

ABSTRACT

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When & where: Session 3, Tuesday, 4 April 17:00-18:15, *Zoom*
 Title: Do we need Science and Technology museums?
 Format: Online conference
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 Chair(s): Marlit Hayslett
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Overview: In this session we will consider roles and responsibilities, of audiences, science communication practitioners and science journalists.

Museums are widely recognized as spaces for non-formal education that promote visitor participation. This has just been ratified by ICOM's new and debated definition of museums in 2022. Based on a critical review of contemporary museum experiences that question the established models and bibliography of the area, we observe that the STS (Science, Technology and Society) perspective, which has permeated educational and academic spheres for more than four decades, has not yet been deeply assumed in museums to any great extent. However, the potential of these spaces to address science and technology (S&T) as historically situated social constructions and to initiate debate on emerging issues at the local and global level is huge. They are also an opportunity to combat the distorted visions of S&T that are reproduced in schools and the media. Therefore, it is proposed here to rethink the role of S&T museums in the light of the theoretical perspectives of critical museology and the process of decolonizing museums cultures and collections in Latin America.

In this presentation we analyze experiences of museums and exhibitions from different countries which assume debates of contemporary problems linked with S&T. We argue that the challenge for museums today is to play an important role in social debates putting Science-Technology-Society + Environment in dialogue, to work towards equity and social inclusion and to build a space open to communities where the political dimension of these institutions is expressed without losing their poetic potential.