Title: ***Can community museums regenerate the past?* Local experiences for a decolonial reflection**

**Abstract:**

Historically museums in the so-called West have exercised their colonial power by the appropriation of non-European cultures and communities as *museum objects*. The discourse on the decolonisation of museums that was introduced in museology in the beginning of the 1970s opened the doors to a more critical approach regarding the notions of “museum” and “heritage” unveiling their status as concepts that are culturally imbedded in European tradition. In a multicultural world where museums are constantly being challenged by communities in what concerns the democratisation of representation, the involvement of minority groups in the management of museums has fundamentally changed the local realities through social experimentation with cultural heritage. In some cases, minority groups have accepted the condition of their objectified representation in order to subvert the museum, negotiating new uses and forms of this political device. In these “community museums”, the disputed authority of the “curator” allows community leaders to become the very actors and narrators of their subaltern representation. But can community participation change the process of historical objectification in the museum institution? How is community action contributing to raise a decolonial consciousness in the foundations of museum practice? The presentation intends to explore how some contemporary appropriations of the museum in the Brazilian context may contribute to a global reflection on the social and political role of community museums.

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