moment in which was recorded.

And there are 2 other cases, when we recorded testimonies that people told us: 'Oh yes, record me so when people call me to do an interview I can tell them to go and watch that testimony, because I'm sick of them calling me'. 2 people told us that which I found very nice. One of them actually sent someone to consult the museum's archives. Because [inaudible 00:53:16:00] [He told them:] ‘Museo Casa de la Memoria. Go there, they have what I have to say’. Alonso Salazar is also a reference.

Catalina: ...Of how much they trust in the museum. That has been a big job, in fact, the same people from the Museum say it. People simply trust the museum, they feel that the Museum is that entity that must preserve and kept their testimony. I mean, and just as they come with documents, I don't know what they're going to give to Greg next week, because they had the whole archive about the process.

María Cristina: That it will come.

Catalina: I told him, no, wait, don’t we have to follow a procedure or a protocol? We're at the opening today. But he goes and finds it and leaves it there. But it is simply because people appropriated the museum, and the victims identify the museum as their home. So you keep your treasures in your house. You can tell what happened to you at home, so that’s the perception that people have about the museum.

María Cristina: Or how to keep that memory.

Catalina: This is the house; this is where it has to be kept. It can't be...

María Cristina: I don't know what could happen if you tell them that you are going to take it to another place. I don’t know what would they tell you.

Jaime: And that feeling has been built up over the years obviously.

Catalina: And it is because we are always in contact with them. So, in a way, either they come to their meetings or they participate in the events, or they do the sewing, or they do the rehearsals of the play, so those victims are always here. They are worse than cockroaches, that is to say, so even if we wanted to take them out, we wouldn't be able because they cling to... that is to say, they are already here and when someone arrives and doesn't know something, they tell him: 'Have you been to the museum? Have you been to the house? Have you asked at the museum? We don't do that’. They think we do everything here, but no, no, that's the victim unity. But they come here because they assume that we do everything. So that is the feeling they also have for the museum.

Vikki: And that's why the name of the museum is ‘Museo Casa’? Ok.

Catalina: It is a museum that is a house, it’s not a house that becomes a museum. It's a museum that's a house. It is a museum that has a spirit and that spirit is those testimonies, those stories, those experiences. The museum would be a building that exhibits, the house instead is something that keeps, that preserves, that allows dialogue, dissent, consensus, it is a tool.

Vikki: That is nice.

María Cristina: Well that is like the last type of archives that we have, which is what I want to go into deeply, which are archives that people bring to us. This is the only one that we have of this nature, and another one is about to enter, a family one. And the one Catalina says. We had one that we had to return because we really had no way of processing it, so we built the bridge with the Universidad Nacional. They are archives that people or organizations bring to us about their own processes.

This was donated to us by two librarians, who were very close to this person, the Jesuit priest Sergio Jaramillo, who was a very important person in Cordova and was killed by the paramilitaries. And they, throughout their work with him, and over the years, accumulated information of the projects he carried out in Tierra Alta, but also all the follow-up in the press regarding his murder and what happened with his case, and they had kept it in their home since 2015. And in 2016 they began to send us little boxes. We arrived here and found a little box and we were said: 'this arrived to you', with letters in which they said: 'we sent you this because we believe that this information should be there, in our house it does nothing'. And well, here it is, we've been trying to organize it. We haven't taken out the formats that they used and in which they gave it to us. Here are the press clippings, but it also has...

Catalina: Well, these are books that Melissa has been reviewing this week.

María Cristina: Yes. What Melisa is doing also has many photographs, they need [inaudible 00:57:24:00], but they also have this kind of things that are the readings that the priest did. So you can see all his impact, all his work, but also the process of formation that they want to do, both, of the [inaudible 00:57:39:00]. And we're organizing that here, we're keeping it. This has not been widely consulted because people sometimes don't make the connection, but it has been used for research projects, and at the end of the month we are going to have a narrative workshop based on these documents from this archive. This is like the biggest challenge we have in the museum in relation to archives.

To be able to organize and receive these archives that people kept in their homes or in conditions of risk. For example, the one we received was from Apartadó and it is an archive that due to the conditions where it was, in Uraba, with not very good organization, the climate, the humidity, conservation is a total risk. It has fungus and everything. They brought it here to see if we could preserve it, and to do all that previous process of conservation in Medellin and obviously to take the copies, but we didn't even have the human capacity.

Catalina: No. They were big.

María Cristina: This for example are 30 folders, and is something we can handle. The other one were 4 boxes, like 4 meters of archives. With photographs, with videos, and they needed intervention, especially all the photographs. They needed fungus treatment, because they had fungus, so that need resources that we don't have. It is irresponsible to keep it, so we did this agreement with [inaudible 00:59:24:00], the Universidad Nacional, like a goodwill agreement. They do all the technical processing, they digitize it, they are doing the cleaning right now, they are doing all the photo cleaning and we accompany all the descriptive part. But especially, we are going to accompany the moment when that archive is returned to the community and is used by the same communities that created it.

It contains the documents of these peace communities, so there are letters in which they are asking for support from Pastoral Social, letters in which they are denouncing the harassment, letters in which they are denouncing that they do not have the conditions to come back, or incredible documents they made, in notebook sheets, constituting that peace community. So they are supremely valuable documents that are a treasure to have them there. The person who gave it to us was the one who organized it from the Pastoral, Pilar Plaza. She told us that the communities don't even know how to take care of the archive, so imagine it's a small town next to [inaudible 1:00:35:00], there's no way they can do it.

So how can we turn this into some support that they can have, so when people go they can learn about the history and what they had lived through? That's the job we're actually doing. All activation and return of the archive to the community. So in that aspect, the alliances are fundamental for us. Alliances with universities.

Vikki: Yes, very important.

Jaime: [inaudible 1:01:02:00] the museum, in relation to the archives, and the lines, and the materials they handle.

Catalina: We now?

María Cristina: The whole project of collections. It's called like that because obviously the museum since it was born until now, has been absolutely focused on doing. Do, do, do, work with the community, build memories, go out and consult. You can watch if you want. That's beautiful, this material. But in the process of doing, it does not give us much time to document.

Catalina: We haven't documented them.

María Cristina: We always say: ‘memory is in crisis’. Of course, because you also feel that you have to be storing [archives]. Because there's always a new project coming up. Since last year, this project of collections was brought to life, which actually reviews what the museum has done, what lines it has worked on and how we have been storing.

We found ourselves with a panorama quite overwhelming panorama, because of course, when we went to check our documentation, those are 3 [inaudible 1:02:17:00] of stored information, stored with a logic of the contractors. So what we started last year was the diagnose of everything we have, to review what we have, how we have storing it, and to start separating all the administrative part of the operation from the ‘mission part’, that is the one that tells us which lines of memory we have worked on, and how the museum has built memory in the city. And this year we have already started that, which is a diagnosis, with the Universidad de Antioquia because the dimension is quite big. And this year we continue with the second stage which was the organization of the selected information that is, obviously, too big. So we started a pilot with 2 exhibition projects, the work that has been done in pedagogy and the publications that the museum has done. We did this to start organizing and from there, to start building all our policy of collections and archives, focused on the mission, as they mentioned at the beginning. Since our work is with the community, then of course, we have a line of documentary management but very focused on what comes after.

Because there is documentary management and archives, but what do we do with all those productions that we have built with the community, with artists, with researchers? How do we preserve them? How do we circulate them? That was the big debt we owed ourselves, which was to reconstruct our own memory. For example, all that script of [inaudible 1:03:52:00], those archives that we have in the chronology, in the photography, in the photographic experiences, where do we put that? and how do we make people consult them? So that's the work we're doing right now, that's the work in progress.

Catalina: I'm going to excuse myself for a moment because I have the other teacher who has already done the tour so I'm going to…

Vikki: Thank you.

Jaime: Thank you very much.

María Cristina: The idea is to have a digital repository by December where we can upload this information. I think that the great contribution of this repository is to see how memory has been built in Medellin, from the Museo Casa de la Memoria, that are some lines that come to complement all those processes that were already in the community. Then we look at all those dialogues we've had in the city.

But it has been a very difficult job, very, very tangled, because the museum has been working for just a short time, since 2011, but it has produced a very copious production and especially with a lot of collection of work with the community. But we weren't organizing, so we're just doing that now. It's going to be the big challenge of the next few years, to be able to organize this, so we can have it available, and so we can identify some clear lines of how we have worked. Because we have like ideas and notions, but when we see all that on the table, we say, here we have been working in these ways, with these people.

Jaime: The Casa Museo is from Medellín, it belongs to the municipality, the Alcaldía. Well, here's a question, I don't know how good it is, but is there a political line depending on who is in power?

[Unidentified voice:] The museum is part of the development plan, so in that sense, we are aligned with the Alcaldía of Medellín, with the government plan that the mayors have. But also in 2015 a very interesting exercise was made to decentralize the Museum. So we are a decentralized entity and that somehow also gives us some autonomy. In other words, the Alcaldía guarantees us the budget, and also the plans for the annual programming, since the Museum is autonomous in that sense. Obviously without losing sight of the fact that we have to contribute to the fulfilment of this development plan.

With the two administrations that the museum has had, there has been a kind of articulation, and the museum has enjoyed autonomy.

Sara: And thematic too. In fact, as I was saying, one of the main achievements of the museum is to recognize that there is a conflict, despite the fact that it is also off the record, the lines that the different city governments in Medellín have taken, has also allowed the museum to be autonomous in relation to what it is visible.

María Cristina: There is another interesting case, it was all this exhibition project, the one in Medellín. The question about Medellín came from before, from 2014, 15. The Centro Nacional was thinking about what happened in Medellín and especially this research report. When the new Alcaldía arrives, the current one of Federico Gutiérrez, it is no mystery to anyone that for him the question from the beginning was what to do with Pablo Escobar's legacy in the city, how we are going to work with it. Because that is a very difficult question that we have to ask ourselves here in Medellín and that has 1,500 answers.

So from the beginning, Federico Gutiérrez came with that question to build his projects, to work, and then obviously the museum has to consider that concern too, because the Museum is the entity called to carry out that project, which is just to ask us what happens in Medellin during those 3 decades? What is drug trafficking all about? From the moment it is born until it explodes.

And in that sense we had enough autonomy, we knew that we were responding to one of the mayor's main interests. In other words, one of his major themes because it was his most important policy in this issue. But we always had the freedom to develop the project along the lines that we were most interested in. So let's say that the objective was not to give Pablo Escobar a protagonist role because he already has that place in other tours, in other stories.

But to give a central role to the memories of the city. To those people who are speaking, to those people who lived it, who felt it, and that is where these testimonies come from. So how [inaudible 1:0917:00] who at that time worked in a very important government organization. In the city he/she lived through all this and saw it, or how the cultural corporations organized themselves to confront it. That was the museum's bet, it ended up in 2 exhibitions. In that sense, there is always a connection, but we also maintain a very healthy critical distance in some cases.

And now, we are giving advice to them in this issue. We are aware of the whole issue of intervention on the Memorial park.

Jaime: Which is that one?

Sara: Where the Monaco building used to be, a park is being built that it also had a process of citizen participation, with neighbours, academics, victims. And the museum has also participated in the process of what will be shown in that Memorial park. So in general there is a strategy of the Alcaldía that is called ‘Medellín abraza su historia’ that has different lines. One is the parque Inflexión, the other is with the Secretaría de Educación, which is a work done with different schools, both with teachers and students on how to address the memory of those decades and from what pedagogical strategies should be done. The museum has accompanied those processes, the process of conceptualization of the parque Memorial and the parque Inflexión, and also the process with the Secretaría de Educación.

Jaime: Who's in charge of that park?

Sara: The Secretaría Privada de la Alcaldía. The idea is to have it inaugurated on December.

María Cristina: There are many articles and information in press, especially opinion columns, because it is a project that has generated a lot of controversy in the city. It's very interesting to follow up on that case. What I was saying, to be able to build this project of Collections and to be able to collect that, allows us to see how Medellín has built its memory and how the lines are changing on time, from these first processes that were so communitarian, that it was only to collect what was already in the community, to these lines that we propose and build together with the community. There are some very interesting processes of transformation there. In December I will send you the link of the repository so that you can see it.

Now we're on a time of organisation. Also because of the...

Sara: Change of administration

María Cristina: Change of administration and nature of the museum. Let's say that with the past change we realized that we were missing that, the consolidation of what was already there, so it doesn’t happen what is happening now in Bogotá, with the Centro Nacional. It has to be ensure that this does not become a politician's weather vane, but that the institutional memory is so strong that it cannot move forward. Because is ok if each administration gives its touch, because of course, everyone has its question and line, but it is different to come and carrying on the exercises that have been proposed in other places. This is what happened in Chile not long ago when the Minister of Culture was appointed and he had to resign because he wasn’t …

And that shows how the processes are consolidated. So what is clear for us, is that to be able to consolidate the process of the Museo Casa de la Memoria, we have to know ourselves, what have we done and how we have done it. We don’t want to let this to become a contractor’s computer’s archive. That is why this project is so important, and that’s the reason why the management has put all their efforts in that line, because it is the only thing that will guarantee these processes to be organized, consolidated and ready for public consultation. The idea is also that this can become a reference for any organization and institution that wants to develop a memory process similar to the one we have worked on. So that’s like the goal of this project.

Everything is free to download, because we are in the age of sharing information. And the museum's collection is digital, our entire archive is digital, we have no objects, just a few.

Jaime: Vikki do you have any other questions or...?

Vikki: No. I think it is better to use the time to see the museum because we have another appointment at 2. Thank you very much for all the information.

Maria Cristina: No, it was a pleasure. Are you going to the central?

Jaime: No. We have an appointment nearby I think...

María Cristina: Wait for me to confirm if I have more of these memories so you can take this one. I can send you several publications we have. Because this week with the exhibition's buzz, you don't realize you're downloading publications. And today everything is closed. But maybe it's easier too. There is one that is called ‘Tramitar el pasado’ which is just an exercise that the Museum did with the Universidad de Antioquia from an exhibition on the archive, the archive of mothers of the Candelaria. So there it is everything, and in there is very clear all the DNA of the museum. And I am sending you the other ones we are making, the catalogues and methodologies that are in PDF.

Vikki: Perfect. Thank you.

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