

The need to preserve our essence

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The nation cultural heritage defines us, and reminds us every single day where our essence are, our origins, where to go, and what we are.

The National Council on Cultural Heritage checked on Tuesday the work carried out in 2019. Efforts focused mainly on the enhancement of the Cultural Development Program, key to put into effect the mission of “preserving, conserving, and promoting the cultural heritage, the protection of our identity, and the collective building of the nation.”

Debates addressed the challenges that come along with the restoration of museums and monuments, which amid the tough situation faced by our country, hit the list of risk. Five monuments were restored in 2019 and other 22 museums resumed service.

Three new National Monuments: Radio Reloj Booth, the Historical Complex Camilo Cienfuegos in Yaguajay, and Havana’s Quinta Santa Barbara were declared in the course of 2019. Indeed, the life’s work of Dr. Fernando Ortiz, EGREM music archives, and Cuban cuisine, its related practice and knowledge were also recognized as part of the nation cultural heritage.

Regarding intangible heritage, the developments in terms of regulations, the fact that some guidelines are being set to become law in the future, which helps the ruling to become effective and may be applied to protect bearers and cultural expressions, were also highlighted.

In this line, it was stressed the importance of education and sensitization, the training of art

instructors, the ties with schools, and the permanent link with the community as we are referring to a living heritage, and is paramount to preserving the transmission and conservation of these traditions.

The importance of updating, renewing the museology concept in the era of new technologies, is certainly a challenge that — despite being already a real thing in some institutions — is part of future projects.

Alpidio Alonso, Cuba's minister of culture, pointed out the need to sensitize different actors in the government in the searching for solutions to the infrastructural problems some museums and monuments still have. He also highlighted that the government has a comprehensive plan to safeguard the historical memory in the country. A series of actions has been implemented in this regard, but he also urged the entity to develop capacities for the commercialization of part of this potential, initiatives to earn money aimed at solving these problems; that is why he praised the capable and committed personnel.

This institution has a fundamental task, so the group of hard-working, elite workers covering the whole island, responsible for safeguarding all this heritage — tangible or intangible — all the treasure, a very important area in the spiritual and material creation of our people.

We need to create a closer atmosphere between the community and museums. We need to spread all the heritage values all around the country, even beyond the area they are located or where intangible heritages take place. We need to bring schools closer to our heritage and devote more spaces to the recent history of the Cuban Revolution. They are also challenges imposed by a cultural war where, safeguarding our historical memory, is actually a winning card.

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