06 2020

Letter in Support of Elvira Espejo Ayca and Max Jorge Hinderer in Bolivia

We are extremely upset and concerned by the recent news about the arbitrary dismissal of the artist, researcher and weaver Elvira Espejo Ayca as the Director of the Museo Nacional de Etnografía y Folklore (MUSEF) and the writer, curator and philosopher Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz from his position as Director of the Museo Nacional de Arte (MNA), both in La Paz, Bolivia. We would like to publicly express our disagreement with this decision, taken by the current Bolivian government and executed through the Fundación Cultural del Banco Central de Bolivia and its newly appointed President, the scholar Guillermo Mariaca. We would like to point out that this decision undoes and interrupts the remarkable work both institutions have been developing under the leadership of Espejo and Hinderer, who are celebrated nationally and internationally for their work with programming, research, conservation and education, and for their defence of the museum as a tool for the transformation of society, and as a platform for public service.

A brief look at the way the transitional government in Bolivia has managed cultural institutions – including its decision to abolish the Ministry of Cultures and Tourism, the Vice-Ministry of

Decolonisation, and the Unit of Depatriarcalisation – leaves no doubt about the fact that Espejo and Hinderer's dismissal responds to a will to implement a conservative agenda and construct reactionary narratives about the recent past. It constitutes a political action with the aim of dismantling any structure that may be committed to social inclusion, to the democratisation of culture and the arts, and to the active fight against racism, sexism and all forms of discrimination.

In addition, this intervention contravenes the fundamental principle of autonomy on which culture is constructed, by not allowing spaces that encourage reflection and disagreement. This type of attack is not restricted to Bolivia, it finds echoes today in the region as well as globally, resulting in a panorama in which reactionary politics, regressive religious views, and racist and fascist positions gain terrain in their attempt to implement forms of censorship and control over culture and education.

With this letter, we would like to publicly express our rejection and condemnation of the dismissals. We also express the strongest support for Elvira Espejo Ayca's work as Director of MUSEF and Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz's as Director of MNA, and warn about the harm the Bolivian government would be inflicting internationally to the reputation of its institutions were it to persist with its authoritarian decision, which goes against the ethical and professional principles that should govern museums and cultural institutions.

Sign the letter: https://www.change.org/

- Agustín Pérez Rubio, Curador, 11th Berlin Biennale of Contemporary Art, Berlin, Alemania
- Alex Sainsbury, Director, Raven Row, Londres, Reino Unido
- Ana Longoni, investigadora, CONICET/UBA, Buenos Aires, Argentina; y Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, España
- Anselm Franke, Director del Departamento de Artes Visuales y Cine, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Alemania
- Bartomeu Marí, escritor y curador
- Benjamin Seroussi, Director Ejecutivo, Casa do Povo, Bom Retiro, São Paulo, Brasil
- Carla Zaccagnini, Curadora convidada, 34a Bienal de São Paulo, Brasil, y Profesora, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen, Dinamarca
- Carles Guerra, curador, académico e investigador, Barcelona, España
- Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, curadora independiente e historiadora de arte, California, Estados Unidos de América
- Clarissa Diniz, curadora y escritora, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
- Claudia Zaldívar, Directora, Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Santiago, Chile
- Cuauhtémoc Medina, Curador Jefe, MUAC, Ciudad de México, México
- Cosmin Costinas, Director, Para Site, Hong Kong
- Diedrich Diederichsen, escritor, curador y profesor, Akademie der bildenden Künste, Viena, Austria
- Dieter Roelstraete, curador y profesor, University of Chicago, Chicago, Estados Unidos de América
- Emily Pethick, Directora, Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, Holanda
- Eungie Joo, Curadora de Arte Contemporáneo, SFMOMA, San Francisco, Estados Unidos de América
- Gabi Ngcobo, curadora independiente, co-fundadora de NGO-

Nothing Gets Organised (NGO), Johannesburgo, África del Sur
- Galit Eilat, curadora, escritora y Directora de Meduza Foundation, Amsterdam, Holanda
- Helmut Batista, Director General, Capacete, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
- Hortensia Voelckers, Directora, Fundación Nacional de Cultura Alemana/Kulturstiftung des Bundes, Alemania
- iLiana Fokianaki, fundadora y Directora Artística, State of Concept, Atenas, Grecia
- Inti Guerrero, Curador Adjunto Estrellita B. Brodsky de Arte Latinoamericano, Tate, Londres, Reino Unido
- Iris Dressler y Hans D. Christ, Directores, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, Alemania
- Jacopo Crivelli Visconti, curador, São Paulo, Brasil
- Jochen Volz, Director, Pinacoteca de São Paulo, Brasil
- José Roca, Director Artístico, FLORA ars+natura, Bogotá, Colombia
- Julia Bryan-Wilson, Profesora, University of California, Berkeley y Curadora Adjunta, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Brasil
- Julieta González, curadora
- Katharina von Ruckteschell-Katte, Londres, Reino Unido
- Keyna Eleison, curadora y escritora, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, y Curadora, Bienal SIART Bolivia 2018
- Laura Barlow, Senior Curator, Qatar Museums, Qatar
- Laura Hakel, Curadora, Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Luiza Proença, curadora y escritora, São Paulo, Brasil
- Madhusree Dutta, Directora Artística, Akademie der Künste der Welt, Colonia, Alemania
- Manuel Segade, Director, CA2M/Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Móstoles, Madrid, España
- Manuela Moscoso, Curadora, Liverpool Biennial 2021, Reino

Unido
- María Berríos, Curadora, 11th Berlin Biennale of Contemporary Art, Berlin, Alemania
- María Inés Rodríguez, curadora y Editora de Tropical Papers
- Marcello Rezende, Codirector, Archiv der Avangarden, Dresden, Alemania
- Miguel A. López, Codirector y Curador en Jefe, TEOR/éTica, San José, Costa Rica
- Pr. Dr. Myropi Margarita Tsomou, Curadora, HAU Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin y Profesora, Hochschule Osnabrück, Alemania
- Natalia Majluf, historiadora de arte, Lima, Perú
- Nuria Enguita Mayo, Directora, Bombas Gens Centre d'Art, Valencia, España
- Övül Ö. Durmusoglu, curadora, escritora, educadora, Universität der Künste, Berlin y HBK Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig, Alemania
- Pablo Lafuente, curador, escritor y educador, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
- Pablo León de la Barra, Curador América Latina, Guggenheim Museum, Nueva York, Estados Unidos de América
- Paul B. Preciado, Filósofo Asociado, Centre Pompidou, Paris, Francia
- Ruth Noack, Directora Ejecutiva y Curadora, The Corner at Whitman-Walker, Washington D.C., Estados Unidos de América
-Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sabeth Buchmann, Professora, Akademie der bildenden Künste, Viena, Austria
-Sol Henaro Palomino, Curadora de Acervos Documentales, Centro de Documentación Arkheia, Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Ciudad de México, México
- Ute Meta Bauer, Profesora, Directora Fundadora de NTU CCA Singapore, Singapur, y miembro del equipo editorial de Afterall Journal, Londres, Reino Unido

- Victoria Noorthoorn, Directora, Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Vasif Kortun, curador, escritor y profesor de arte, instituciones y prácticas espaciales, Turquía
- Vivian Crockett, curadora
- Dr. Yilmaz Dziewior, Director, Museum Ludwig, Colonia, Alemania
- Zdenka Badovinac, Directora en Funciones, Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, Eslovenia