

## MEMORIES AND HERITAGE EDUCATION AT THE CASA HANSEN BAHIA MUSEUM



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### ABSTRACT

This article presents a study on the former house of the artist couple Ilse and Hansen Bahia, as a museum space that aggregates memories listed by the government. Our problem: Is there a need to form a sense of belonging in the local population that will generate protection and preservation actions? The objective is to reflect on the importance of heritage education activities, which bring the local population closer to the house as a cultural heritage in an affective and expanded way. The methodology used was based on the analysis of the problem through a qualitative approach of knowledge apprehension, articulated with the bibliographic research, where the information collected was analyzed, selected and, through synthesis, gathered in a systematic way in the theoretical foundation of the intended study. The relationship between memory and education established in the text points to an interdisciplinary path in the preservation of artistic and cultural heritage. Finally, we conclude the importance of the educational actions developed by the Casa Hansen Bahia Museum in partnership with schools, highlighting the need to expand the actions to the local adult population, aiming at the socialization of knowledge and more diversified public access to the collection.

**Keywords:** Heritage, Education, Interdisciplinarity.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Casa Hansen Bahia Museum is part of the historical and artistic heritage listed in the state of Bahia and is located in the city of São Félix do Paraguaçu, a historic region of the Bahian recôncavo marked by the battles of expulsion of the Portuguese. What is intended in this text is to conduct a reflection, directed to the understanding of the importance of the aforementioned museum, as a space for the promotion of individual and collective memory. It also emphasized the need to carry out educational actions focused on the local population, in order to bring them closer to the heritage so that they develop a relationship of belonging and cooperate with its preservation.

The museum was in the past the headquarters of Fazenda Santa Bárbara and before being sold to the artist couple Ilse and Hansen Bahia, the property belonged to Edvaldo Brandão Correia, a dentist and doctor born in the city of Cachoeira, in the recôncavo of Bahia and who was vice-governor of the state between 1975 and 1979. However, the house would only really have its apex as an important historical heritage, with significant regional relevance, after having been the residence of the couple of German artists specialized in woodcuts, both internationally recognized for their participation in exhibitions and works on panels spread across several countries.

The text is divided into three systematically structured sections, where the arguments developed in each of them complement each other in the foundation of the main idea. The first part refers to "The memory of the Hansens" and discusses the historical and artistic importance of the Casa Hansen Bahia Museum, in its documentary qualities, by bringing in the essence of the collection and the house itself, the memories, values, customs and preferences that translate the lifestyle of an era and of the couple of artists themselves. The second part addresses "The Hansen's house-museum" as a heritage listed by the state government and reinforces the importance of preserving it, due to its relevance, for the reflection and dissemination of the work and life of the Hansens, being an instrument that integrates the cultural memory of the city. The third part is "Education for cultural preservation" and discusses the initiative and promotion of broader educational activities that involve the local population, in order to create bonds that culminate in the preservation of the heritage that belongs to all citizens.

The objective of this text is to promote a reflection on the Casa Hansen Bahia Museum as an instrument that aggregates memories in a way that fosters the involvement of the community in the preservation and maintenance for future generations. It also seeks

to understand how the implication of educational actions is able to guide and sensitize the population, to the understanding that the protection of heritage implies the preservation of a part of local history, in addition to the conservation of a cultural asset that belongs to all. It is intended to highlight the significant role played by the Casa Hansen Bahia Museum in the field of education and socialization of knowledge, consolidating its space of memories as a historical and artistic heritage of Bahia. It was with these arguments that we intend to contribute here with a brief discussion about the social role of the Casa Museum in its interactions with the memories of the local population.

## **THE MEMORY OF THE HANSEN**

When we come across objects that were part of the history of a community or family nucleus, these objects linked to the memory of places convey information about the lifestyle, customs and social practices of the time. Fochi (2017), in his writings on Memory and oral history, when discussing the objects and places of memories, states that, "In order for memories and recollections to be sensitized, places and objects play a primordial role" (Fochi, 2017, p. 60). The Hansen Bahia House Museum, the object of analysis of this article, is a space that preserves the architectural characteristics of a residence and inside, a significant set of objects that belonged to the couple of artists Ilse and Hansen Bahia, who lived in the property.

The former Hansen house, the current museum (Figure 01), does not exhaust its importance as a historical heritage in its physical dimension, by itself, as it carries memories, values, customs and preferences that denote the couple's lifestyle. "We can, then, look at heritage as a support for evocation and memory" (Araripe, 2004, p. 119), as they manifest documentary qualities linked to their social dimension and historical-cultural importance. According to Fochi (2017, p. 60-61), "The objects and places built enjoy irrefutable, unanimous and consolidated recognition among a given population". In the case of the Casa Hansen Bahia Museum, both the property and the set of domestic, professional and artistic artifacts that are part of the collection, enjoy this recognition, for their historical and cultural importance for the memory of the local population.

Figura 01: Museu Casa Hansen Bahia.



Source: Personal archive, 05/04/2024

The museum, as a historical heritage, brings together memories of the past that are lived in the present by the public, through the observation and contemplation of the collection formed by objects from the house. However, "[...] if all material heritage has an immaterial dimension of meaning and value, in turn all intangible heritage has a material dimension that allows it to realize itself" (Menezes, 2009, p. 31). Therefore, the museum in its material dimension, due to the memory in its essence linked to the history of the couple, brings an immaterial dimension. In this way, the Hansens' memory is linked to their material legacy and, the preservation of this, to keep their memories alive and vice versa.

In the memories of all those who knew or knew him, and also tell about the figures who were socially the Hansens, there are many accounts gathered in a biography of the artist written by journalist Bochicchio (2012). The book is entitled Hansen Bahia: master engraver, and is part of the People of Bahia Collection, organized by ALBA – Legislative Assembly of Bahia in 2012. However, what moves us to argue here is the part of memories available to understanding, through the introspection of the objects contained in the museum's collection and of the house itself as heritage. These objects, as historical artifacts loaded with information, are part of a heritage that, together or individually, tell a story, therefore, as Araripe (2004, p. 121-122) tells us,

We need these heritages that are memories and these memories that are heritages so that we can use them as informational sources for research and adopt them as a way to strengthen the teaching process as a space for the construction and exercise of citizenship.

The way the objects are arranged in the organization of the domestic space of the house, follows in its divisions, the cultural conversions to a traditional family residence, however, curiously it instigates us to think that they are still in the same way that the

Hansens left or not. Even if they were moved by some initiative of the museum's management, and relocated to another space in the house, the mere presence of these objects in the environment says a lot about the couple's daily routine, because, according to Araripe (2004, p. 115), "Heritage, due to its symbolic content and its meaning, works as a key to the understanding of an era, of a society, or of a moment in social life". All the spaces that make up the house, with their furniture and decorative artifacts, give testimonies of a period or moment in the couple's life and allow us, through lapses of memories, to understand how they lived. Fochi (2017, p. 61) points out that, "Objects can provide information at a direct/objective and indirect/subjective level, and can also reveal tastes, habits and customs, ways of living and coexisting, technological level and trends, and the entire network of social relations that surrounded them". The old TV (Figure 02) in a black and white image tube goes up a small closet on the right side of the bed in the Hansen's room is an example that the artifact was restricted only to the couple's leisure.

Figure 02: Furniture, television and objects.



Source: Personal archive, 05/04/2024

The artists' studio is part of the space of the house, being one of the environments that instigates multiple memories in the form of imagination, by bringing together in its enclosure the carving tools used in the making of the wooden matrices for the production of woodcuts. One can also imagine there, how the printing of the woodblock prints was done using a press that the artist himself assembled, adapting an iron cylinder used in the coffee grinding. For Araripe (2004, p. 114), "[...] Heritage, too, is present, it is memory of the present time." In other words, heritage is also made through the memories of visitors who carry them in their memory. Therefore, placing the Casa Museum on the tourist route allows visitors to get to know the historical importance and works of this couple who left an artistic

legacy in woodcuts to the Bahian recôncavo.

## THE MUSEU HOUSE OF THE HANSEN

The former Hansen residence was listed in 2002 by the Institute of Artistic and Cultural Heritage of Bahia – IPAC-BA, due to its cultural importance as a historical heritage of Bahia. The listing resolution is number 8.357/02 of November 5, 2002 and the registration was carried out in the Real Estate Listing Book with registration number 51, identifying the property with the name of Antiga Casa dos Hansen na Fazenda Santa Bárbara. According to Vieira (2017, p. 154),

This space, organized in the public sphere, founds a place of memory in its symbolic dimension, respecting the characteristics of a museum-house that, through its curatorial philosophy, provides the reconstruction of the places of experience of its former residents. As a museum space, it aims, through cultural practices, to disseminate the work and life of the honoree.

In the case of the present study, the place of experience of the couple of artists Ilse and Hansen Bahia, evidences their particular way of life and also the xylographic production, both by the presence in the museum of the studio space with the tools and equipment preserved, or by the various xylographic works displayed on the walls of the house. According to Fochi (2017, p. 95), "The houses are built testimonies of the family group, of its most intimate dimension, of the daily rhythms and rituals, of the ruptures and discontinuities and the succession of generations", and, in the case of the old Hansen house, it could not be different. The couple left as a legacy more than their woodblock production, or simply the house, with its spaces, furniture and domestic accessories, they left their history and marks in the form of memories of their unrestricted presence in the property.

The preservation of the internal spaces of the house, maintaining the original constitution as a home environment, allows the connection through memory with the Hansens' past, "Therefore, it is these interactions of memory that, when manifested through a museum, enable the characterization of this space as a 'place of memory' and, consequently, enable the historian to question it" (Vieira, 2017, p. 149, emphasis added). The museum then presents itself as a fertile space for reflection, investigations and research, capable of bringing to light knowledge and new information about a historical-artistic-cultural phenomenon. In the words of Lima, Queiroz, Souza, (2015, not paginated), "However, in addition to telling the story of the past through its fragments, they narrate

stories via cultural materiality, reconstructing the past in different ways". The Casa Hansen Bahia Museum is constituted in this bias as an archive, formed by the vast collection consisting of household utensils, furniture, decorative and personal objects of the couple.

The listing was a crucial step towards the recognition and safeguarding of the former Hansen house, however, the institution of the museum guaranteed it a permanent social function, as a space that keeps and preserves in its material and immaterial dimension, a part of the local history of the city of São Félix, in the Recôncavo da Bahia. "If we do not give a social utility to what we judge or presents as heritage, it certainly dies or, at least, goes unnoticed" (Araripe, 2004, p. 114), becoming just another building in ruins, whose utensils and furniture end up lost or destroyed, or at best, integrating private collections. "It should be emphasized that they are always unique, non-repeatable testimonies, which have to be analyzed with the utmost diligence, basing the proposals on rigorous criteria" (Kühl, 2006, p. 21), in this case, of preservation, so that later generations have the opportunity to know and enjoy the artistic and cultural assets produced by humanity. To this end, the safeguarding process is only the first step, as preservation actions must include integrative initiatives between heritage and the local community, sensitizing it through education focused on cultural preservation.

## **EDUCATION FOR CULTURAL PRESERVATION**

Bringing the local population closer or re-approximated to the artistic-cultural heritage, making them know and understand the importance of its preservation should be one of the primary objectives of actions aimed at heritage education. Such actions, according to Araripe (2004, p. 122), "It implies, therefore, finding a social and educational role for heritage that will contribute to having citizens who are more aware of their values and, in this way, preservers and builders of their daily living space", because, in most cases, heritage is part of the daily reality of the local population, is inserted in their daily lives, as is the case of local merchants who see the visiting public as possible customers.

Scifoni (2019), in his article "Knowing to preserve: An idea out of time", raises a very pertinent discussion within current perspectives regarding education for preservation. I could not fail to mention here her reflections on this theme, since in the aforementioned text the author questions the role of heritage education, emphasizing that it should focus on the socialization of the listed property, turning it to the local public and creating in it an awareness of belonging. To paraphrase the author, preserving includes a process of

promoting knowledge, through which the local population appropriates affectively and develops an attachment to the listed property.

To point out that heritage education is justified, not because of its alleged redemptive character of heritage problems, but as a social right and as a necessity, means to affirm that it is in the first place and not as an annex and complement of the patrimonialization process. (Scifoni, 2019, p. 30)

The Casa Hansen Bahia Museum has been developing actions for some years in order to get closer to the local population, through partnerships signed with public and private schools, promoting thematic exhibitions, guided tours and workshops on woodcuts and mixed engraving techniques using alternative materials in the making of the matrices. The actions and projects have the dynamics of taking the museum out of its static and passive form, creating a closer relationship with the public, articulating knowledge from the past with active or immersive experiences in the present, "Education as a place for the construction of new knowledge based on dialogue and, therefore, a horizontal relationship that values popular knowledge and the other." (Scifoni, 2019, p. 29). The Casa Museum is always open to the general public, however, perhaps one should think of educational actions aimed at a niche of visitors that is not very present, the local adult population. It is then necessary to systematically develop activities that lead them to become sensitively involved with the artistic-cultural good, in this case, inserted within their daily reality. According to Comerlato (2021, not paginated), "Cultural heritage is an interpretative support for the emergence of artistic interpretations, made possible by the visual dialogue between cultural assets and individuals", this may be the path to awareness that will trigger a sense of belonging.

The fact is that, with the appropriate educational activities, whether in the existing partnership with schools or in the possibilities of new artistic and cultural propositions aimed at adults, the Casa Hansen Bahia Museum can strengthen its social bond with the local population and value a heritage that is in essence everyone's, as Scifoni (2019, p. 20), "The idea of collective inheritance brought the conception of collective interest, that the destruction of these assets would mean the loss, for all, of relics of the country's history". As already pointed out, listing is not enough, the preservation and maintenance of heritage assets for future generations depends on various actions, including political and educational initiatives that bring them closer to society. In the words of Lima, Queiroz, Souza (2015, not paginated),

We realize how important the studies carried out around the museological theme are, because we can make the population aware that these institutions are guardian spaces of our local memory and, therefore, these enclosures must be evidenced by the media and school spaces.

The essential objective to be achieved by heritage education is, therefore, that of intermediation between the museological institution, or the heritage itself, and the local community, aiming to make it aware of the importance of preserving these spaces that aggregate memories from the collective experience. In the words of Fochi (2017, p 133), "Researching, recording, transmitting and preserving memory and heritage content is to document the society of which we are the most direct heirs and successors". In this quote, the importance of heritage should be highlighted, as sources of activating memories and in the construction of knowledge through research.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Education for cultural preservation must advance beyond the conventional punctualities and commonplace educational actions applied in order to comply with only an institutional calendar. It must extend from the listing, through all the moments of the existence of the heritage in order to achieve its full effectiveness with a focus on its main agents of perpetuation, the local population and among these, the managers of public agencies responsible for the heritage at the municipal level. Because, only in this way, can one think of guaranteeing future generations the social right to enjoy the artistic and cultural goods produced by humanity over the years.

Whatever the intended actions, the best way should be through an approach that reinterprets and attributes a new meaning to heritage, arousing a new look on the part of the local community, capable of refining a critical and at the same time sensitive and affective thinking about the listed property. The teachings about heritage should, in turn, demonstrate to the local population that the actions to protect these assets, in addition to being important, reflect a civilized posture on the part of those involved in the preservation of their history. And, even more, it is a good that by means of rules belongs to everyone and beckons to a more collective commitment.

Finally, the trajectory of the discourse developed here was to account for the symbolic relevance of the Casa Hansen Bahia Museum for the local population, from a social and cultural perspective, consolidating its memory space as an artistic and cultural heritage of Bahia. In relation to heritage education, its socio-educational mission stands out

in partnerships signed with public and private schools in the region, in addition to the possibilities of expanding its field of vision and action also for the local adult population.

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