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Towards a Professional Learning Dialogue in Mexican Contemporary Art Museums

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Declaration

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Abstract

Dialogue is a tool that can be used to promote learning experiences amongst audiences in contemporary art museums, in particular due to the potential difficulty of interpreting this type of art. This study argues that when dialogue between the museum and audience promotes balanced opportunities to express ideas and information, the museum can also learn. The museum can share the learning findings about audiences with the rest of the staff members through a professional dialogue, which may impact, creating positive change on future museum practice, in order to facilitate exhibitions, programmes and activities better targeted to audiences.

The research explores the concept of learning dialogue using interviews, content analysis, and a theoretical framework related to learning and dialogue in museums. The study also analyses the role of learning and education, and their context in contemporary art museum practice in Mexico, using critical texts and practical evidence from interviews with educators, curators and directors.

The thesis investigates, in particular, the case study of the Enlaces programme at the University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC). This is a learning activity where the Enlaces participants, who are university students, receive training about the specialist knowledge required to understand contemporary art. The participants aim to create further dialogue with audiences with the purpose of provoking questions, reflection and understanding of MuAC's contemporary artworks and exhibitions. Findings from the Enlaces participants' interviews reveal a learning dialogue with audiences, resulting in a model that considers the interaction of three categories of dialogue: visual internal, content and participatory dialogues.

Furthermore, the research demonstrates that the interactions between the Enlaces participants and MuAC staff stimulate peer dialogue, professional dialogue and limited dialogue. The analysis of findings results in a model for professional learning dialogue based on the interaction between three key areas: communication, recognition and teamwork. The research proposes an optimal scenario where there is professional and audience learning dialogue taking place, these then feedback to the museum cyclically, allowing audiences to contribute and influence the organisation.

Table of Abbreviations

ACSI	*Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso* [Former College of San Ildefonso]
AMPROM	*Asociación Mexicana de Profesionales de Museos* [Mexican Association of Museum Professionals]
CCE	*Centro Cultural de España en México* [Spain's Cultural Centre in Mexico]
CCU	*Centro Cultural Universitario* [University Cultural Centre]
CCUT	*Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco* [University Cultural Centre Tlatelolco]
CECA	Committee for Education and Cultural Action
CENART	*Centro Nacional de las Artes* [National Centre of the Arts]
Chopo	*Museo Universitario del Chopo* [University Museum of Chopo]
CISM	*Centro de Investigación y Servicios Museológicos* [Research Centre of Museology Services]
CNAP	*Coordinación Nacional de Artes Plásticas* [National Coordination Office of Plastic Arts]
CONACULTA	*Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes* [National Council for Culture and Arts]
CU	*Ciudad Universitaria, campus central* [University City central campus]
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sports
DiGAV	*Dirección General de Artes Visuales* [General Director's Office of Visual Arts]
DOF	*Diario Oficial de la Federación* [Federal Official Register]
El Eco	*Museo Experimental El Eco* [Experimental Museum El Eco]
ENAP	*Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas* [National School of Plastic Arts]
ENCRyM	*Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía* [National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography]
Ex Teresa	*Ex Teresa Arte Actual* [Ex Teresa Current Art]
ICOM	International Council of Museums
INAH	*Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* [National Institute of Anthropology and History]
INBA	*Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes* [National Institute of Fine Arts]
INEGI	*Instituto Nacional de Geografía, Estadística e Informática* [National Census and Geography Agency]

Jumex	*Fundación/Colección Jumex* [Foundation/Collection Jumex]
LAA	*Laboratorio de Arte Alameda* [Alameda Art Laboratory]
MACG	*Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil* [Carrillo Gil Art Museum]
MAM	*Museo de Arte Moderno* [Modern Art Museum]
MCM	Museo de la Ciudad de México [Museum of Mexico City]
MLA	Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
MNA	*Museo Nacional de Antropología* [National Museum of Anthropology]
MNSC	*Museo Nacional de San Carlos* [National Museum of San Carlos]
MTAC	*Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo* [Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum]
MuAC	*Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo* [University Museum of Contemporary Art]
MUCA	*Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Artes* [University Museum of Sciences and Arts]
MUCA Roma	*Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Artes Roma* [University Museum of Sciences and Arts Roma]
MUNAL	*Museo Nacional de Arte* [National Museum of Art]
PNCE	*Programa Nacional de Comunicación Educativa* [Nacional Programme of Educational Communication]
PNI	*Programa Nacional de Interpretación* [National Programme of Interpretation]
PAN	*Partido Acción Nacional* [National Action Party]
PRD	*Partido de la Revolución Democrática* [Party of the Democratic Revolution]
PRI	*Partido Revolucionario Institucional* [Institutional Revolutionary Party]
SAPS	*Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros* [Siqueiros Public Art Gallery]
SEP	*Secretaría de Educación Pública* [Ministry of Education]
SHCP	*Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público* [Ministry of Finance]
UIA	*Universidad Latinoamericana* [Latin American University]
UNAM	*Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* [The National Autonomous University of Mexico]
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPN	*Universidad Pedagógica Nacional* [National Pedagogic University]

Chapter 1

Learning Dialogue: Introduction and Research Methodology

Learning in Mexican contemporary art museums has either been centred predominantly on activities for children (Martín Medrano, 2009)[1], or on programmes with an academic focus, such as talks or workshops, which target audiences[2] with a greater interest in art. Over the past 40 years research in the UK and the US[3] has focused on bringing learning to the core of art organisations, focusing on museums' learner-centred approaches that respond to audiences' demands and needs (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 150; Henning, 2006, 75). Furthermore, the Committee for Education and Cultural Action at the International Council of Museums (ICOM CECA) argues that only recently has education become important in museums, with the aim of compensating for some of the "weaknesses of the formal educational system" (ICOM CECA, 2004, 12), such as the lack of supporting resources and materials for students, including real objects and artworks.

UK examples such as *Visual Dialogues* organised by Tate Britain in partnership with other museums (Felicity Allen, 2009; 2010), *Enquire* by Engage (Pringle, 2006; Taylor, 2006b; 2008a), the UK's national association for gallery education; and BALTIC's *Learning on the Frontline* (Duff, 2012; Thomas, 2012) have all offered learning activities in museums and galleries, with the aim of stimulating audience engagement and further understanding of contemporary art [4].

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[1] Interviews with educators and other professionals (2009-2010) revealed children's activities as one of their museums main services offered. In particular because the Ministry of Education arranges regular school visits to all public museums (SEP, 2005).

[2] This thesis uses the term audiences in relation to people visiting the museum. Other terms used to refer to them are the public, attendee, visitor, viewer, observer, spectator, and even clients or customers. The people that do not attend museums yet, will be considered as potential audiences.

[3] Hooper-Greenhill (1992; 1994; 2000), Pringle (2006; 2008), Taylor (2006a; 2008a) refers to learner-centred approaches in the UK; and Falk and Dierking (1992; 2000), G. Hein (1991, 1998) and Simon (2010) in the US.

[4] These programmes target specifically young people.

Mexico City contemporary art museums are less advanced with regard to creating innovative learning programmes, but increasingly recognise the importance of knowing their audiences. As an example, for Mexican ethnologist Diego Martín Medrano (2009, 14), Deputy Director of Educational Communication at the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), there is a growing relevance of the role of audiences in museums, which focuses on offering works and exhibition spaces that create explicit links to their visitor experiences. He also argues that audiences need to be diversified, to be included in the museum practice[5]. Graciela De la Torre (2002), Director at the General Director's Office of Visual Arts (DiGAV) from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), also agrees there is a museum's responsibility to audiences, which involves offering "them tools that bring about not a linear learning but one that is significant to their own needs and expectations" (De la Torre, 2002).

Learning in this thesis is defined as assimilated, significant, and meaningful experiences that create further understanding of contemporary artwork (Falk and Dierking, 1992; G. Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). The person's individual background, feelings and knowledge, together with observation and new information, offered by the museum, the artwork, and other people, create new knowledge. This process allows linking, interacting and connecting the artwork with an individual's own life[6]. Having enough tools and information can make people feel more comfortable and capable to engage, learn, reflect, question and communicate their opinions about contemporary art. For example, the artwork *Pinched Ball* by Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco may not make sense to audiences because it represents an everyday object that potential has no value, due to the loss of its original function:

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[5] According to researcher and consultant Etienne Wegner (1998, 50), practice is an ongoing social and interactional process "by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful". Taking this idea, museum practice relates to the significant experiences of professionals and staff during their work and with their colleagues. Practice is what they actually do and how they operate on a day-to-day basis towards established projects and goals.
[6] Section 3.3 discusses learning from a theoretical perspective.

Image 1.1
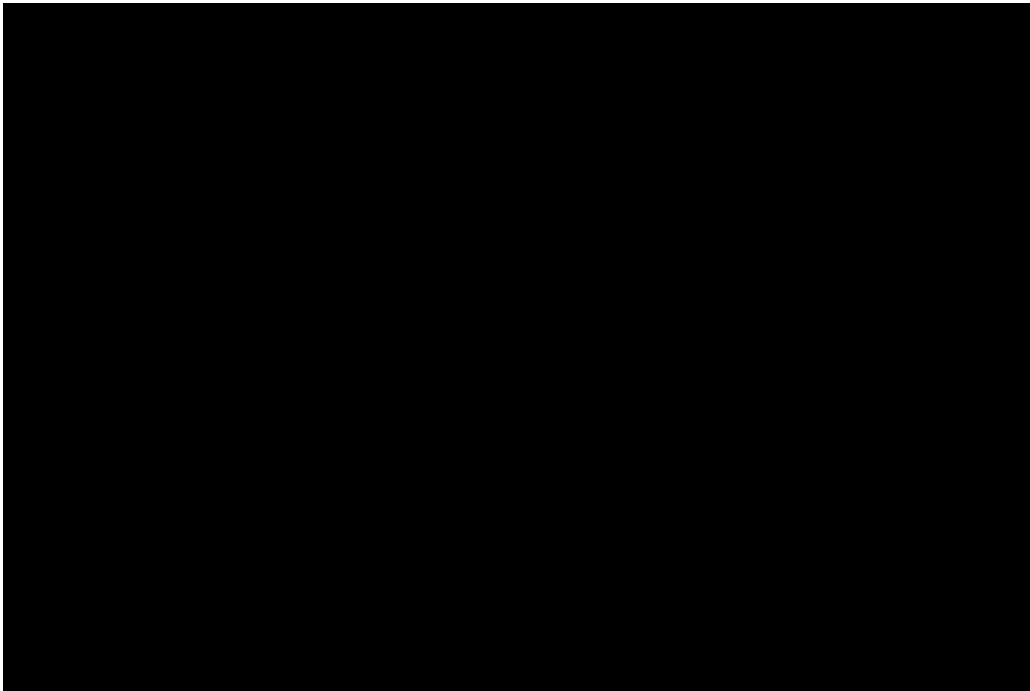
Orozco, Gabriel (1993) *Pelota Ponchada* [Pinched Ball]. C-print. 22.9x34cm (E-flux, 2004).

When an everyday object like a punctured football is turned into a contemporary artwork, do museums have a responsibility to facilitate audience engagement with works such as this? Having information and knowing the background about the artwork will support our interpretation and understanding. In an interview, Orozco (interviewed by Guerrero, 2010) refers to *Pinched Ball* in relation to the materials' original functionality and to the familiarity of the object itself. He explains there is a process of recovery that happened as a functional accident where a punctured football still contains some air but also turns into an inverted water container (Guerrero, 2010). This work is similarly interpreted by Professor Jean Fisher (1998): "a photo of a deflated and dysfunctional child's football, now transformed into a water vessel bearing a reflected image of the sky".

Due to the complexity and unconventionality of contemporary art, this thesis puts forward that dialogue can be a tool to offer audiences more information about the artwork to enable their further understanding and potentially learning. This research defines dialogue as an active verbal face-to-face conversation, which involves at least two participants who talk, listen, respond,

and react to each other's opinions. Dialogue encourages balanced opportunities for participants to share ideas and reflect, based on their personal knowledge, background, new information, viewpoints, feelings and reactions. This process turns into a learning dialogue when it becomes a meaningful experience and allows dialoguers to co-create meanings[7].

It is proposed in this thesis that dialogue with audiences, prompted by a museum staff member, has the potential to gather knowledge about their needs and interests, which subsequently becomes a learning opportunity for all the staff members. Professor Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1994, 5) considers that the museum increasingly aims to integrate "the needs, strengths and delights of their publics into all areas of their work", which are all essential for its success. Artist and lecturer Claire Robins (2007, 23) agrees that audiences are gradually "acknowledged as significant, if not always central, to the process of meaning making" and learning. Despite of these perspectives that recognise audiences in the centre of museum practice, academic Karen Knutson (2002, 5) argues that decisions and views about the museums' aims and management in relation to "experiences, exhibitions, and audiences' impact" on future displays have been barely researched. Hence, this research analyses how Mexican museum's views on audiences can be enriched and have the potential to affect future practice in order to offer more relevant exhibitions and programmes for the public. The reason is that currently in Mexico, audiences' experiences do not seem to influence the museum decision-making and programming, to potentially offer them more effective access to the artwork, particularly in contemporary art.

Mexico lacks of evaluation and academic studies about the quality of museum visitor experiences and learning, especially in contemporary art museums[8]. However, some professionals have forward-thinking visions in relation to learning[9] (Sections 3.3 and 3.4). The research presented in this thesis aims to

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[7] See Sections 4.2 and 4.3.
[8] See Appendix 2.5.
[9] Professionalism in museums refers to the professional staff working for the collection, preservation and display of the artwork, maintaining the principles of scholarship, and providing a service to audiences at the same time (Cossons, 1982, 233). Professional staff

understand the dialogue used to communicate with and to learn from audiences. The particular focus is the Enlaces programme at the University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC) in Mexico City, which recruits and trains university students in relation to contemporary art. The Enlaces participants are assigned a place in the museum's galleries and are constantly promoting dialogue with audiences. This programme shows initiative towards a learning-centred approach[10]. Evidence from research interviews with the Enlaces participants reveals that through dialogue they gain knowledge and learn about audiences, but they rarely share this information with the museum staff. This lack of communication restricts MuAC staff's learning that will enable them to target more effective programmes and exhibitions for their audiences[11].

This investigation uses theoretical perspectives in relation to contemporary art, experiential learning, and communication and dialogue in museums to analyse learning dialogue in the practice of the Enlaces programme. Evidence from data analysis concluded that the Enlaces participants' learning dialogue with audiences involves three types of dialogue: visual internal, content, and participatory; while their dialogue within MuAC is observed as peer, professional, and limited (Chapter 5). The thesis will also demonstrate that dialogue amongst museum staff, professional dialogue[12], is central to sharing information about audiences, particularly through three areas that impact on professional learning dialogue: communication, recognition, and teamwork (Section 5.2). The aims of this investigation are:

1) To gain in-depth knowledge about the role of education in Mexican contemporary art museums.

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are workers who have specialist knowledge, and their roles are publicly recognised (Weil, 1988, 251-252).

[10] A learning-centred approach relates to a museum that focuses on the learning of its audiences within its programmes (Black, 2005, 5).

[11] The thesis does not study and lacks evidence to analyse audiences' learning in the museum. Audiences are only discussed through Mexican professionals', MuAC staff members' and the Enlaces participants' experiences.

[12] Professional dialogue will be discussed indepth in Chapter 5.

2) To investigate the Enlaces participants' role as intermediary between audiences and MuAC staff and the learning outcomes from their experiences.

3) To analyse the interaction of MuAC staff with the Enlaces participants and the learning gained from these experiences.

4) To understand the concept of learning and dialogue in Mexican contemporary art museum practice.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 refers to the research methodological framework used during this study. Prior to the methodology discussion, Section 1.1 focuses on the definition of contemporary art based on international and Mexican critical perspectives. Section 1.2 introduces the research questions and presents a review of the current literature relevant to analyse learning dialogue, Section 1.3 discusses the research methods and approach to data analysis used during the study. Section 1.4 explains the research fieldwork context and the stages involved during data collection. Finally, Section 1.5 refers to the problems, limitations and other considerations encountered while dealing with the research, fieldwork and analysis.

Chapter 2 discusses the context and current situation of learning in terms of policy, management, and professional practice focused on Mexican contemporary art museums and Mexico City[13]. Chapter 3 introduces MuAC and its position within the national university[14], its focus on education and how this relates to other theoretical and practical approaches to learning[15]. Chapter 4 refers to the Enlaces programme case study, its background and operation, its focus on dialogue, and how this relates to theoretical and

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[13] CONACULTA (2001-2011), García Canclini (2004; 2009; 2010), INBA (2007-2011), Nivón (2000; 2006) and SEP (1998-2011).
[14] De la Fuente (2010), Perez Tamayo (2011) and UNAM (1998-2012).
[15] Falk and Dierking (1992; 2000), G. Hein (1991; 1998), Hooper-Greenhill (1992; 1994; 2000) and Simon (2010).

practical aspects of dialogue [16]. It also discusses some examples of international museum experiences that use dialogue to promote learning[17]. Chapter 5 analyses the role of learning dialogue in practice, based on the experiences of Enlaces participants with audiences and with MuAC staff, and reveals different categories of dialogue that emerged from data analysis. Finally, Chapter 6 breaks down the findings of dialogue with audiences and professional dialogue into practical models that propose the optimal elements to enable learning dialogue in the museum. It also refers to this investigation future research implications. The chapters' reliability involves providing triangulated information and analysis between the different groups of interviewees and the relevant theoretical perspectives (Mayring, 2005, 267).

The interest to undertake this research comes from the dichotomy between the richness of contemporary art production, artworks and artists in Mexico; and the limited knowledge about audiences who have a general lack of interest in this type of art. Contemporary art represents the world today despite it can portray reality beautifully or shockingly. Having experiences with contemporary art can enrich a person's life, as other types of art do. For curator Rayna Green (1996, 39) art allows people to "have different versions of vision and imagination… of who we are, where we come from, where we are going, and what we might be." However, due to the unusualness of contemporary art, dialogue can help to minimise any barriers that may limit its interpretation.

1.1. Contemporary Art Today

Contemporary art is complex and challenging, but at the same time it can be inspiring and revealing. Like other art, it is open to interpretation by audiences, as much as artists, museum staff and other professionals (G. Hein, 1998, 177; Ravelli, 2006, 88; Roberts, 1997, 220). This thesis defines contemporary art as the production of today's artists, as well as any artworks that are still

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[16] Hooper-Greenhill (2000), Ravelli (2006), Simon (2010) among others, and fieldwork interviews (2009-2010).
[17] Merriman (1997), O'Donoghue (2003), Perin (1992), Rassool (2006), Tchen (1989) and Thomas (2012).

current today; using a variety of traditional, non-conventional and digital media to explore a diversity of topics without restrictions (Stallabrass, 2004, 150). The range of themes explored in contemporary artworks commonly produce value judgments or "qualifying adjectives [such] as sublime, terrible, interesting, disgusting, charming, and dull…" (Weil, 2002a, 203). Contemporary art often involves technology, from photography and video, to digital media and Internet based art. It also comprises installations, which are usually site-specific and can use any material from rubbish to marble; an example is this gigantic inflatable by Argentinian artist Judi Werthein:

Image 1.2.
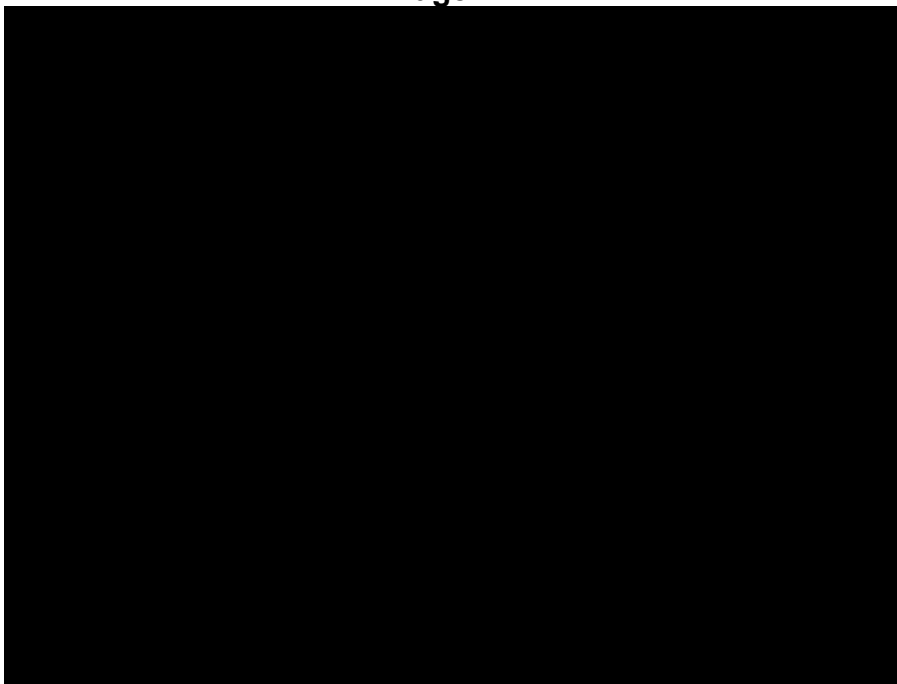
Werthein, Judi (2009) *Cosa* [Thing], variable dimension. Los de Arriba los de Abajo [The ones on top, the ones below], Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico City. 13th November 2009-14th February 2010[18]

Image 1.2 shows an elephant lying down on the floor of the museum, a work distinctly different from the traditional conventions of art. For Swedish curator Cecilia Widenheim (2011) the work is made to fit in every exhibition space, and needs to 'inhale' and 'exhale' air in order to be displayed. This work was intentionally made in China, ordered by a telephone call placed by the artist, "where the global demand for products has strengthened their now robust economy" (NY Art Beat, 2011). *Cosa* has travelled from China to Scandinavia

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[18] The arwork was displayed with a small white label on the left-hand side, and there was minimal information about it in the museum (fieldwork observations, 2010).

and Mexico City with a weight and size, that when deflated and shapeless, FedEx can courier. In relation to works such as this, writer and curator Julian Stallabrass (2004, 25) explains that contemporary art is ephemeral, sometimes difficult or even impossible to move, especially when made in situ for the museum.

Contemporary art reflects the complexities of the world today. Generally it is an intricate and demanding art, not always aesthetically beautiful, that can make people feel alien and uncomfortable. For academic Néstor García Canclini (2010, 220) audiences' common attitude towards contemporary art is indifference, where their usual comment is: "is this art?" This is currently the case in many Mexican contemporary art museums, demonstrated through individual visitors' comments[19]:

> Is this really art? It doesn't invite me to reflect anything nor to appreciate it aesthetically (Museo Universitario del Chopo, 2010)

> This modern art is very strange (Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, 2009)

> I tried to understand the artwork, but I found it very difficult (Museo de Arte Moderno, 2010)

These examples show that people view contemporary art as uninviting, odd, and complex. In this regard, for educator_1 (2009) one of the main problems for Mexican audiences' interpretation is that they are used to traditional ideas about art, and they have not yet been shown how art creation has evolved to today's contemporary forms and media (See Chapter 2). This lack of knowledge may therefore create existing prejudices and confusion in relation to contemporary art (director_1, 2010). García Canclini (2010, 221) explains that the majority of audiences pass quickly through the installations and videos, judging them with values from "the ordinary world", comparing them with something that they know. Hence, although contemporary art can relate to everyday life, it may also involve a process of creation not always evident to audiences. Knowing more about the artwork can affect its interpretation, as it will be demonstrated later on.

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[19] Appendix 1.10 lists other audiences' opinions from Books of Comments consulted during fieldwork.

Researcher Graciela Schmilchuck (2005, 107-108), states that it is important to spend time with contemporary art, in order to develop knowledge to appreciate its value. Schmilchuck also argues that contemporary art audiences need to accept that this genre of art requires the onlooker to make an effort not only to gain the specialist knowledge to understand it, but also to acknowledge there is "uncertainty in the artwork itself". Director_5 (2010) agrees that the experience with contemporary art is not passive, as audiences have to actively read labels, the artists' suggestions and inform themselves, and then associate this knowledge to create connections and meanings (McClellan, 2003b, xv). This suggests that audiences may need more information when the artwork is difficult to interpret.

Stallabrass (2004, 167) further maintains that contemporary artwork can be challenging, by being part of the artist's self-realisation, or "dark, ocular, and ambiguous, a faithful reflection of the epoch." However, another issue for understanding contemporary art is that it "regularly uses complex references to art history that require specialist knowledge of its viewers" (Stallabrass, 2004, 170). Contemporary art interpretation may be complicated when it shows difficult issues of our time, such as war, violence, drug trafficking, discrimination, and racism; or when audiences do not have the tools and required knowledge to understand it.

In many cases, the process and background behind contemporary artworks are not obvious, but these can be more important than the work itself (director_1, 2010), hence having more information about these facts becomes useful to support audiences' interpretation. Although not every person will need this additional information, some will certainly benefit from it. Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 150) agrees that audiences do not always have "the disciplinary background to make sense of the art-history based exhibition structure, nor the cultural knowledge to grasp the significance of the individual paintings". This view also applies to contemporary art, which can be more challenging than experiencing a landscape or a portrait. Furthermore, for sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel (1991, 54): "the love of art is not love at first sight but is born of long familiarity". These authors' view reveals a

need to visit museums and to look at artwork regularly, in order to engage more effectively and familiarise with contemporary art.

As with all art, contemporary art aims to communicate ideas and emotions, encouraging people to think and question the world and themselves (Dallow, 2005, 137; Wittlin, 1970, 44). García Canclini (1987, 56) agrees by referring to artworks as part of a social and communication process[20]. Furthermore, curator_6 (2010) states that in contemporary art, the "visiting audience find a language they are not used to", which goes beyond written and verbal to the visual elements observed in the artworks. Furthermore, for García Canclini (1987, 56) the experience with art is not always individual. It can be "a complex process in which many intermediaries intervene: the school and the media as taste 'shapers'; the museum, the art market, the critics, the publicity and the public"; Yúdice agrees (2002, 27). García Canclini does not establish how active or direct these interventions should be, but some of the work of the intermediaries will be analysed later on as part of the case study. More recently, García Canclini (2010, 213-214) speaks about mediators that affect how art is observed in our social life, including professionals in arts and museums, policy makers, politicians, investors, journalists, and even the outcomes of sociology and anthropology studies. Interestingly, García Canclini also considers audiences' role is integral to the artistic process, who have a valid interpretation about the artwork.

García Canclini (2010, 213) speaks about the art crossover with "the democratisation of society and culture", as a process that inserts art in society. However, for García Canclini (2010, 244) art stays local as the majority of artists "only 'echo' within their own country" because most of the population still remain living in the place they were born. García Canclini (2010, 233) refers to the role of contemporary artist and the complexity of today's art, which is also observed in Mexico:

> Art does not turn us into rebels for showing us the despicable, nor it mobilises us by looking for us outside the museum. Maybe it can transmit us its critic and not only its

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[20] Due to the limitations of this research, the communication process will only be considered through dialogue with other people (See Chapter 4).

indignation, when art itself becomes detached from the 'complicit' languages of the social order (García Canclini, 2010, 233)

This statement relates to art's power to provoke social movement activism[21], just by letting people thinking and reflecting about it. Yúdice (2002, 381) agrees as directors and curators work with artists in order "to reorganise institutions and sites, to 'unchain chemical reactions' between the public." However, Mexico struggles to attract greater numbers of audiences in contemporary art due to its complexity and the lack of familiarity with it. In this sense, Schmilchuck (1994) compares the museum's motivation to attract visitors to businesses, which would not operate if they were not able to bring costumers in. For Schmilchuck, Mexican museums have great potential to attract audiences:

> Mexican museums present artwork from good artists regularly… there are curators that organise and install excellent exhibitions. Nevertheless the majority of art museums make us feel always ignorant, insensitive. The curiosity is undercovered by confusion, frustration, and disregard in the presence of the inaccessible. I believe the museums have plenty to do providing the deserved importance to communication and education, professionalising and increasing the quality and quantity of research and experimental staff to attend directly to visitors (Schmilchuck, 1994).

Although this statement was written 20 years ago, it still reflects the current situation of art museums and audience engagement. Furthermore, this perspective demonstrates there is a potential benefit of exploiting the promotion of learning dialogue in museums, which will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

1.2. Research Questions and Literature Review

The overall research question investigated in this thesis is:

How does dialogue impact on Mexican contemporary art museum learning of the Enlaces participants and museum staff?

Three further subordinate research questions will be investigated, which are:

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[21] The theory of social movement activism will not be discussed in detail, as it is out of the research's scope.

1. Which contemporary art museum learning and dialogue theoretical approaches lend themselves best to application in the context of Mexican contemporary art museums? (See Chapters 2 to 5).

2. How are learning and dialogue understood in the context of Mexican contemporary art museums? (See Chapters 2 to 4).

3. How does dialogue impact on Mexican contemporary art museum learning in practice? (See Chapters 4 to 6).

These questions led to determining the chapters and the investigation[22]. To answer these, the thesis starts providing the general context of Mexico, then focusing on Mexico City, and finally on contemporary art museums, and MuAC. It is constrained to the particular case study of the Enlaces programme, and the specific conditions of 2009-2010 when the fieldwork took place. Understanding different periods of time or longitudinal events is out of the scope of this investigation. The research questions raise complex issues about dialogue and communication emerging from interactions between staff members (Denscombe, 2003, 38), as well as the Enlaces participants, which will consequently affect learning within the museum and further relationships with audiences.

This investigation involves multidisciplinary academic areas of study. In terms of the literature review, the thesis uses an Anglo-Saxon literature, mainly from the UK and the US, which works well to analyse Mexican contemporary art museums' practice. It also uses critical texts and popular press references from the Mexican literature in order to understand the context of Mexico and the approach to contemporary art (Eder, 2002; García Canclini, 2004; 2009; 2010; Martín Medrano, 2008; 2009; Nivón, 2000; 2006; Schmilchuck, 1994; 2004; 2005; Vallejo, 2002a; 2002b; 2003). There are no authors writing academically or publishing about learning dialogue in art museums in Mexico, despite anthropology and history museums have written critically about this

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[22] For Professor Bill Gillham (2000, 62) research questions "are like sub-headings which sectionalize the interview purposes of content analysis". Furthermore, social science method researchers, Beverly R. Dixon et al. (1987, 16) argue that research questions are limited to a specific time, place, and conditions.

topic, which makes it difficult to identify a theoretical framework and the relevance of Mexican arts' audience-centred approaches.

The main authors used to discuss learning dialogue in the thesis come from different literatures and areas of study. First, the museum experiential learning theoretical approach comes from authors such as Hooper-Greenhill (1992; 1994; 2000), George Hein (1991; 1998), and John Falk and Lynn Dierking (1992; 2000), who provide insight about learning experiences in museums, the relevance of social interaction for learning, and some aspects of communication. These authors refer to museums in general, and not specifically to contemporary art. Hilde Hein's (2000) perspectives were also consulted in terms of the museum experience focused on art and the importance of audiences. Second, theoretical approaches to dialogue were discussed using Hooper-Greenhill (2000), Louise Ravelli (2006) and Paulo Freire (1996). Ravelli talks about communication in museums based on texts, and Freire focuses on adult education but more generally, as he does not refer to museums. These authors propose an interesting framework for dialogue, based on balanced relationships and opportunities to learn and reflect. Third, both learning and dialogue on the Enlaces programme involve social interaction. Hence, the issue of participation was discussed based on Nina Simon (2010) and Garrick Fincham (2003) in terms of the value of participants or volunteers, and by Etienne Wenger (1998) based on his theory about communities of practice. Fourth, theoretical approaches about power and the influence of language and dialogue were discussed through Michel Foucault (1992; 1977; 1980), Bourdieu (1991) and Bourdieu and Darbel (1991), as power affects the museum organisational structure, creates hierarchies of knowledge, and influences the language used by curators and other staff to communicate with audiences.

None of these theoretical approaches refer to contemporary art specifically, so perspectives from authors like Stallabrass (2006), academic Hans Belting (2007) and García Canclini (2010) were also used in relation to learning dialogue in contemporary art (Section 1.1). Practical evaluations from Barbara Taylor (2006a, 2008a), Emily Pringle (2006) and François Matarasso (2008)

were used to discuss the learning benefits of contemporary art projects for young people. There are other authors that the research looked at but were not explored further. In terms of learning theories, the thesis does not utilise Howard Gardner's (1993) multiple intelligences, or the Generic Learning Outcomes (MLA, 2008a), as the research is not analysing the learning abilities of individuals or what audiences learned in depth. The thesis does not cover issues of social inclusion and access to museums (Dodd and Sandell, 2001; Sandell, 2007b), nor it refers to semiotics either (Fiske, 1990; Barthes, 1985).

Professional dialogue was discussed based on two areas of study. The first one refers to museum practice theoretical approaches by Lisa Roberts (2004), Knutson (2002), Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson (2009), Paul Owens (1998), and Hooper-Greenhill (2000), who discuss the roles and relationships of educators and curators. The second one comprises approaches about organisational learning theorists from a managerial perspective, which do not refer to museums but help understand their role as organisations, including Chris Argyris and Donald Schön (1996), David Boud and Heather Middleton (2003), and Michael Eraut et al (1998). The analysis of these two areas of study is relevant to look at Mexican contemporary art museum practice, the role of the educator, and internal communication issues that affect an organisation's practice.

Case studies from other countries that successfully engaged and gained knowledge about audiences in practice, focused on the use of dialogue, have also been discussed to offer a comparison framework to the Enlaces programme. Some of these examples include the Chinatown History Museum in New York (today Museum of Chinese in America), the Museum of London, the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, the District Six Museum in Cape Town, and BALTIC in Newcastle (Merriman, 1997; O'Donoghue, 2003; Perin, 1992; Rassool, 2006; Tchen, 1989; Thomas, 2012).

Finally, some of the theoretical approaches used in the research refer to more than one subject and crossover to different disciplines, for example Wenger refers to practice, negotiation of meanings, and active participation, which relate to learning dialogue and practice; whereas Hooper-Greenhill talks about communication, learning, the educator's practice and role in the museum, and the importance of understanding audiences.

1.3. Research Methods and Approach to Analysis in this Study

This research examines how dialogue impacts on learning of Enlaces participants, MuAC staff, and other Mexican museum professionals such as curators, directors and educators from a qualitative perspective. For Professors Jane Elliot (2005, 175), Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin (1995, 6-19) qualitative research is useful to understand the participant's choice, behaviour and the meaning they give to their experiences, and it gives interviewees a public voice[23]. The methodological approaches used to investigate and analyse the research questions include questionnaires, semi-structured interviews[24], a case study, and images of contemporary artworks.

Questionnaires (Ibert et al., 2001) are quantitative sources to collect data, create knowledge about a target population, and are responded to individually (Sapsford, 2007; Trobia, 2008). According to Professors Orlando Behling and Kenneth S. Law (2000), questionnaires support gathering information about the background and demographics of a population, as well as their intentions, expectations and aspirations. This research applied questionnaires to two target populations: 1) museum educators, which aimed to gather information about their departments' operation and practice (Appendix 1.2); and 2) Enlaces participants, which collected data about the demographics and interests of university students taking part in the Enlaces programme (Appendix 1.5).

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[23] Interestingly, the issue of having a voice relates to an aspect of dialogue identified in the Enlaces participants' experiences (Sections 4.3 and 5.2), and other international museum experiences (Section 4.4).
[24] For Uwe Flick (2009, 150) semi-structured questions propose a specific discussion topic, allowing an open response, or vice versa. In this research, the questions' topic was established prior the fieldwork, leaving interviewees with open freedom to answer them.

The research interviews have gained evidence about learning dialogue at MuAC through various professional perspectives. Professor Kathy Charmaz (2001, 676) defines qualitative interviews as an "open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight." As an example, Mexican museum educator interviewees show significant experience and awareness when discussing learning in contemporary art museums, which are not sufficiently acknowledged by other professionals, such as curators and directors (fieldwork interviews, 2009-2010). Furthermore, for Professor Ernest Stringer (1996, 63) "interviews enable participants to describe their situation", create a record and legitimise their viewpoints.

Elliot (2005, 17-18) sees interviews as a form of social interaction, aiming to understand the research questions, exploring 'how', and finding meanings for them[25]. Furthermore, Professors Kathleen Gerson and Ruth Horowitz (2002, 210) argue that when interviews turn into conversations, these can become in-depth investigations of meanings from the interviewee's responses. Gerson and Horowitz (2002, 206) suggest interviews aim to look for information about "the actual event, the social context in which the event or experience takes place, the person's behavioural response, the person's feelings, perceptions and beliefs before, during and immediately following the experience." Hence, the research interviews' responses support that both learning and dialogue are significant in current Mexican contemporary art and the Enlaces programme practices.

Furthermore, for Hans Merkens (2005, 166) the case selection involves researching the example's unique contribution and accessibility to the institution and potential interviewees. Prior to the case study selection, a first stage of fieldwork investigated learning practice in 15 museums displaying contemporary art exhibitions in Mexico City[26]. This preliminary research

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[25] This approach to interviews is interesting for this thesis' discussions, as both learning and dialogue also involve social interaction, both in theory and in practice (Chapters 3 to 6).
[26] For a list of the research's contemporary art museums see Appendix 2.4.

revealed the uniqueness and significance of using dialogue for audiences' learning and engagement in the Enlaces programme at MuAC. Access to undertake the research with the participants was granted by the museum's director with support of the education manager (Angélica Hernández, 2009; Cann, 2009). Further access to interview former participants in the programme was gained through the previous education manager at MuAC.

Evaluation research consultant Robert Yin (2003, 1) argues that case study as a method aims to answer explanatory questions involving 'how' and 'why', where the researcher has minimum control over a current event[27]. For Yin (2003, 11-14) a case study is characterised by creating knowledge about individuals or groups, and using data sources (also Denscombe, 2003, 31). Furthermore, the data collected from a case study can be triangulated (Flick, 2005, 178) and related to theoretical aspects, both during the collection and analysis of data[28]. A case study is specific (Denscombe, 2003, 30-31); it focuses on only one example, an in-depth study in a natural setting, focused on relationships and processes, which provide "sufficient detail to unravel the complexities of a given situation". For example, in this research the analysis of data gathered from the Enlaces participants' relationships with staff and audiences reveal different categories of dialogue (See Chapters 5 and 6).

An advantage of using the case study is that despite its uniqueness, its findings can be generalised, because the level of detail gathered through the data informs the researcher's judgement and its relevance to other examples (Denscombe, 2003, 36-37). However, Professor Martyn Denscombe (2003, 39) recognises a problem of credibility with these generalisations because they are perceived as soft data[29], with boundaries that may be difficult to define.

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[27] Professor Peter Freebody (2003, 83-84) discusses the case study procedure in four steps: 1) define the research question; 2) design and plan gathering of data within the field; 3) analyse and interpret the data, discussing the case's relevance and unexpected findings, which may distance from the original research question; 4) report the results. For the Enlaces programme case study, Freebody's points 1 and 2 are discussed in this chapter, while 3 and 4 are analysed in later chapters.

[28] Based on Freebody (2003, 82), Gorard and Taylor (2004, 164), and Yin (2003, 14).

[29] For Roger Kaufman et al. (2006) soft data refers to feelings, perceptions, and opinions, which cannot necessarily be validated without verifiable and measurable hard data.

The thesis also uses images to illustrate specific points related to contemporary artworks' examples and Enlaces participants' experiences, which complement the analysis. Professor Douglas Harper (2005, 231-234) refers to photographs as an information record of a particular moment, which focuses on one interpretation among many possible ones. For both Harper (2005, 235) and Professor Uwe Flick (2009, 241-246) the researcher's process of framing an image involves content selection, which can be problematic when it creates subjective interpretations. Interestingly, curators go through a similar process when they select the artworks to be displayed in exhibitions, as they frame this in the museum and create one interpretation among many possible ones (Ravelli, 2006, 88; Roberts, 1997, 220). Each image used in the thesis is followed by additional information about the artwork to allow the reader to create his/her own interpretation.

The data analysis approach undertaken during the research starts from the documentation and transcription of the data collected from the interviewees' responses. For Dixon et al. (1987, 15) the investigation's process of analysis and interpretation involves "relating the data to the research question". Elliot (2005, 37) refers to more specific interpretative analysis that creates understanding of how the interviewees relate to events and experiences, which "require dense, detailed, and contextualized description". For Flick (2009, 294-302) the documentation process occurs in three stages: 1) recording, which this research has done mainly through interview voice recording; 2) editing, making transcriptions (also Elliot, 2005, 51); and 3) constructing innovative interpretation. Flick (2009, 299-302) claims the process of transcription requires time and energy, so it is reasonable to consider transcribing only to document the information needed to answer to the research question, with certain considerations:

> The documentation has to be exact enough to reveal structures in those materials and it has to permit approaches from different perspectives. The organization of the data has the main aim of documenting the case in specificity and structure (Flick, 2009, 303).

The research involved 94 qualitative interviews in total (Appendix 1.1), which gathered a great amount of experiential data, and consequently required to spend time (Elliot, 2005, 51) and work in their documentation, transcription, and analysis[30].

The process of interpretation in this research continued with coding and content analysis. According to Gillham (2000, 59) and Professor Philipp Mayring (2005, 269), content analysis aims to identify key points and create categories from the collected data. Gerson and Horowitz (2002, 216-217) and Flick (2009, 307) see these categories as "group structures and processes", revealed by individual interviews. These categories relate to collected responses discussing major topics[31]. Miles and Huberman (1994, 56) argue categories can be either straightforward or complex "words, sentences, [or] paragraphs". Further, Gillham (2000, 60) refers to categories as exhaustive and exclusive, acting as headings with meaning through "the use of direct quotations categorized … displaying the range and character of the responses"[32]. Data analysis of the interview questions with museum professionals and Enlaces participants were used as categorised headings of learning dialogue, which revealed reviewed and amended subcategories while grouping individual responses after further analysis. Gillham (2000, 63) and Professors Matthew Miles and Michael Huberman (1994, 61) agree that any established categories need to be revised, changed, combined, and discarded (See Appendix 1.12).

The research categories are useful to analyse activities, meanings, participation, and relationships; and to define a setting, context, situation, perspectives, and practices (Miles and Huberman, 1994, 61). In this sense, Miles and Huberman (1994, 61) argue that content analysis specifically supports, first, "ways of thinking about people and objects; understandings of each other, of outsiders, of objects in their world", and second, "relationships and social structure", among others. These will be discussed through the

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[30] Appendix 1.13 contains examples of interview transcripts from this investigation.
[31] The categories established through fieldwork analysis are in Appendix 1.12.
[32] Flick (2009, 309) and Miles and Huberman (1994, 62) agree that creating categories supports understanding and itemising a particular set of data.

Enlaces participants' experiences with audiences, staff members and the contemporary artwork.

Although, for Charmaz (2001, 683), codes and categories reflect on the interests, perspectives and interpretation of the researcher, which make each study unique, this choice may affect the reliability of the investigation. The choice of categories can be problematic in content analysis, when "judgements about latent meanings [are made], i.e. what they 'meant' by what they said" (Gillham, 2000, 69), which can be subjective [33]. Miles and Huberman (1994, 57) agree that the researcher code choices affect the outcome of the analysis, which can unintentionally influence the conclusions of the research. To deal with this issue, Gillham (2000, 69-70) argues that categories should be comprehensive and any inferences made by the researcher need to be made explicit.

1.4. Fieldwork Context and Research Objectives

The research fieldwork developed in three stages between 2009 and 2010 involved in-depth interviews with, and questionnaires given to, museum professionals (educators, curators, and directors) and Enlaces participants in Mexico City. All interviews were voice recorded in order to maintain their detail and accuracy (Stringer, 1996, 64)[34]. Due to ethical considerations and interviewees' lack of consent to be named[35], their responses and quotations have been coded in order to protect their identities and to maintain their anonymity (see Appendix 1.1). However, according to Professor Blake Poland (2001, 634) there is an ethical problem when removing the interviewees' identities, as this may eliminate information about the context of their roles, organisations, and other features, which can compromise the ability to create

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[33] Mayring (2005, 269) observes another problem with this type of analysis when the research question is very open, which may require interpretation techniques such as grounded theory, not discussed in this research. In this sense, this thesis is using existing theories to analyse the data.

[34] Problems may arise when the interview does not have a natural flow, after informing interviewees they are being recorded (Flick, 2009, 294), which was rarely the case in this research.

[35] Jean McNiff and Jack Whitehead (2006, 86-87) argue that participants should not be named unless they want to be.

relationships for future researchers[36]. The three stages of empirical work on site involved:

<u>Stage 1: Learning Overview in Mexico City Contemporary Art Museums</u>
July-August 2009

The aim of Stage 1 was to understand the current learning situation of contemporary art museums' practice in Mexico City, and the educators' knowledge about their audiences. This stage provided evidence about practices and problems that affect museum education, which give a comparison framework to learning programmes at MuAC. This stage involved the following methods:

1) A questionnaire sent by email to 15 Mexican museum education departments that display contemporary art exhibitions with an aim to gain quantitative knowledge about their operation, policy, staff numbers, programming and budgets[37]. Only six museum educators responded to this questionnaire, with a response rate of 40%[38].

2) In-depth interviews with 32 Mexican professionals involved in museums learning (see Appendix 1.3), including 3 academics, 20 educators, 3 learning consultants, and 6 government servants[39]. These interviews aimed to gain in-depth knowledge and qualitative understanding about the role of education in contemporary art museums.

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[36] This issue is mainly observed through the elimination of the interviewees' institutional affiliation, which may limit creating relationships between museums for future researchers.
[37] Some of the questions from this questionnaire were based on a survey undertaken by the Arts Council England to create a database about arts organisations and their education programmes (Hogarth, Kinder, Harland, 1997, 64-71), see Appendix 1.2.
[38] A summary of some relevant data gathered from these questionnaires is found on Appendix 2.2.
[39] Appendix 1.9 summarises the number of interviewees, their positions, and affiliated organisations when the interview took place, during all the research stages. The number of educators is considerably higher because they are the main staff members responsible for learning. Educators provided more in-depth information about their relationship with curators and other staff members.

Stage 2: Case Study and Professionals' Experiences on Learning Dialogue
January-March 2010

This stage involved a questionnaire and in-depth interviews to investigate learning and dialogue perspectives, and the understanding of audiences in practice. This stage also involved the following research methods:

1) **Non-education professionals' perspectives** [40], which included 20 interviews (Appendix 1.4) with Mexican contemporary art museum curators and directors, in order to gather evidence about learning, the education department and audiences within their particular places of work. This gave a framework reference to the educators' data from Stage 1.

2) **Enlaces participants' experiences,** which aimed to investigate the participants' role as intermediary between audiences and MuAC staff and the learning outcomes from their experiences, in order to gain a full understanding of learning dialogue in the Enlaces programme at MuAC[41]. Data was gathered from 34 participants through three main tools[42]:

(i) A questionnaire aimed to gain quantitative information about the participants, their contact details and their interest in the programme (Appendix 1.5).

(ii) In-depth interviews that gathered comprehensive data about the participants' experiences and dialogue with both audiences and staff members at MuAC (Appendix 1.6), their current practice as part of the

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[40] See Appendix 2.4.

[41] According to Theano Moussouri (2002, 19), learning outcomes offer a way to identify what has been learned, and they are also useful for researching learning. There is a vast list of learning and social outcomes proposed by different authors that will not be considered here, such as GLO and GSO (MLA, 2008); and social inclusion theories by Matarasso (1997), Dodd (2002), Sandell (2002; 2007a; 2007b), and Dodd and Sandell (2001). The thesis does not discuss other learning theories by Dewey (1979) or Eisner (1988) either.

[42] This stage initially also aimed to create a Facebook group to share everyday experiences from the participants, who were encouraged to upload comments, photos and videos to document their shared practice; and to promote discussions about their experiences at MuAC (Bueno-Delgado, 2010). However, this tool did not stimulate participation or dialogue enough, so it will not be discussed further during the thesis.

programme, and their understanding of learning in contemporary art. Interviewees' responses vary, as for Gerson and Horowitz (2002, 211) while some "are able to offer great detail and insight", others may not be able to achieve this. Hence, different levels of opinions arise from the "unsurprising and uninteresting" to those that "prompt a new way of seeing concepts and organizing principles" (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002, 221). This variety of perspectives and experiences arose within the Enlaces participants' responses, as well as within educators, curators and directors[43].

(iii) Observations were undertaken during the participants' training sessions, guided tours, interaction and dialogue with audiences, and everyday activities at MuAC, recorded through photography and a fieldwork diary[44]. In this matter, Stringer (1996, 64-65) refers to participant observation as a method to let the researcher "gain a clearer picture of the research context … in which participants live and work". However, the researcher's observation may influence the participants' behaviour (Flick, 2009, 226).

3) MuAC staff's perspectives about learning dialogue. The objectives were to understand the staff's knowledge and interaction with audiences and the Enlaces participants; as well as their relationships, learning dialogue, and shared practice with the Enlaces participants. This fieldwork involved interviews with 6 staff members at MuAC directly related with the Enlaces programme (Appendix 1.7). Access to other staff was complicated due to institutional and bureaucratic issues, which limited the results of this investigation (See Section 6.2).

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[43] Some interviewees invariably provided greater insight and were quoted more than others, for example director_1 (2010). This brings out the issue of representativeness (See Section 1.6), where the study's population selected for the research needs to involve a balanced representation (Gillham, 2000, 77).

[44] For Flick (2009, 297) field notes reflect realities into text, which according to Gerson and Horowitz (2002, 219) should be read repeatedly in order to create categories and connections among these too, as part of the content analysis research approach (Section 1.5).

Stage 3: Learning Dialogue for Mexican Museum Educators
September-November 2010

The aim was to investigate Mexican contemporary art museum educators' views about dialogue, shared practice, and any relationships with other staff members that were not discussed enough during Stage 1. Data was gathered through interviews with 9 museum educators (Appendix 1.8).

Although this research does not focus specifically on the audience, Stage 3 involved a review of books of comments from 7 contemporary art museums, in order to gain knowledge about audiences' opinions and experiences[45]. For some museums this tool is their only source of communication with audiences (Appendix 2.5). Books of comments provide some insight to audiences' experiences with contemporary art, as seen in Section 1.1.

Throughout the three stages of fieldwork, the researcher attended contemporary art exhibitions in order to observe the reactions from the audience, and to create an informed judgement about the experience of looking at the artwork[46]. The overall fieldwork reveals a comprehensive purpose: to gather enough evidence to analyse the issue of learning dialogue in Mexico City contemporary art museums and the Enlaces programme. Furthermore, for Elliot (2005, 40), the data gathered from qualitative interviews refers to collective stories where individual experiences are represented together. Such is the case of the Enlaces programme, where individual participants' experiences create a story about shared dialogic learning practices.

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[45] A list summarising selected comments relevant for this thesis is found in Appendix 1.10, divided into different categories.
[46] See Appendix 1.11 for a list of exhibitions visited in Mexico City during the research period.

1.5. Research Considerations and Problems

The research methodology and analysis of data are not without limitations and other considerations that will affect the findings and conclusions of the thesis, which are:

1) Sampling, which relates to the process of selecting the participants in the study, who belong to a certain population. Prior to the fieldwork, a research sample was defined based on particular features of the group (Dixon et al., 1987, 13; Flick, 2009, 318; Merkens, 2005, 167), which was chosen carefully and without bias (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002, 205). In particular, this research collected data from 15 museums that regularly display contemporary art in Mexico City, and aimed to access as many of the curators, educators, and directors as possible (Appendix 1.1) [47]. The sample of Enlaces participants is the largest (34 interviews), as it involved former and current participants during the research period, which aimed to gather comprehensive data about their experiences and practice.

2) Reflexivity, conveyed as the researcher's position during the collection, documentation, interpretation, and analysis of the study. For Elliot (2005, 153) reflexivity involves "a heightened awareness of the self … of the researcher within the research process." Reflexivity in the current study is shown by observation of participants passively, by listening to interviewees' responses, and by commenting only when participants moved away from the discussion topic. This process involved remaining objective and uninfluenced by interviewees and personal feelings that favoured one particular group over another. However, this has been difficult to achieve at MuAC, because the amount of interviews undertaken with Enlaces participants is almost 6 times more than the ones with staff members, which also affects the latter's group representativeness.

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[47] The number of educators is larger because between 2009-2010 there were changes within the staff, which implied two educators had the same role in different periods.

3) Validity, relates to being able to generalise the findings to the "broader population" with consistency and relevance (Drucker-Godard et al., 2001; Elliot, 2005, 22). The evidence and results should be reliable based on the research method and fieldwork, and supported by theory as is done in this investigation. For example, this thesis proposes a model of professional learning dialogue (Figure 6.2), which can be generalised but its validity in other case studies will need further study and analysis.

4) Translations. Maintaining reliability without changing or reinterpreting the meaning of interviewee responses (Fairclough, 1995, 190), and the translation from Spanish to English have both been a challenge for the thesis. According to Poland (2001, 632) transcriptions should be "faithful to the original language". Linguistic changes such as changing a word for a similar one affect the interpretation (Behling and Law, 2000; Poland, 2001, 632). To deal with this issue, the research involved meticulous translations. It also created a dictionary of words that could not be translated directly from Mexican Spanish to English (See Appendix 1.14). In this matter, researcher Janet Harkness (2008) argues that the quality of translations is essential to enable comparability of the data collected[48].

5) Dealing with egos. Another research's issue was dealing with museum staff and professionals in Mexico City, as well as institutional bureaucracy. It will be demonstrated that Mexico has an inefficient public administration structure (Chapter 2), which creates barriers to access museum professionals in this investigation, in particular those at top levels such as the directors. This problem was managed by maintaining contact with professionals; being persistent with any intermediaries who were directly related to provide access to desirable interviewees, such as secretaries. Dealing with egos also involved listening objectively to participants' opinions during interviews without taking any sides (based on Rubin and Rubin, 1995, 7).

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[48] For Harkness (2008), poor translations create sources of error in the research, but when translation is not enough to understand a concept, an adaptation may be used, as seen in Appendix 1.10.

6) Flexibility. Initially this research planned to undertake action research[49] with Enlaces participants at MuAC. However, due to the lack of institutional support this type of research could not take place. Hence, the study adapted to this changing situation during the fieldwork delivery, and diverted to increase the number of Enlaces participants interviewees[50]. In this matter, McNiff and Whitehead (2006, 113) argue that the researcher should be able to adapt and continue even when things do not work out as originally planned.

7) Lack of documentation in Mexico, particularly about learning in contemporary art museums. Sources of information such as the history, policy documents, institutional reports, and learning resources were difficult to access in museums on site and online because they are limited or non-existent (See Chapter 2). For McNiff and Whitehead (2006, 113) documents report practice, from public records to minutes of meetings, and they are important sources of data "about what people were thinking and doing at a particular time and place." Quantitative data about budgets and employee numbers was also difficult to access, despite most museums in this investigation are institutions funded with public taxes.

8) Lack of evidence about staff's learning outcomes. The staff's learning products were not possible to be evaluated and are only considered in terms of their own perspectives and experiences. Further research involving in-depth and detailed interview questions will be needed to understand the staff's learning.

9) Open-ended questions[51], which relate to the concepts of learning and dialogue as complex processes of study, particularly when defining new terms like learning dialogue or professional dialogue. Further studies could be

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[49] Freebody (2003, 85) sees action research involving ethnographic and case study techniques to "document and explore purposeful changes in educational practice". This was not possible in this research.
[50] The research does not identify former and current Enlaces participants in the proposed codes. The majority of former participants worked at MuAC with the previous education manager. This study does not identify issues related to the change of management within the programme. Further research will be needed to understand these topics.
[51] Open-ended questions refer to questions that do not direct the respondent to answer in a specific way, giving freedom to answer in his/her own way (Ballou, 2008).

undertaken to discuss and question these concepts based on different evidence or using other practical and theoretical perspectives.

This investigation is limited to time, location, specific groups, and a theoretical learning and dialogue framework in contemporary art museums in Mexico City. The use of other theories and practices will affect the findings analysis and conclusions. Although the research refers to benchmark cases of good practice using dialogue in international museums' experiences (Section 4.4), it does not go to any comparative analysis in-depth, as the focus was mainly on understanding Mexican contemporary art learning dialogue practice, and there was not enough time or detailed data to evaluate the comparative cases.

Chapter 2

Learning in Museums in the Mexican Context

Art and museums are engrained in the modern history of Mexican nationalism and identity. Contemporary art is also increasingly positioning itself in the museums' cultural infrastructure and attracting audiences, offering them new perspectives about current issues affecting society. Reaching people has not been an easy task in Mexico, as most contemporary art museums struggle to attract large numbers of visitors, especially when compared to other art or history museums[1], and even less when compared to cinema[2]. Mexican government and private institutions increasingly propose initiatives to develop policies and training opportunities favouring museum practice and education. Nevertheless, the importance of the work of learning is not always clear:

> … beyond the general acceptance that education is a 'good, worthwhile' activity and somehow concerned with 'engaging people with the arts', there often is no real consensus within arts organisations and across arts organisations about why the work is actually undertaken or about its importance within the programme (Owens, 1998, 8).

In this report for the British American Arts Association, Paul Owens researched tensions within arts organisations, which revealed a failed general understanding of the benefits of education over 15 years ago. This view relates to a current issue from arts funding government institutions to actual museums in Mexico. This chapter reveals there is a lack of clarity about the concept of learning, despite this being everyone's responsibility in the museum. Although educators create activities to link audiences with the artwork or exhibitions, curators are still responsible for how to approach

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[1] Between 2000 and 2007, Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum and Carrillo Gil Art Museum had close to 600,000 audiences on average, whereas other national art museums in Mexico City, such as the National Museum of Art and the National Museum of Architecture that had 1 million visitors, and the Fine Arts Palace received 3.7 million people in the same period. These numbers are relatively small compared with anthropology and history museums that had larger audiences in a smaller period of time, between 2001 and 2006. The National Museum of Cultures received 1.6 million visitors, whereas the National Museum of History had 7 million and the National Museum of Anthropology had 9 million (CONACULTA, 2008, 18).

[2] In 2009, 178 million people went to the cinema in Mexico; the majority of audiences were concentrated in Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey, the bigger cities in the country (CONACULTA, 2010a, 147).

interpretation (Selwood, 2011, 26), for example through curatorial discourses[3]. However, Mexican contemporary art museums have to deal with another major issue beyond their learning offer, which relates to engaging audiences with a difficult art (Section 1.1), when they are used to very traditional ideas of art and have great pride in their past and heritage. This attachment to the past has led to the existence of cultural, historic and policy issues that affect how Mexicans approach art today. Nevertheless, the chapter demonstrates that in theory of practice, policies and institutional objectives[4], the structural organisation, and the existing training opportunities for Mexican museum education offer a positive approach that could impact on learning practice[5].

The chapter refers to observations and fieldwork interviews with Mexican professionals and education practitioners[6]. It also discusses critical perspectives from Mexican academics, sociologists, anthropologists, art historians, and other museum specialists. These views reveal the following problems that impact on learning today: first, existing issues that affect cultural policy, including a strong tie to the past, a national identity based on heritage pride and government control over what is considered art. Second, the lack of documentation and reliable sources of information about museums, particularly learning, which are limited and difficult to access publicly[7]. Third, the lack of clarity, consistency and consensus about learning related to aims, strategies, budgets, policies, and outcomes in the arts, particularly in

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[3] Curatorial discourses are a type of script that disseminates the purpose, research and what is behind an exhibition; these discourses usually do not imply verbal dialogue.

[4] Policy documents, conferences and magazines are records about government, institution, and museum practice, and important sources of data about what Mexican organisations are thinking and doing (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006). These documents create knowledge and offer information about the organisation's features (Stringer, 1996, 67). These will be used as references in this chapter.

[5] For the purposes of this research learning practice is defined as the learning work undertaken in museums. These include the application of theoretical, policy and strategic planning of learning, followed and achieved through the education department and other professionals.

[6] Problems may arise with this data as professionals' names are coded, which limits understanding of these issues to a general conception, rather than the specificities of each museum.

[7] The lack of availability and access to public and printed references was a problem to fully inform this research. This chapter uses mainly sources from printed and online policy documents by Mexican government bodies and private institutions, online sources from museums, arts and culture government bodies; websites, records, reports, press releases and programmes from conferences and journals; and references from fieldwork findings and interviews.

education, government institutions and museums. Fourth, participation in academia and training focused on learning seems to be limited to education departments, possibly due to a lack of interest and acknowledgement for education within the overall organisation by other professionals and departments within the museum.

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section 2.1 introduces the political framework and critical aspects that affect museums and cultural Mexican institutions practice today. Section 2.2 presents the government and private organisational structure, policy, work plans, expenditure and objectives that apply to art museums, focused on understanding the positioning of learning. Section 2.3 explores the role of the education department in the contemporary art museum, in terms of internal policy, collections, work relationships, size, and activities offered. Finally, Section 2.4 investigates academic training, professionalisation opportunities and research in museums, related to learning.

2.1. Political and Cultural Framework affecting Mexican Museums

Mexico is a country of great cultural importance with abundant resources and diversity, with 52 indigenous languages currently spoken and diverse prehispanic heritage traditions (Secretaría de Cultura de la Ciudad de México, 2004, 59). Mexico has 32 sites registered at the world heritage convention from UNESCO, holding the 1st place of importance in Latin America and the 6th in the world (UNESCO, 2013). In this context, Mexican museums have over 230 years of history (De la Torre and Enciso, 1980, 173). Their growth in numbers shows evidence that they potentially have played a more relevant role in the lives of people over the past decades[8]. Learning in museums is also gathering increasing importance.

There are recurrent issues that affect museum learning decisions, which go beyond the organisation, arts management and policy. Mexican curatorial

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[8] Over a 100 year period, between the 20th and 21st centuries, the number of museums in Mexico increased from 38 to 846 (CONACULTA, 2010a, 116).

fellow at Independent Curators International, Sofía Olascoaga, broadly summarises one of the major issues that has constantly affected policy development and public spending in formal education:

> The last decades have witnessed a decline in the standards of public education and educational policies in Mexico. Serious impoverishment of working conditions and institutional resources for educators in regions such as Oaxaca, Guerrero, Morelos and Mexico City have led to increasing demonstrations, open confrontation… [there is] a climate of increasing tension and ambiguity regarding the distribution of resources for the development of education (Olascoaga, 2010).

This research does not aim to analyse the main problems of Mexican public education. However, as museums offer informal learning opportunities and they depend from the Ministry of Education (SEP), they will evidently be affected by this decline of working conditions, resources and education standards. Director_5 (2010) sees a problem in education specifically related to the skills developed in schools, which affects audiences understanding of contemporary art, where people lack "thoughtful, reflective, and independent thought formation away from the markets and the media"; which demonstrate there are a lot of factors affecting what and how people think about art.

The current Mexican Federal government created the National Programme of Development 2013-2018, where both culture and sports, are seen as valuable resources that strengthen a holistic education and offer development opportunities (DOF, 2013). However, this government only referred to these topics in one paragraph (within 184 pages), which highlighted a need to introduce cultural programmes that provide access to wider audiences (DOF, 2013), but without providing more information about specific actions and strategies. This government view is not new though, as for Professor George Yúdice (no date) since the 19th and 20th centuries, the arts have been used to promote community service and economic development.

Throughout the 20th century, Mexican cultural policy has been significantly influenced by the Mexican 1910-1917 revolution. This was a populist and nationalist movement promoting freedom and social justice, which significantly transformed the country's policies, economy, society and culture, evidenced in the Constitution of 1917 (Hurtado, 2010, 129-130). The regime established

during the revolution led to 70 years of authoritarism (Secretaría de Cultura de la Ciudad de México, 2004, 101), ruled by the centre-right party, known today as the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)[9].

For art historian Rita Eder (2002, 25-26), the critical national discourse of the revolution focused on unifying the country, and was greatly interested in the indigenism. All the visual, musical and literary works of the time used national symbols to construct the nation, reflecting on the social issues of the time, and determining a "national character" (Labastida, 2006, 11; Reyes Palma, 1987, 23; Osvaldo Sánchez, 2001, 141). Furthermore, Mexican art historian Issa María Benítez Dueñas (2006, 69) explains that the national identity embraced by the post-revolutionary government promoted the mural art movement, based on the idea of modernity, promoting popular and massive art (Benítez Dueñas, 1999, 107). The newly created SEP promoted this art movement commissioning murals in schools, government buildings and public markets from 1921 (Secretaría de Cultura de la Ciudad de México, 2004, 69). Mexican art production was clearly very linked to the government intention of constructing a unified popular identity, based on monumentality and heritage proudness:

> Mexico's Indian heritage is resoundingly praised and honored: the government commissions famous artists to glorify the Indian past in murals and paintings; it builds spectacular museums to enshrine the artistic, archaeological, and anthropological marvels of the past; and national writers paint sympathetically evocative portraits of the vital contributions made by past cultures. (Goulet, 1983, 53)

Néstor García Canclini (2010, 14) agrees that some of the most important cultural buildings, such as the national museums, were established after the revolution[10], where "cultural policy was oriented to the preservation and the use of heritage to legitimise the political regime and to promote national unity". In agreement with this, for Professor Nuria Balcells (1998, 30), "museums were born from the need to create the symbols of the Mexican nation, which praised our nationality and not the collections". However, these views on mural art, proudness for the indigenous heritage, and the revolutionary

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[9] The other main ruling parties in the country are the National Action Party (PAN) (right) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) (left).
[10] Appendix 2.3 gives more information about the history of Mexican art museums.

Mexican identity have a great impact on how people experience contemporary art today:

> Mexico has a particular context: a public art history well connected with the nation, and the tradition of painting, sculpture and monumental art. There is a tradition of what art is for Mexico and a lot of people visit contemporary art museums with these ideas (director_1, 2010).

This view evidences the issue of tradition against contemporaneity in museums. Educator_15 (2010) agrees that audiences with very traditional ideas about museums and art struggle to look at contemporary artworks and commonly respond: "this is not art". This is a common response in the experience with contemporary art, discussed in Section 1.1.

Human development theorist Denis Goulet (1983, 61) argues that the Mexican revolution was one of "the most influential models in all of Latin America" until the 1960s, and still is. However, the revolution's heritage has been constantly criticised for stopping the modernisation of Mexico. For Eder (2002, 28), one of the criticisms is that the revolutionary movement established "social differences and the coexistence of modernity and tradition". Goulet (1983, 49-51) agrees and distinguishes three main issues that consequently affect Mexican development: (a) the inherited national identity, (b) the active defense of Mexico's cultural, ethnic, and historical pluralism, based on its heritage, and (c) the remaining fidelity to social and political ideals of the revolution. These are clear factors that look back at principles from the past rather than a promising renewed future, which consequently will affect how people look at contemporary art.

Cultural policy has been very linked to the ideals of the revolution too. For Mexican Professor Bernardo Maribe (2003, 17-18), between 1970 and 1997 cultural policies remained politically and socially unchanged, focused on the country's national project that favoured the interests of a few and kept promoting indigenism (also Hurtado, 2010, 128). Professor Eduardo Nivón (2000, 204) argues that one of the reasons Mexican cultural policy has been linked to these ideals is the aim to control the cultural organisations. He explains that for decades the government was also responsible for 'high

culture', almost acting as a monopoly, and for proposing strategic actions to validate museums, education, visual arts, crafts, dance, and publishing (Nivón, 2000, 204). Curator Olivier Debroise (1997, 9) agrees with this idea of government control, but refers more to the centralisation of cultural production and promotion that created "extremely hierarchical and vertical" institutions, which are still observed in museum practice today.

The government had control over the arts production, as well as education. From 1960, SEP was responsible for editing and publishing the free textbooks that are distributed to all primary schools, and to create their programmes of study (Berenzon, 1993, 150). These textbooks have been a "fundamental tool to determine both the way of promoting history, as much as the vision of history given to shape generations" of students (Berenzon, 1993, 151), in agreement with Maribe (2003, 61). SEP introduced the School-Museum Programme in 1972 to actively engage culture with public education (De la Torre, 2008, 37), and currently it continues coordinating the school visits to Mexico City museums (SEP, 2005)[11]. SEP produces one booklet per academic year, distributed to schools, that contains a page information about each museum, including services offered, booking details, costs, times and capacity (SEP, 2010b); also available on a website. The booklet gives general information and does not inform about temporary exhibitions. Further, headmasters and teachers decide which museums they want to visit a year in advance, leaving no control to museums over these decisions or the arranged dates[12]. One of the problems with this is that the visit dates could be set when the museum's exhibitions are changing.

Educator_1 (2009) argues that the National Museum of Anthropology (MNA) receives the most visits, as it clearly refers to history in the school curriculum[13]; whereas contemporary art relate to experiences about life and other current topics not so evidently linked to formal education. SEP

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[11] SEP's department that coordinates the schools' visits to museums is the General Director's Office for Educational Diffusion (SEP, 2005).
[12] Another programme from SEP (2007b) has been the museum fairs in Mexico City, which encouraged teachers and schools to visit museums (every year between 2004 and 2007).
[13] See footnote 1, page 30.

introduced more recently the *Learning to See* programme (SEP, 1998), which consists of a booklet with 40 images of artworks from Mexican modern artists and of muralism, with the aim of encouraging students to observe and exchange ideas, but these do not include contemporary art. Furthermore, Nivón (2006, 51) argues that art education in schools lacks professionalisation and it is undervalued, being taught without a systematic teaching plan. Despite this SEP programmes demonstrate evidence that the government has had at least 90 years of involvement in arts and history, controlling the artwork production, curriculum contents, and schools access to museums.

The Mexican government has two main institutions that manage culture and public museums directly, and participate in the creation of policy, which are dependant on SEP (Figure 2.1). On one hand, the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) established in 1939, which has had a clear focus on indigenism based on the revolution ideals, and offered a nationalist and populist museum model (Balcells, 1998, 29-31). On the other hand, the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) since 1947, focused on integrating Mexican art to the international culture elite[14].

Debroise (1997, 9) explains that Mexico's museum system was copied from France at the beginning of the 19th century, incorporating academic power, the official salons, and "an unrestricted support to those artists serving the powerful", which has been evidenced throughout the muralism movement. However, in the 1950s civil servants educated in law, economics and political sciences occupied the position of museum directors (Debroise, 1997, 10). These professionals did not really have an apparent interest in the arts and possibly limited the potential of displaying the contemporary. INAH museums incorporated the views from the revolution and acted as secular temples that showed "the indigenous petrified past as the true one for the Mexicans" until the end of the 1980s, which effectively unified the Mexican identity (Morales, 2003, 42-45).

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[14] The majority of contemporary art museums considered in this research are under INBA's management.

Over the years, cultural policy has not yet acquired greater significance. On the contrary, recent Mexican governments have barely shown any interest in it. Carlos Salinas (President of Mexico from 1988 to 1994, affiliated to PRI) had an economic focus abroad, which promoted the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the US and Canada. The NAFTA agreement did not consider cultural policy in Mexico enough, leaving the country at a disadvantage due to the lack of protection to culture (Maribe, 2003, 67). For Debroise (1997, 12), the NAFTA agreement imposed a commercial level of competition to culture, which for example led to museum curatorial decisions in benefit of collectors' interests rather than the public. The Salinas' government had an urban and industrial focus, which kept promoting the idea of indigenism, sticking to 'old practices' (Eder, 2002, 27; Maribe, 2003, 57).

Through the NAFTA agreement, the Salinas' government initiated the Mexican process of globalisation, which provoked tensions with innovation and turned culture into an investment resource (Yúdice, no date). However, Yúdice (2002, 358) argues that the NAFTA agreement gave culture more institutional freedom from the government, demanding professionalisation of museum staff who now competed with international organisations, in order to attract private visitors. While being open to external influences and economic processes of integration, globalisation promoted technology development (Nivón, 2000, 204), increasingly used in arts and museums. Globalisation has promoted a step forwards away from traditional and outdated past values. García Canclini (2010, 22) agrees, for him globalisation has led to an art production more interested in interaction with current social life, less focused on the expired ideals of the revolution. However, Bénitez Dueñas (2006, 72) disagrees, and speaks about an existing counterculture throughout the 20th century that has allowed contemporary art to develop with no obstacles during the years of history-focused governments. As an example, the artists from the 'Ruptura' movement (breakaway) appeared in the 1950s and promoted

artwork disapproving "the official discussions about the Mexican nationalism" (Mello, 2002, 41)[15].

CONACULTA (the National Council for Culture and Arts) was created during the Salinas' government in 1988, a decentralised institutional body that promotes and disseminates culture and arts in Mexico and the world, with a budget authorised by SEP (DOF, 1988; Maribe, 2003, 57-58). One of its official tasks has been "to organise artistic education, public libraries and museums, artistic exhibitions, and other events of cultural interest" (DOF, 1988). CONACULTA became responsible for INAH and INBA. For Debroise (1997, 11), it "grouped the museums network and other cultural institutions under one management…[that adjusted] cultural budgets and gathered decision making to the top level, practically in hands of the President, with an emphasis on diplomacy". CONACULTA added another bureaucratic layer to the management of museums, previously administered by INBA (Nivón, 2006, 21) and INAH[16]. Furthermore, CONACULTA has been criticised for lacking a visionary project and by its elitist programmes and limited budget (Maribe, 2003, 60).

Ernesto Zedillo's government (President of Mexico from 1994 to 2000, affiliated to PRI) continued with Salinas' programmes without showing further direction for cultural policy (Carlos Blas Galindo quoted by Reforma, 1995). Both governments were distanced from cultural diplomacy (Gerardo Estrada interviewed by Hernández, 2001), which disagree with Debroise, and did not consider culture a priority (Maribe, 2003, 78). This lack of interest has also affected the budget assigned to culture and arts (Haw, 2003a; 2003b). More recently, under Felipe Calderón's government (President of Mexico from 2006 to 2012, affiliated to PAN), CONACULTA aimed to support both artists and craftsmen, and created the "21st Century Cultural Policy Project", focused on international promotion, and the digitalisation, document scanning and a

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[15] The Ruptura art movement did not aim to seclude from the artistic past, but only with those who had taken over the protagonist roles of Mexican arts production (Del Conde, 1994). This was a major art movement in Mexico.
[16] CONACULTA (2010c) coordinates ten public bodies in charge of the Mexican cultural administration, including INAH, INBA, and other institutions.

system of museums and archaeological sites evaluation proposal (Lara González, 2009, 49). The outcomes from this project have not been issued yet, with exception of CONACULTA's museum visitor studies published between 2008 and 2010 (CONACULTA, 2008; CONACULTA, 2009; Coordinación Nacional de Desarrollo Institucional, 2010). Nowadays, the current PRI government has focused on two main cultural issues: exploitation of the use of technology to its full potential and culture accessibility for a greater number of people (DOF, 2013). The latter recognises the importance of audience development. The political party views of PRD and PAN have converged their cultural policy views to PRI's proposals over the past decade (Tejera Gaona, 2009, 263).

Mexican critic and curator José Luis Barrios (2006, 4) believes cultural policy has lacked direction, both during the recent PRI and PAN governments, which sidelined the creation of a specific national cultural law that focused on the current Mexican needs. Nivón (2006, 15) agrees as CONACULTA's programmes lack of consistency and involvement of political agents, such as the Legislators, who had not yet created the laws in benefit of cultural development. Nivón (2006, 27)'s view summaries the effect of lack of interest in cultural policy, observed during the recent years of cultural management, which have been characterised by a lack of long-term planning, limited links to the academic community, reduced evaluation and accountability tools, and the unaltered work and salary conditions of cultural workers:

> The only way to respond to federal policy… is by strengthening the institutional environment and autonomy, creating a strong legislative and regulatory framework, designating capable managerial staff, expanding the advisory bodies, and increasing the financial ability (Nivón, 2006, 27).

Both Barrios and Nivón establish there is an imminent need for a Mexican law specific to culture. This should involve considerations about the cultural budget expenditure, especially when government funding cuts normally affect arts more than other sectors. In this matter, Nivón (2000, 203) argues that culture could be increasingly seen as an investment that offers potential social benefits, which can be promoted within community by: 1) channelling cultural capital to the communities; 2) increasing cultural influence through

participation; and 3) being related to culture as a positive activity[17]. These benefits can be used as an argument to raise and maintain funds for culture.

The Federal Government support to cultural policy has been evidenced as limited. Conversely, Mexico City has been more strategic in developing this type of policy. The capital city has had its own autonomous government since the beginning of the 90s (Mantecón and Nivón, 2004, 54), and also has an established cultural infrastructure and organisational configuration that provide support to the local museums. Although the city has recently claimed to have the largest number of museums in the world (Bolaños Sánchez, 2006)[18], it occupied the 7th place in 2009 (Saur, 2009)[19]. Mexico City has 149 museums (over 12% of the total in the country, CONACULTA, 2013)[20].

The cultural importance of the capital city goes beyond its museums, as for Ana Rosas Mantecón and Eduardo Nivón (2004, 52) its historical centre has the largest number of historic monuments both in Mexico and Latin America. Mexico City is also important in terms of size and economic impact. Its metropolitan area includes 16 Delegations, plus 58 municipalities from its neighbouring States: the State of Mexico and Hidalgo. The city holds the greatest concentration of industry, economy and commerce in the country (Secretaría de Cultura de la Ciudad de México, 2004, 63). Mexico City also centralises policy formation and decision-making. For Professor Héctor Tejera Gaona (2009, 277), political relationships take place centrally in the city, but they are structured vertically operating in a pyramidal form, which also reflect on the museum's management structure previously discussed by Debroise.

One of the problems that affects culture in Mexico City is access to cultural activities due to the length of travelling time within the city, the financial crisis,

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[17] These social benefits will not be discussed further in the thesis, as the focus is on learning dialogue.
[18] This claim was made by the national newspaper *La Jornada* and the Chief of Government of Mexico City in 2006. Since then, many organisations have used this claim to promote Mexican tourism (Burns, 2012; Lufthansa, 2012; Wikipedia, 2012).
[19] See Appendix 2.1.
[20] Mexico has registered 1,204 museums in 2013. This total is comparable to European countries like France with 1,173 museums registered in 2003, and Spain with 1,455 in 2008 (EGMUS, 2009).

and the increase of crime; which have led people to choose to spend more time at home (Nivón, 2000, 201). Another problem comes from the population and immigration growth, which produces inequality leading people to spend the majority of their time working to cover their basic needs (Secretaría de Cultura de la Ciudad de México, 2004, 100-101). Inequality reinforces the contrast between the popular classes and the elite, seen both in terms of income and education (García Canclini, 2004, 23), which affect people's interaction with art too. The issue of inequality is also observed at the Federal Government, as CONACULTA has often been criticised by focusing on selected groups, sporadically creating projects for the working class (Maribe, 2003, 78). This problem replicates with contemporary art, which is usually associated with the well educated and the elite (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991, 113; director_1, 2010). In this matter, Yúdice (2002, 381) argues that art institutions should work with non-traditional audiences offering them a less penalised institutional experience, without subordinating their capacity of action when this affects the promotion of art's progress (See Chapter 3).

Over the years, the city has undertaken an urban development that impacts on the cultural infrastructure, including the renovation of Chapultepec in the 1960s and the University Cultural Centre of UNAM in the 1970s; the Federal Government largely supported both projects (Mantecón and Nivón, 2004, 84). For Mantecón and Nivón (2004, 54), in the 1990s there was also a growth of "citizen participation experiences" such as cultural activities and festivals, which operated with a limited cultural infrastructure at the time. This resulted in the private sector intervention, creating the Trusteeship of the Historical Centre to develop an annual international arts festival (Mantecón and Nivón, 2004, 54).

Mexico City is one of the few cities in the country that has reflected more seriously about developing cultural policy. The first Government of Mexico City, led by the PRD, raised the question about cultural policy in the capital city in 1997, which was not yet developed by the Federal Government (Nivón, 2000, 195). The Institute of Culture of Mexico City emerged from this reflection in 1998, which aimed to disseminate, promote and preserve culture

in the city (Mantecón and Nivón, 2004, 55); also establishing the Law of Cultural Promotion in 2004 (Secretaría de Cultura de la Ciudad de México, 2004, 59). One of the outcomes of this law is that it designates a minimum of 2% of the city's budget expenditure to culture –which does not happen in the Federal Government- and demands issuing a plan for promotion and development of cultural policy every year (Haw, 2002). This institute's named has changed today to the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Mexico City (since 2003). The cultural management in Mexico City differs from the Federal Government, which operates more independently through a council instead of a ministry. However, it has limited action as it only manages a few number of museums in comparison to CONACULTA.

One of the focuses of cultural policy in Mexico City has been to continue the promotion of citizen participation, and more recently to directly "impact on the wellbeing and economic life of the city" (Mantecón and Nivón, 2004, 84). In theory, democracy relates to citizenship participation in the political processes and access to the State's resources and their distribution, which involve the citizens' increased intervention and control over these (Tejera Gaona, 2004, 182). In this sense, democracy should enable reforms' adjustment and redirect policy to include and satisfy the citizens' needs and expectations (Tejera Gaona, 2004, 184). In a way, this is what museums should consider when learning about their audiences' interests and needs: participation that impacts on the direction of future practice. Although this sounds positive, in reality citizenship participation in culture and museums does not necessarily affect how the resources, reforms, policy, or even the content selection for future exhibitions are managed[21].

Yúdice (2002, 203) argues that policies of representation are able to transform institutions through the inclusion of citizens. He gives the example of public art programmes that act as "catalysts of action" targeting the community. Yúdice suggests that these do not necessarily eliminate any current social problems within the community. But he does not specify how art

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[21] The topic of arts democracy is out of the scope of this research.

programmes actually change institutions. Mexican social anthropologist Lourdes Arizpe (2004, 365) agrees that citizenship participation should involve various agents in the decision-making process of protecting the archaeological and cultural heritage specifically. According to Nivón (2006, 15) participation can foster economic and social development. Furthermore, education theorist Paulo Freire (1992, 27) relates participation to learning, as he suggests having a voice and the right of citizenship promote a progressive education practice. Hence, the practice of citizenship involves diversified stakeholders' inclusion, participation and dialogical strategies that can potentially influence policy making. Some of these factors are observed in practice in the case study, but have not to date impacted policy and the museum work (see Chapter 5).

2.2. Education Policy in the Institutional Management Structure

The Mexican cultural management infrastructure is formed by four groups, according to José Luis Paredes Pacho (2008, 143-145), director of University Museum of Chopo. The first two are: the 'official circuit' and the private sector. The first one comprises museums, galleries, and venues managed by the government, and operated in a vertical hierarchy (in agreement with Debroise, 1997, 9). The official circuit of Mexican arts is managed by two institutions mainly: UNAM (discussed in detail in Chapter 3), and INBA (Figure 2.1). There are exceptions of public museums that respond to other organisations such as the Museum of Mexico City (MCM), which receives its budget from the Government of Mexico City. For Paredes Pacho (2008, 144), the private sector includes cultural and entertainment industries, for example recording studios, television companies, magazines, and the radio, as well as museums. The private infrastructure leans towards horizontal management and maximisation of revenue, which may limit support for emerging artists that have riskier careers when compared to established artists.

Figure 2.1.
Federal Government Organisational Chart Focused on Museums
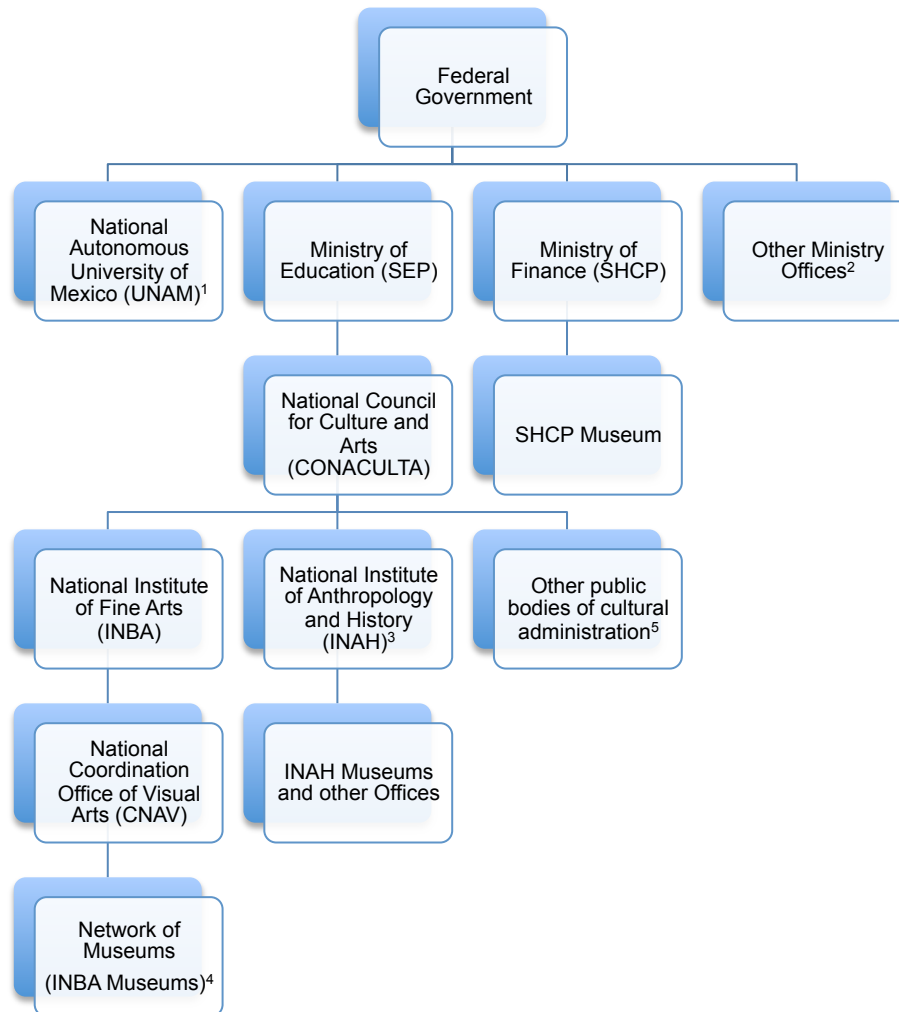
[1] The Federal Government finances UNAM, but this institution has an autonomous management (See Figure 3.1).
[2] The Federal Government manages 18 Ministry Offices besides Education and Finance (Presidencia de la República, 2011).
[3] Since 2000, INAH has had an independent office that supports museums' education (Martín Medrano, 2009; Vallejo, 2002b; Vallejo et al, 2003).
[4] The Network of Museums includes 18 fine arts museums (INBA, 2013); 7 of these display contemporary art exhibitions and are part of this research's fieldwork (Appendix 2.4).
[5] These offices manage other aspects of culture, such as libraries, film, music, educational media, cultural centres, international affairs (CONACULTA, 2010c).

Source: Presidencia de la República (2011), INBA (2010; 2013), CONACULTA (2010c).

The Mexican public museums' management structure is ruled by the Federal Government, led by the President who governs for a period of 6 years. This creates continuous changes of staff in the overall public administration and limits the production and delivery of long-term projects within all public bodies.

The lack of continuity also affects learning in the organisation, but it is inevitable:

> … departures and arrivals are not just discontinuities. People are replaced; new recruits are progressively absorbed into the community as they start contributing to its practice. There is a stake in continuity –at the level of the institution, and at the level of community of practice. (Wenger, 1998, 94)

There is a potential loss of knowledge in an organisation due to rotation of staff, when records of practice are not kept (Argyris and Schön, 1996, 12; Wenger, 1998, 94). This is an issue the Mexican government, cultural institutions and museums have to deal with every 6 years. With each new government, CONACULTA creates a work plan: the *National Culture Plan.* During the period 2001-2006, CONACULTA (2001, 40) referred to education as a means to achieve harmonic development of a person's skills[22]; and aimed for the acquisition, transmission and promotion of culture; and to guarantee the continuity, excellence and dissemination of culture. CONACULTA's focus on education was mainly linked to children and schools, with no mention to museums (CONACULTA, 2001, 41; SEP, 2005; 2010b). INBA also recognises the importance of developing individual skills focused more specifically on informal education within its aims:

> To promote, strengthen, and spread arts education in the country… so that art becomes an integral part of the Mexicans' education, strengthens critical thinking and creative thought, new communication and interpretation skills, and the development of multiple intelligences (INBA, 2009b)

This view moves towards a learner-centred approach promoting arts critical thought and interpretation[23]. On the other hand, INAH's understanding of education in anthropology and history museums goes beyond, discussed as a continuous process of concepts, purposes and actions, which develop skills, knowledge, values and the public feedback (Vallejo, 2002b, 12; Section 3.3). Interestingly, INAH acknowledges audiences' responses, which can potentially impact on museum practice. CONACULTA's (2001, 40-41) work plan aimed to strengthen the link between the education and cultural sectors,

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[22] These skills relate to the individual's knowledge linked to Robinson's (1982) view of art education, and also that of Taylor (2006a; 2008a).

[23] The study of Gardner's multiple intelligences theory is out of the scope of this research, as the focus is not a study of personal and skills development of audiences. INBA's work activities report does not show explicit references to this theory or strategic plans to develop multiple intelligences.

recognising a current need for combined policies and strategies. As a result it conceived and implemented the education reform policy with SEP, in which arts become an integral part of the school curriculum[24]. However, in practice, a public servant interviewed in this research, involved in the application of these reforms, explained that there is not enough emphasis on how museums can support art education (government_2, 2009), only focusing on schools.

INBA delegates the museums' management to the National Coordination Office of Visual Arts (CNAV) (Figure 2.1), which currently is responsible for the development of museums, the management of artistic heritage, and aims to establish cultural policy in benefit of Mexican visual arts (INBA, 2013). There is no information published in relation to CNAV's direct involvement in policy making. However, INBA's *Work Plan 2007-2012* has been interested in developing strong policy for the museums' artistic creation, research and promotion (INBA, 2007, 29-30). For example, INBA aimed to create a Network of Museums that promotes connections between these organisations and proposed a broad list of 'specific strategies' to accomplish this (INBA, 2007, 30-31).

The Network of Museums has been put into practice, including 18 museums around the country that promote and disseminate 20th century visual arts (INBA, 2013), including contemporary art. Although this is a national network, 17 of its museums are located in Mexico City, which demonstrates how centralised the cultural administration is. The Government of Mexico City does not have much input in their management. INBA (2010) states that the network's aim is to enable the museums to improve their services and to define common strategies. No further outcomes or analysis have been publicly shared by INBA today in terms of evaluating the museum links and communication experiences.

CONACULTA's and INBA's policies and strategic planning are interested in the link between education, museums, professionals, and schools. However,

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[24] This policy includes the *Reform of Secondary Education* in 2006 (SEP, 2006) and the *Reform of Basic Education* in 2009 (SEP, 2011).

there is a lack of evidence and published materials that confirm the institutional actions, achieved targets, and outcomes, available for public access and reference[25]. In practice, director_1 (2010) argues one of INBA's major problems is that it does not encourage a specific mission, evaluation strategy, goals or criteria that justify why each museum exists, which reflects a lack of committed government plan. Regarding this matter, curator Ery Cámara established in an interview that public museums from INBA require more professionalisation opportunities and a policy that specifies the role of each museum clearly (Hernández, 2002). Journalist María Eugenia Sevilla (2001) agrees that there are no regulations, laws or cultural policy that apply specifically to museums in Mexico. There is need for a public information centre that gathers data and studies about Mexico City (Sevilla, 2001). This lack of specific policy for museums seems to be a recurrent issue in Mexico.

There is limited evidence of how art institutions learn from their audiences. INBA asks the museums to fill in audience survey formats, but fails to follow up on these reports: "INBA is very strict about asking how much budget we need and what we want to do with it, but never asks for final results. Final outcomes are not important to them" (educator_13, 2009). Without evaluating learning outcomes and programmes, either internally or institutionally, it is very difficult to redirect and impact on future museum practice (See Appendix 2.5).

INBA's *Work Plan* shows an interest in knowing about audiences in theory, discussed through a well designed and administered "feedback system of opinions and demands from current and potential audiences" (INBA, 2007, 42). As a result, in 2008 and 2009 CONACULTA published the outcomes of two audience surveys undertaken at INAH, INBA and privately managed museums[26]. Their aim was to understand audiences' decisions to visit, their

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[25] The issue of lack of documentation is replicated on education departments in contemporary art museums (See Section 2.3).

[26] The 2008 survey included 400 people at 11 museums in Mexico City (CONACULTA, 2008). The following one in 2009 added 4 museums, bringing the total to 15, two of these were located outside the city (CONACULTA, 2009). These studies have been sporadic rather than systematic and regular. There was also a visitor study undertaken at some INAH museums in 2010 (Coordinación Nacional de Desarrollo Institucional, 2010).

residence and socio-demographic characteristics (CONACULTA, 2008, 7). The findings are merely quantitative, and do not say much about the museum learning experience. However, this attempt potentially made participant audiences feel their opinions are valued, and opens up an interest to learn about visitors. In this sense, for museum experience designer Nina Simon (2010, 195) the effect of participation on an institution's value and mission, where staff are able to express the participants' learning value, can be reviewed and rethought as to whether it influences organisational learning, in a similar way to citizenship participation (discussed in Section 1.1). CONACULTA's and INBA's visitor studies do not seem to have achieved this yet.

Foundation/Collection Jumex (Jumex) [27] is a private contemporary organisation that manages an art gallery and a museum recently opened in November 2013 in Mexico City (Fundación/Colección Jumex, 2013), which represents a minority in comparison to the number of public art museums. Jumex is important because it has "the largest collection of contemporary art in Latin America", valued at $80 million USD (Viveros-Fauné, 2014, 84). It is funded by Grupo Jumex, a private company that produces juice and beverages. Jumex's mission is "to promote the production, conservation, research, examination, construction of meaning, communication and exhibition of contemporary art produced both in Mexico and abroad" (Fundación/Colección Jumex, 2011). This view links to audiences and learning. Jumex (Fundación/Colección Jumex, 2011) seeks challenges and reinvention, concurring with art historian Jorge Alberto Manrique (1993, 23) that the museum is an organisation in flux.

Reinvention at Jumex relates to multiple interpretations, where both understanding and potential learning are unpredictable. In this matter, for Barnard (2001, 73), the artwork always possesses something "indeterminate and uncommunicative". While having a vague element the artwork opens up to multiple meanings. Jumex constantly reinterprets its collection through

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[27] This organisation has a major interest in contemporary art. Hence other private organisational structures may vary according to their own interests.

exhibition projects, curated in-house or externally, inviting curators of international repute, constantly reinventing itself. In comparison, INBA has not referred to the issue of multiple interpretations, which may indicate unidirectional approaches in museums.

Figure 2.2.
Fundación/Colección Jumex Organisational Chart
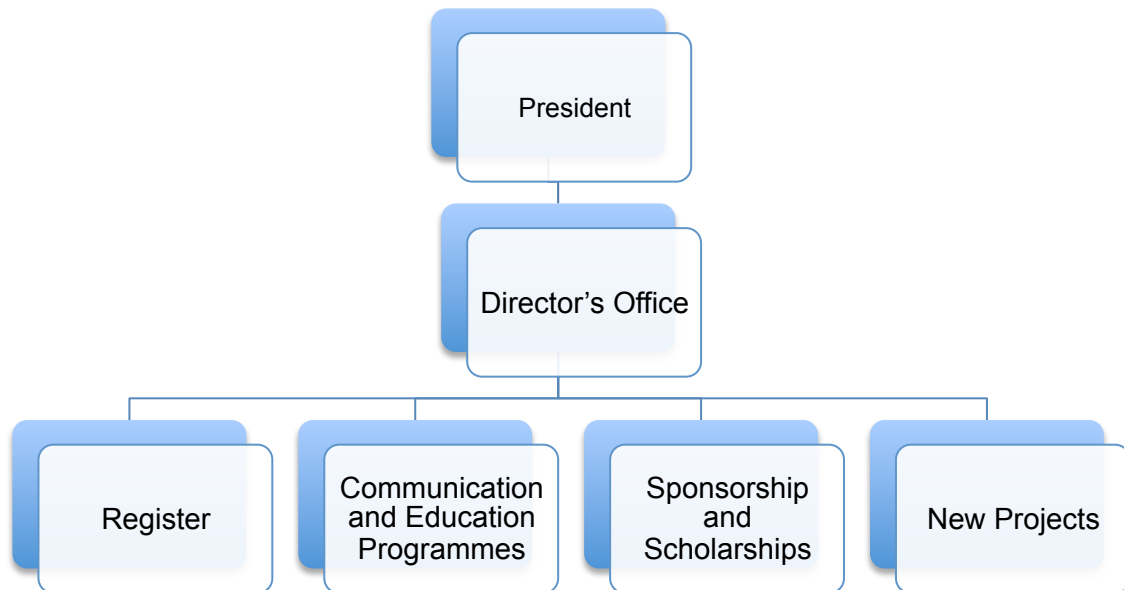
Source: Fundación/Colección Jumex (2011) and Questionnaire to Education Services Department (2009)

Figure 2.2 was produced with data from 2009 and 2011. This organisation chart is potentially outdated due to changes of direction and infrastructure within the organisation including the recent opening of Museo Jumex (Fundación/Colección Jumex, 2013). Although there is a staff directory available on the website, further research is needed to understand the hierarchy of management, because Jumex's organigram is not publicly accessible due to its private administrative nature. Nevertheless, based on this research's data, Jumex has a more levelled management structure, in agreement with Paredes Pacho. Education is on the third level of hierarchy, which facilitates its operation in comparison with public museums that deal with reporting to other institutions before even referring to learning explicitly in their organisational chart (Figure 2.3). This research does not have further

information about whether this hierarchy can be generalised to other private museums.

Jumex (Fundación/Colección Jumex, 2011) recognises "patronage and the act of collecting" as its strengths, and supports other organisations, including public museums, to deliver contemporary art exhibitions extensively. It also creates collaborative projects, artwork commissions, and supports young emerging artists. Jumex's education department particularly aims to focus on projects related to the organisation's collection and exhibition programme, to provoke understanding, interpretation, discussions and significant experiences associated with contemporary art (Fundación/Colección Jumex, 2011). The education department organised activities such as the conversation programme at MACO Zone, an annual art fair in Mexico City (Arteven, 2012), where professionals were invited to talk about contemporary art. There is not enough evidence to evaluate if this format of programming encourages dialogue effectively. However, an electronic comment posted during a public conversation with art critics and artists held after the Museo Jumex's opening asked:

> Why does contemporary art choose to privilege kitsch, frivolousness, and the banal during a time that demands profound answers with respect to interiority, spirituality, and poesis? (quoted by Viveros-Fauné, 2014, 84)

According to writer Christian Viveros-Fauné (2014, 84), this comment puzzled the panel's speakers. Interestingly this reflects a strong critique to contemporary art, which is also a common reaction to it today. This department creates education and academic programmes to analyse and reflect on contemporary art history and theory, targeting different audiences including the employees of the company (educator_9, 2009). There are no further policy documents publicly accessible, in relation to Jumex's work plans or objectives.

INBA and Jumex refer to promoting critical thought in their policies, objectives and action plans, but their practical strategies to achieve and evaluate this have not been published. Jumex relate experiences to learning, whereas INBA only refers to gaining interpretation skills and promoting school

education. INBA speaks more generally about learning in its objectives and policy, and barely about dialogue, perhaps because the institution manages 16 art museums, whereas Jumex has its own direct management that facilitates the targeting of and dealing with issues more directly. Jumex also has a budget for acquisitions that facilitates the display of current art.

While referring to policy, INBA aims are more general, potentially to be adapted to each museum's needs. CONACULTA's plans and objectives are even broader than INBA's, mainly focused on the promotion and dissemination of culture and arts in Mexico and abroad. Although INBA has attempted to gain feedback from audiences, in practice this has only been done quantitatively. Neither INBA nor Jumex acknowledge audiences as stakeholders in their policy and strategic objectives, nor do these institutions discuss specific actions about how they share their knowledge of audiences.

The public institutions' budget expenditure is approved a year in advance by the Chamber of Deputies, and distributed by the Ministry of Finance (SHCP). After INBA receives its budget through SEP and CONACULTA, it allocates the funding to the museums through the CNAV, involving many layers of bureaucracy. Every Mexican government institution is responsible for returning any overbudgeted income to the SHCP (The Chamber of Deputies, 2009, 69). This issue disincentives INBA museums to make any profit, as they do not have any control over income earned from entrance fees, shop sales or the café. On the other hand, Jumex does not advertise its overall expenditure. More detailed data about funding in contemporary art museums is discussed further in Appendix 2.2.

2.3. Education Departments in Contemporary Art Museums

According to Manrique (1993, 15), in Mexico education is a government service offered to the public, where museums are places for everyone to study and learn. Mexican museums have traditionally had an education and social role (Vallejo, 2002b, 10), with the first education department established in 1952, which organised guided tours for primary and secondary

schools led by history teachers. During this time and until 1968, education was at the same level of hierarchy as the museum's publication and research departments (Vallejo, 2003, 77).

Nowadays, students visit the museums as part of their school assignments. Unfortunately, in many cases their teachers do not explain to them the importance of museums for appreciating culture and heritage (Pérez, 2004). Hence, students just copy the labels' information without giving much consideration to the aesthetic and cultural value of the exhibitions. At the same time, the visitor status is changing in museums leading to education strategies being increasingly focused on communication, active participation and dialogue with the collections (Martínez, 2004, 12)[28].

INAH has been extremely innovative promoting museum learning. It created the National Programme of Education Services aiming to understand the current conditions of education in anthropology and history museums, which has led to further reflection over the practice and role of education (Vallejo et al, 2003, 1). This department turned into the National Programme of Educational Communication (PNCE) in 2000, which establishes education as shared knowledge; and communication as dialogue, reflection and interpretation (Vallejo, 2002b, 11-12; Vallejo et al, 2003, 1). The programme aims to plan, design, develop and undertake educational-communication strategies in collaboration with other departments at INAH museums (PNCE, 2003, 1). For Diego Martín Medrano (2009, 15), this national programme has aimed to strengthen cultural identity and historical memory within education, using more efficient processes of communication in museums. Another purpose of the programme is "to create a manual with guidelines, strategies and materials for educators and volunteers" and to develop visitor studies to understand more about their needs and interests (Vallejo, 2002b, 16-17). The outcomes of this programme are out of the scope of this research. However, PNCE demonstrates INAH museums as a potential example of good practice,

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[28] These are all part of learning dialogue, as it will be discussed from Chapter 4 onwards.

reflecting on and moving towards learning dialogue in their educational approach. Conversely, art museums have failed in this task:

> The current situation, in a few words, is of dangerous poverty of resources, collections, professionals and professionalism, quality courses and degrees. The exhibitions and events, education, and publishing programmes, are inconsistent due to each museum's inability to exercise their own budget and to create their own plans… instead of being subjected to random bureaucratic orders. Because of these [reasons art] museums are insufficiently utilised (Schmilchuck, 2004).

All these issues of lack of resources and professionalism opportunities will also have an effect in education practice. Schmilchuck (2004) further argues that educators rarely incide in the museum discourse, nor work directly with researchers and curators. For her, staff overwork in museums, despite there being insufficient support and excessive institutional hierarchies, with budgets that arrive months later and are difficult to negotiate. All these issues demonstrate a complex work situation in general art museum practice. This view agrees with perspectives from contemporary art professionals interviewed during this research (fieldwork interviews, 2009-2010).

The art museums contemplated during the fieldwork research have collections that vary from modern to contemporary art, and in some cases even include the architecture (see Appendix 2.4). Public museums normally do not have funds to purchase new works, and therefore only acquire them either through donations, or support from the Friends of the Museum or Board of Trustees, contrarily to Jumex. INBA's contemporary art museums that do not hold a collection have significant archives of resources, which include printed and electronic materials that document contemporary art projects, artists and exhibitions which they have hosted (interviews with educators, 2009). For Schmilchuck (2004), the decision to support projects generally comes from government servants rather than experts (in agreement with Debroise): "the museum direction is impossible, [when dealing with] a distressing management of resources" (Schmilchuck, 2004).

Contemporary art museums in Mexico City are commonly seen as spaces for experimentation using unconventional materials and media (educator_14, 2009; Stallabrass, 2004, 25). Education departments offer tools to support

understanding and a more effective and direct approach to experience the artwork (curator_5, 2010). Five out of nine directors interviewed see learning as a tool that complement and give access to contemporary art topics and discourses. However, some staff members do not like to use the term 'education', as they feel it closely relates to schools:

> We are not interested in educating but in opening up new perspectives, making audiences leave with more questions, and stimulating their curiosity (director_8, 2010).

> The museum's aim is not to educate but to exhibit, share, and create experiences. We are not a school where you learn what is and is not contemporary art, because not even the people in the art scene know this (curator_8, 2010).

Museum professionals have differing ideas about learning, only concurring that it is linked to experiences, as seen by curator_8, who argues that there is no certainty about what contemporary art is (in agreement with Barnard, 2001, 73). But this could also imply more freedom to experience and interpret contemporary art. Academic_2 (2009) agrees, saying that not even specialists understand contemporary art, despite that the artworks may have an impact on people. These views reveal an issue of inequality in practice from an elite with specialist knowledge and audiences considered without knowledge about contemporary art. MuAC staff will refer to a similar issue in Section 3.2. Nevertheless, education in public museums is significant, as illustrated in the hierarchy of management structure:

Figure 2.3[29]
Public Museums' Organisational Chart*
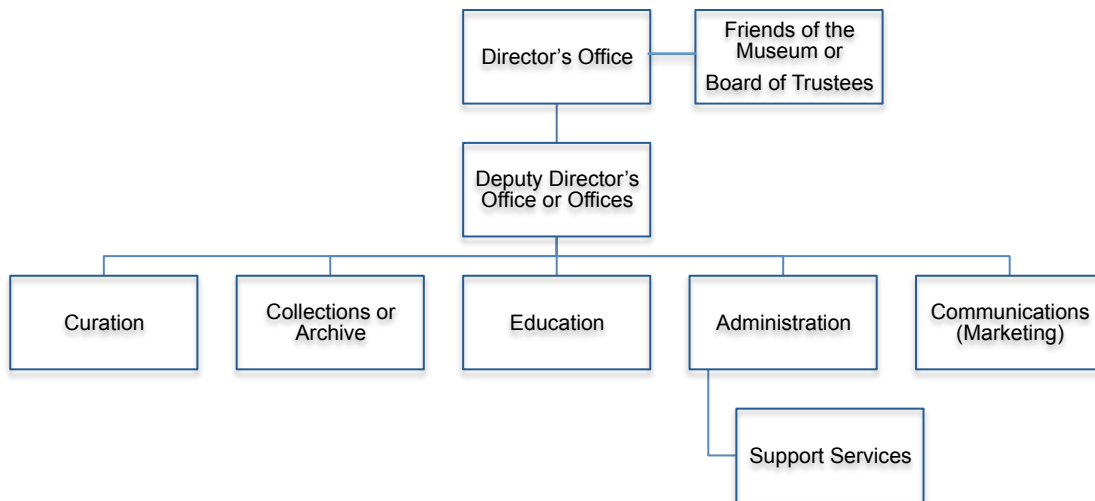
Source: *Questionnaire to Education Departments* (2009-2010) and Interviews with museum educators (2009) (Appendixes 1.2 and 1.3).
*Support Services include front of house, guards, shop, cloakroom and the café when applicable.

This organisational structure applies to the majority of INBA museums, with some variations, for example, the Museum of Modern Art (MAM) has 3 Deputy Director's Offices instead of one (educator_10, 2009). Figure 2.3 differs from the private museum's organisational structure (Figure 2.2), as the education department at Jumex works directly with the Director's Office, as does the Museum of Mexico City (MCM) (Carrión, 2010; educator_14, 2009). In some cases a curator operates the Deputy Director's Office, as at the Alameda Art Laboratory (LAA) (González, 2010), or even manages the Director's Office[30], where power structures will be more likely to be evident and may cause unbalanced relationships between curators and educators, which can also reflect in the funding designated to the education departments.

Most of INBA's contemporary art museums name their learning areas Education Services, which are responsible to establish links between the

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[29] Figure 2.3 summarises the structure of the public museums analysed in this study. The actual organigram may vary according to each museum. Some museums have an archive or instead of a collection have a separated Museography Department (Design), working horizontally at the third level of hierarchy.
[30] Between 2009-2012, MAM, SAPS, ACSI; MTAC and MACG (until 2011); and Jumex (from 2012) had curators in the role of museum directors. LAA and Ex Teresa had visual artists acting as directors (Fieldwork interviews, 2010; Esquivel, 2012).

collection and visitors (Busquets, 2006, 13). While using the term 'service', museums recognise they are able to assist audiences and provide them with education opportunities (Manrique, 1993, 15). Some museums adequate this department's name to their aims and needs. For example, Jumex's Education Programmes department offers more structured events, which aim to have a long-term impact, or Carrillo Gil Art Museum (MACG)'s Open Studio, which shows a link to the process of creation. Education departments are not named learning explicitly, possibly because they want to show that they provide value to audiences and the museum itself more formally, whereas learning is seen as an informal approach to education (Brighton, 1996, 15).

The educators interviewed argued that contemporary art museums generally struggle to create exhibitions with their allocated budget. Educator_17 (2009) explained that because contemporary art exhibitions are expensive, the budget for learning becomes reduced. Furthermore, for educator_1 (2009), the education department's budget suffers because museums in Mexico are still considered to be exhibition and contemplation spaces, rather than for learning (also Medina, 1993, 66-69). These perspectives move away from CONACULTA's and INBA's education targets in practice (Section 2.2), due to the lack of financial support. However, for consultant_2, education budgets should be more balanced:

> In order to make the museum more open, offer more options, and have more spaces for audiences, we need to be more balanced. If we spend 20 million pesos on an exhibition, let's also do something for audiences' interaction. We need to take some distance from the close-minded academia, and have professionals in the museum who advocate for audiences (consultant_2, 2009).

Exhibitions are essential to display contemporary artworks and require significant budgets to be delivered. However, educators should aim to have further financial relevance that enables them to deliver more engaging activities and programmes (McLean, 1999, 89), especially because curators do not always have a target audience in mind in comparison to educators who are closer to visitors. In this matter, educator_19 (2010) suggests that there is a lack of direction, target, vocation and interest in audiences from the majority of the staff, "with the exception of the director in this museum". This view

reinforces that educators need more support beyond their finances, in agreement with Schmilchuck (2004).

In terms of working as a team, educator_15 (2010) argues that other departments in the museum know about the work of education, but in the end "exhibitions are defined by curators and directors, the curatorial and research areas work together." This demonstrates that there are no guarantees to work in collaboration, share practice and learn in the entire museum. Educator_15's view agrees that education is not an area considered during exhibition choice, planning and content. The educator is usually incorporated in the later stages, but becomes responsible for attracting and engaging audiences after the opening (consultant_3, 2009).

The Curatorial and Education Departments are shown at the same level of hierarchy in Figure 2.3. However, evidence from fieldwork interviews demonstrates that in practice the relationship with educators is rather unbalanced. Consultant_2 (2009) argues there is a hierarchical problem of Mexican art museums, which "lack a contemporary organisational scheme, as it is dictatorial, lacking respect; it is vertical". For Hilde Hein (2000, 122), educators act as mediators between curators and audiences due to the museums' communication gap. Mexican educators usually work directly with audiences during programmes and activities, so they have learning potential from their museum experiences. For example, educators can learn from the current dialogue that takes place with audiences, guides and mediators, who often depend on the education department (fieldwork interviews, 2009-2010).

Educators' respondents argued that in practice they work with other departments in the museum, particularly curation[31], but they did not specify the nature of these relationships. Only a few of the educators provided more detail about their work with other areas, such as educator_3 (2009), who exchanges information and, in some cases, shares projects with other departments in the museum. Educator_11 and educator_13 (2009) also argue

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[31] 40% of educators interviewed (8 of 20) state that they work with curators (fieldwork interviews, 2009-2010).

that they work closely with curators and other staff members involved in the planning stages of the museum's programming. Educator_17 (2010) explains that there is great communication between all areas in the museum, where every curatorial decision is shared with the education department. Although this sounds very positive, but communicating decisions and information, and working closely with curators does not mean that professional roles and relationships are balanced, or that an actual dialogue takes place (see Section 5.2).

In this matter, former curator Philip Wright (1989, 135) suggests "the curator needs to learn how to share control with those responsible for interpretation and education". Although there is the potential for professional learning dialogue, this research does not have enough evidence to prove how responsive and participatory this dialogue between educators and curators actually is. H. Hein (2000, 123) argues that the educators' role and participation in the museum's operation, planning and delivery of exhibitions and programmes, will benefit from them being more equal in relation to other members of staff, and explains educators now have a greater presence within the museum structure; which is what some Mexican educators, consultants and director_8 (2010), are arguing for within their interviews:

> We get logistics and production support from the museum, but not everyone in the staff believes in this… [Learning projects] not only imply attending the event, but to be conscious about what is happening and being provoked by the public in there… Who are they? What did they say? ... What did they take from the experience? (educator_18, 2010)

Clearly, not all staff members are able to attend every learning activity offered, but the knowledge gained from those experiences, or at least the main findings from them, can be shared between the staff to potentially learn about audiences. However, before relationships with audiences balance, the staff should aim to create coequal professional interactions within the museum, which consider the educator as an equal partner with curators and other staff members. The director of the *Enquire* programme[32] Barbara Taylor (2006a, 11) agrees and speaks about this issue in the UK. She argues that the

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[32] Engage coordinated this programme, as a project to promote learning in contemporary art galleries and museums in the UK, involving young people, artists and teachers.

educator's role and "the skills required to develop partnerships should be recognised and supported in terms of status, remuneration and training." Ultimately, the production of contemporary art museum experiences should involve all staff members:

> The cleaner is also part of the audience. How do you make him or her love art? It should not be from top to bottom, but working together. It is more likely that the audience will talk to a security guard than to a curator (educator_1, 2009)

> We want to give a museum experience to everyone including our own staff, in terms of how to protect and have information of an artwork (curator_2, 2010)

Curator_2 only refers to art and does not mention potential interactions with audiences. Nevertheless, these statements demonstrate that everyone in the organisation need to be considered as equal partners within the museum, which can be promoted through a professional dialogue. This way shared practices and learning will be more likely to occur. None of the contemporary art museum professionals interviewed in this research mentioned dialogue explicitly, as a form of communicating ideas and sharing knowledge about audiences internally. Hooper-Greenhill (1996) agrees that evaluation of shared practice can create more professionally inclusive organisations:

> There may be conflicting agendas within the museum –attendants, curators, educators and shop staff may all see the visit from a different point of view. The evaluation process can help identify the different agendas that exist and help to ensure that they do not conflict. This is why it is useful to involve everyone in the process. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1996, 9)

Although this perspective refers to the museum visit only, it demonstrates that evaluation is useful to reconcile the learning programmes' aims and work targets, as well as internal practices, which can be promoted within staff by using tools such as professional dialogue. Furthermore, sharing practice is a way of learning in practice, as it will be demonstrated in later chapters. Etienne Wenger (1998, 87) agrees that learning within the organisation implies sharing knowledge internally. Nevertheless, evaluation in Mexican museums is seen as a new practice (Mantecón and Schmilchuck, 2006, 5):

> We do not have a methodology to follow up on exhibitions with a high impact. Audience members have not reached out to tell us how their lives changed either (director_7, 2010)

Both visitor studies and the possibilities that allow audiences to express themselves in museums are limited (Dersdepanian, 1998, 11-13). Although evaluation is a tool to learn from audiences, the lack of studies in Mexican museum practice replicates from the government institutional limited interest in evaluating the quality of museum experiences discussed in Section 2.1[33].

The curator-educator relationship also unveils the issue of power. Michel Foucault speaks about power associated to the role of the intellectual, such as the curator, art historian[34] or academic in the museum; who influence the artwork, by using a language "that had to be interpreted" (Foucault, 1972, 42). This perspective has not changed much today with contemporary art, as curators' discourses use a "technical, verbose, and eminently curatorial" voice (Roberts, 2004, 217), which does not necessarily consider audiences (director_5, page 66), or appeal to them. Furthermore,

> The texture and tone of the curator's voice, the voices it welcomes or excludes, and the shape of the conversation it sets in motion are essential to the texture and perception of contemporary art (O'Neill and Wilson, 2009)

The language used by curators clearly influences the experience, and further understanding of contemporary art in museums. Claire Robins (2005, 150) also speaks about the curator's role inciting both power relationships and meanings. Display decisions in contemporary art also reveal that "the framing power of the museum is such that even the most mundane, mass-reproduced, or ephemeral of things can be transformed into a museum object" (Henning, 2006, 69). Nowadays the museum environment on its own frames contemporary art's "contents with significance" (Henning, 2006, 7). Examples are installations or performance works which are not framed in the traditional way (plinths, glass cases or picture frames), where the museum space becomes their frame[35], such as in Image 1.2 (page 3).

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[33] See Appendix 2.5 for more details about evaluation in Mexican contemporary art museums.
[34] Art historians operate as curators globally (O'Neill and Wilson, 2009). In the case of Mexico, educator_9 (2009) agrees.
[35] This concurs with H. Hein, as anything on display can be seen as art, without necessarily being questioned.

Robins (2005, 150) argues that curators are responsible to look after the contents of the gallery, or the museum, and potentially the "well-being of visitors". However, curators do not necessarily consider audiences' needs and opinions. Curatorial practice then can be problematic when curators show more interest in presenting to their colleagues rather than to audiences (consultant_2, 2009; consultant_3, 2009), as this creates a discourse and language which is more academic, complex, and difficult to relate to (G. Hein, 1991; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 135; Ravelli, 2006, 72). For Academic Louise Ravelli (2006, 3), language should be explicit, reflexive, and effective, in order to achieve both the museums' and audiences' aims; characteristics that should be used in dialogue. However, not all museums in Mexico have moved to operate in this direction:

> There is a break in the communication of exhibition between understanding the image and thinking people will read anything curators write on the walls. Sometimes curatorial discourse and exhibitions are created to target groups of experts, as audiences take different things that make sense differently (consultant_2, 2009).

For consultant_2, Mexican curators still use a very formal style and language to communicate with audiences. Mexican curators seem to have authority, power and influence through their choice of language, which may exclude audiences' understanding of contemporary art. Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 137) explains that this happens when the curator creates an exhibition without an audience target in mind, where only "those who have the same frameworks of intelligibility and strategies of interpretation as the curator" manage to engage with it. This communication problem is also observed in the lack of acknowledgment for the role of the educator in Mexican practice:

> Curators do not like educators: there is no communication, neither the minimum intention to translate the curatorial proposal to a colloquial and accessible language for audiences. (consultant_3, 2009)

Arguing that one group of professionals does not like another implies value judgments that may not have anything to do with the effectiveness of the curator's or the educator's work. But this view suggests that the language used by contemporary art curators still affects the museum visitor's interpretation, which demonstrates why sometimes educators need to support audience engagement with contemporary art, in order to overcome difficulties

to approach complex and highly academic curatorial discourses. Furthermore, for artists and writers Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson (2009), a curatorial discourse is a "dialogical negotiation of artworks into public existence through the organic, open-ended co-production and conversation of artists, curators, artist-curators and other players". However, this definition does not show that audiences or educators are included in this conversation or the balance of participation from other stakeholders. There is no doubt that the curatorial discourse involves a complex process, but it also reinforces the authority of the curator to create meaning of the artwork: "exhibition-making is not displaying a truth, but interpretation" (G. Hein, 1998, 177).

Robins (2005, 151) provides a good example of how the Tate dealt with the issue of unbalanced relationships between curators and educators. In 1999, the Tate modified the job title of their education officers to 'curators of education', which aimed to minimise the existing hierarchies between these professionals. This offers an alternative that could potentially be used in Mexican contemporary art museums to deal with the issue of unbalanced relationships. This change also demonstrates a further interest in communicating with audiences.

Mexican contemporary art museums do not seem to have a specific internal learning policy. The educators interviewed (2009) argued that they do not follow a certain policy or operation guidelines. Five educators referred to a lack of internal operation manuals in their work, and three explained that INBA provides some general guidelines and aims that apply to the entire museum (fieldwork interviews, 2009), as an example:

> [We] create activities or courses working with active artists, so they can be in contact with audiences and share their experiences, but we do not have further explicit aims (educator_14, 2009).

The lack of targets and objectives do not necessarily mean programmes are ineffective, but these may make the educators' role unclear to the rest of the staff. G. Hein (1998, 14) agrees with Henning, that the museum learning aim is "frequently vaguely defined if defined at all", in terms of definitions, strategies and actions. Lacking targets and evaluation of their results will limit

further understanding about the value and impact of the educator's work, reducing any potential learning within the organisation. In this matter, academic Theano Moussouri (2002, 41), in a report assessing learning in the UK, recommends that museums create a shared definition of learning, considering its various approaches, and using research within the organisation and in collaboration with others to understand learning outcomes. So far it is not clear that Mexican contemporary art museums share a learning understanding in this sense. Both educator_3 and educator_9 (2009) established that they follow their museum's mission as their target, but this can be limiting when it does not provide enough detail for the educator's work. When this happens, Garrick Fincham (2003, 15) argues that even a page with aims and objectives, which can be modified by the educator and adjusted to what can be realistically achieved based on the department's finances and possibilities, can be used as the internal learning policy.

During the interviews, educator_4 and educator_10 (2009) argued that their department's work plans were being re-evaluated due to a change of management, which shows to be a recurrent issue that affects long-term planning and following up on projects (Section 2.2). For educator_9 (2009), the lack of guidelines complicates decision-making. Manrique (1993, 21) agrees and considers that if the museum's mission lacks clarity, it will be difficult to produce coherent exhibitions and activities, or to build solid teamwork. For Manrique (1993, 21) the mission should not be strict, but should be able to be modified over time, which is in agreement with Fincham. Without clear aims and targets, the staff do not have clarity about the work, role, performance, outcomes and the influence of learning in the museum, agreeing with Owens (1998, 8) at the beginning of the chapter. But there could also be a lack of clarity in relation to the work of other departments, which is out of the scope of this research. Although INBA and CONACULTA provide some education targets in their policies, because of their generality and vagueness, they do not provoke in-depth understanding of learning within museum practice.

In terms of size, Mexican contemporary art museum education departments are normally small in staff numbers, with 3 people on average, and the largest team had 10 people (Former College of San Ildefonso, ACSI) in 2010 (See Appendix 2.6). MUCA Roma and El Eco do not have staff designated for education, but still organise talks with artists and professionals as part of their programming. The largest museums in terms of staff (MuAC and MAM, with over 100 employees) have smaller education teams than ACSI. Larger museums are capable of receiving greater visitor numbers, which sometimes allows for setting up the case for extra funding applications. However, they may also have to liaise with larger bureaucratic structures and staff members, which can limit decision-making and action.

These staff numbers do not however account for volunteers, who can complement the size, support the work of the education and other departments, and their interactions with audiences. Four of the contemporary art museums in this study have one person operating their education departments. In one of these cases, this individual also works as a communicator, dealing with marketing, public relations and education (educator_14, 2009). Nevertheless, some of these museums also have small curation teams, but with greater influence in the organisation than educators. Smaller contemporary art museums may lack financial and human resources, but by not receiving as much attention they may be able to work more independently and experimentally. Museum researcher and consultant Bernadette Lynch (2009, 7) argues that smaller organisations perform with more clear leadership and focus, and are more able to work with audiences as active partners.

As previously discussed, for some Mexican professionals learning is offered as additional programmes within the museum. Curator_11 (2010) argues that learning activities are relevant to attract audiences after the exhibition launches, when visitor numbers tend to be very low. This is when educators have the responsibility of dealing with audiences more actively (educator_9, 2009). For curator Mary Jane Jacob (1995, 50), both learning activities and

the education team act as mediators between the artwork and the audience (also educator_6, 2010; educator_12, 2010).

Learning activities in Mexican contemporary art museums are either directly linked or parallel to the exhibitions' programme in practice[36]. Parallel activities go side by side with the displays, but according to educator_13 (2009), they never cross or relate directly to them, which shows evidence of a disconnect between curators and educators. However, Owens' (1998, 17) and Jillian Barker and Jane Sillis[37] (1996, 31) agree the museums' learning programme needs to support and complement the engagement, connection and understanding of exhibitions and the artwork[38]. Some museums struggle to create specific activities for each temporary exhibition when these rotate every three months (educator_14, 2009), where more regular parallel activities are easier to offer.

However, activities that do not relate to the exhibitions may not necessarily support further understanding of contemporary art. Education programmes need to give enough information and engage audiences further without directing interpretation too much (director_5, 2010). Nevertheless, for Robins (2007, 23) learning activities should aim to persuade audiences to talk about the objects and artworks. But are these really effective for all audiences to talk about the work? Do they need to be encouraged by staff members or mediators to stimulate balanced participation? Can these compromise the artwork's intention? Critic and curator Andrew Brighton (1996, 17) speaks about this issue:

> …what I tend to despise are those approaches which reduce works of art to a simple expression of an ideology which simply seems to me to ignore the work of art as art. (Brighton, 1996, 17)

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[36] Education departments may offer other learning activities that may have nothing to do with the exhibition programme. Some are performing arts, cooking courses or photography contests (educator_3, 2009).
[37] In 2012, Jillian Barker was the Director of Education, Information and Access at the National Gallery, and Jane Sillis was the director of Engage (http://www.engage.org, 2012).
[38] Conferences, courses and talks are also offered as part of learning programmes, sometimes organised with the support of other staff members (curator_6, 2010), or turned into academic events when planned by curators instead of educators (educator_4, 2009).

In this sense, educators and all staff need to work towards offering an exhibition and learning programme that avoids diminishing the quality of the artwork. Curator_2 (2010) refers to this in terms of an "ethical commitment to promote contemporary artists and their arts production", which is responsibility of the museum and a priority when compared to any additional activities. Exhibitions_2 (2010) agrees and feels that although audiences' opinions should be listened to, these can be very subjective and should not change the museum's work[39]. Former Mexican art museum educator Rosario Busquets (2006, 13) adds that professionals should rather make room for audiences' experience in their future practice. But the experiences offered should be welcoming, so audiences are willing to attend the museum in the first place (educator_1, 2009).

Interpretation consultant Graham Black (2005, 270) agrees that audiences can be included more, but museums should preserve their core values in relation to the quality of their artworks, collections, and exhibitions (Belting, 2007; Putnam, 2001). Black (2005, 5) states the importance of having exhibition teams rather than just curators making exhibitions, where "the objective now is the production of audience-centred participative and engaging exhibitions, but ones still underpinned by academic rigour." Audiences are becoming major stakeholders in the museum, so this becomes a problem when the staff still defend scholarship and aesthetic standards at "the expense of the needs of visitors" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, 1). Education and learning programmes can help to support this balance.

2.4. Academia and Professional Training in Mexican Art Museum Education

Mexican art museum practice has existed since 1934, but their education departments only appeared in the 1970s, the same decade when the academic focus on museum studies emerged (Ortiz Islas, 2003, 30-31). The growth of and changes in museums, increasingly considered as spaces for

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[39] Director_5 and educator_16 (2010) agree with this perspective.

debate and collective identity, pushed for the development of museum studies in Latin America (also known as museology) (Férnandez Bravo, 2012, 225).

According to academic Ana Ortiz Islas (2003, 30-31), the first museography (museum design) degree course in Mexico came up during the 1950s, only offered for a short period of time. Later on in the 1970s, there was a real academic interest for museum studies through specialist courses. But the majority of postgraduate programmes started 20 years later in the 1990s. However, art history has been taught in UNAM since 1937, and the first Masters programme and specialisation course commenced in 1971 (UNAM, 2011b). Privately, the Latin American University UIA (2010) has been teaching a degree in art history since 1953. There are two art education university programmes with different professional interests in Mexico City currently:

First, since 1993, UIA has offered a Masters in Art Studies (UIA, 2010, 2), with focuses on historic and current visual arts' exhibition design, curation and collections. The course offers a specialisation area in Art and Education, and is interested in learning through critical thought and artistic appreciation (UIA, 2010, 10)[40]. UIA is one of the few Mexican institutions that refer to learning rather than education in the arts, but there is no explicit detail about this area of specialisation. UIA (2010, 2-24) promotes students' knowledge through conferences, publications, and visiting exhibitions; guest speakers and professors working in museums and other arts organisations; and links with arts institutions such as some INBA museums. UIA offers great opportunities to learn about practical experiences and museum professionals.

Second, the National Pedagogic University (UPN) is a public university offering a Masters in Education Development (UPN, 2010)[41]. This course aims to educate professionals to work in the education sector as teachers, administrators and managers. UPN's focus is different than that of UIA, as it

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[40] SEP and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) in the U.S. validate the Masters in Art Studies (UIA, 2010, 2).
[41] There is no date published of when the Masters started, but the university opened in 1978.

has a focus on schools rather than on arts organisations. UPN's Masters has a specialisation area in Artistic Education, which aims to understand the value and problems associated with art education for children and youth in schools (UPN, 2010). It is based on theoretical views by John Dewey and other unnamed researchers who promote the appreciation, creation and critical thought of both performing and visual arts[42].

The academic study and practice of museum education are both relatively new disciplines in Mexico[43]. However, curatorship is also a relatively young activity practiced from the end of the 1980s (Arriola, 2003, 117; Mayer, 2003, 128)[44], which initially was practiced outside the institutional structure. For Mexican contemporary art curator Magalí Arriola (2003, 117) the aim of this discipline is to propose specialist discourses to frame the presentation and analysis of the artists' proposals[45], and "to create discussion platforms between different participants in the cultural scene", in agreement with O'Neill and Wilson. Artist Mónica Mayer (2003, 127-128) adds that curation is an activity that introduces, conceptualises, contextualises, produces and validates contemporary artwork.

For Debroise (1997, 8) curatorship is not a new discipline, but because it has now been institutionalised, it has gained some formality. For him, Mexican curators increasingly act as producers, only recognised by the government after achieving success abroad (Debroise, 1997, 14). Freelance journalist John Holt (2013, 30) agrees that especially nowadays curators have to multi-task to deal with several issues and financial cuts. Education can gain a greater academic role to become equally respected by curators:

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[42] UPN (2010) is one of the few universities offering a PhD in Education Development. One of its strands closer to learning is Hermeneutics and Multicultural Education, which refers to cultural differences in teaching and learning.
[43] Barbara Taylor (2006b, 19), from Engage in the UK, argues that gallery education is a relatively new field of work.
[44] Arriola (2003, 117) speaks about curatorship by authorship where curators are publicly recognised and named in the exhibition wall texts and labels (related to McClellan, 2003b, xvii), started by curators Guillermo Santamarina and Olivier Debroise.
[45] Previously the museum was discussed as a frame for contemporary art (Henning, 2006, 7; O'Doherty, 1976, 14-18).

> Education in a public museum is very linked to, as important as, curatorship. It does not deliver children's activities only. It is an academic department that supports the design of exhibitions and conferences, and directs audiences to each activity (curator_6, 2010)

Curator_6 recognises that the educator's position in this museum has an academic focus, but this may limit varied audience groups' engagement, which want to learn in a relaxed and informal environment. Although the education department should be able to maintain a certain level of academia in its programmes and activities, it should also be able to communicate with all types of audiences. However, curator_6's view seems limited to activities offered for children or specialist audiences, which restricts the scope of learning to a few audience groups.

Although educators have 40 years of practice in art museums, their relevance is not acknowledged enough, whereas curators have acquired greater recognition over the past 20 years. In this matter, De la Torre (2008, 136) states that there is a need to update the educators' training, so that the art museum continues to promote significant learning experiences. This need for professionalisation has been discussed previously in this chapter (Hernández, 2002, Schmilchuck, 2004). De la Torre (2008, 136) believes that the current museum education tools are alien to curators, and restricted to a "mechanic interaction to interpret the exhibited object", which narrows the field of education to direct experiences with the artwork, and limits the creativity and innovation in learning programmes. In this text, De la Torre only refers to the interaction with the artwork in the San Carlos National Museum (MNSC). She does not give specific details about the relationship between curators and educators either. Academic_2 (2009) provides another limited view about education practice:

> I do not think there is any debate about museum education in Mexico. People given responsibility to manage this area usually do not know about art. They adjust to produce an understanding, educative discourse and enjoyment at the same time… [Learning] programmes start from a false promise of understanding (academic_2, 2009).

There are some issues with this claim. The first one is arguing that there is no museum education debate in Mexico, as INAH museums have developed critical thought in the area through PNCE, and there are conferences and

academic programmes enabling academic opportunities to discuss museum learning and shared practice, which will be discussed later in this section. The second issue is assuming that learning programmes offer a "false promise of understanding", as contemporary art has multiple interpretations that create diverse ways of experiencing the artwork. The third one is the claim that educators do not have knowledge about the arts, as educators interviewed stated that they have degrees in art history, arts practice, and other relevant art specialties[46]. Overall this view reiterates the lack of clarity and knowledge about the educator's work. Some Mexican educators see their practice limited in terms of the relevance to their role:

> Art historians have turned into curators, but educators have not. Educators work more intuitively, but are limited in terms of their action either to work just with children or to deliver guided tours (educator_9, 2009)

Educator_12 (2009) feels that the work of curators is very academic, where they act like researchers. Museum education is however progressing towards academia. ICOM CECA México (Committee for Education and Cultural Action) and the American Association of Museums (2004, 9) established in their *Principles in Museum Education*, that education practice should show excellence in their knowledge, be able to collaborate with academics and specialists, undertake research to promote and improve the museum profession, and enable mechanisms to share the current education methods in the field. These principles demonstrate an increased interest in the educators' academic practice, and could be considered further across the entire museum.

H. Hein (2000, 71) argues that museums collaborate continuously with researchers and scholars to expand their field of study. The most direct example of this is university museums, which normally highlight the importance of research, having collections and professionals that act with a critical perspective (Edson, 2001, 9). However, research is one of the most important tasks at INAH, within archaeology sites, anthropology and history

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[46] Evidence from fieldwork interviews (2009-2010) demonstrates that museum educators hold university degrees in art history (educator_12, educator_13, educator_17), arts practice (educator_1, educator_11, educator_20), and other art-related degrees like design (educator_18).

museums, with over 850 researchers; number that has significantly decreased over the last 20 years (Luis Carlos Sánchez, 2013). The National Museum of Anthropology is a good example of this as it has a large centre that continually undertakes research related to archaeology, heritage, historic documents and conservation (Museo Nacional de Antropología, 2013). In the arts, the National Museum of Art has a research department that mainly makes decisions about the exhibition programme (León, 2005, 14-15). However, there is no evidence that this art museum publishes research documents and investigations regularly. In practice, Mexican professionals argue that contemporary art museums do not have many links with academia and universities (director_4; curator_3; curator_5, 2010), in agreement with Nivón (Section 2.1).

Mexican educators can broaden their professional and academic training through conferences and publications[47]. *M Museums of Mexico and the World* was a museology magazine edited by CONACULTA, INBA and INAH, which published 3 Editions between 2004 and 2008 (Latindex, 2010). The *Gazette of Museums,* edited by INAH, is another existing publication, published since 1996, which aims to reflect on museology practice in Mexico (SIC CONACULTA, 2011a). This is a regular publication with 50 numbers published, up until the beginning of 2012 (Martínez, 2012); however its main focus is on anthropology and history museums. La *VozINAH*, edited by the PNCE at INAH, is specific to anthropology and history museums, which aims to share knowledge, analysis and reflections about education practice (VozInah, 2006). For Mexican Professor Mónica Amieva (2013) magazines, newspapers and museum publications actually offer limited exposure for art critics. An independent magazine emerged during the time that the PRI governments did not allow room for experimentation in museums was CURARE (Oles, 2008, 231). This magazine focuses on contemporary art

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[47] Other opportunities for training museum professionals, which were previously offered, were through workshops organised by the Mexican Association of Museum Professionals (AMProM). However, this organisation's website is not operating anymore, which questions its continuity. The topics of these workshops were education and museums, contemporary museology, and museum management (aimed to discuss international experiences from MoMA, the Getty Museum, the Guggenheim Museum and Project Zero (AMProM, u/d)). Payment was required to attend these workshops.

research, critics and theory (García, 2009, 4-5), with 31 editions over 18 years, although no new magazines have been published since 2011.

In terms of art education conferences, *M Museums,* together with the Mexican Association of Museum Professionals (AMProM, 2003 and 2008) organised an international symposium in Mexico City entitled 'Museums: Talk to Them' (2003), which aimed to reflect on, and debate the relationship between management, audiences and spaces in museums (AMProM, 2003). This symposium included a daily slot on 'Dialogues with the Public', in which museum professionals sought to create dialogue with audiences. However, there are no published outcomes of the symposium, or about whether the audiences were actually involved in these dialogues, and if their opinions were truly listened to.

ICOM CECA México has organised three conferences. The first two had a national focus, concentrating on new pedagogy museum theories (2000), and in education within the museum (2001) (ICOM CECA, 2001). The third became an international conference with speakers from Canada, Spain, the US and the UK, including Eilean Hooper-Greenhill and George Hein (ICOM CECA, 2004); it aimed to discuss education definitions in museums. ICOM CECA published booklets for the three conferences, and the first two document all of the presentations. However, according to consultant_2 (2009), ICOM CECA Mexico has not done much recently and nor has it promoted reflection internally; it has only talked about what other specialists do. Further research is needed to analyse this point.

Leisure and Museums is another conference that took place in 2009, 2011 and 2013 organised by the Museum of the Ministry of Finance in Mexico City (SHCP, 2009; SHCP, 2011a; SHCP, 2013). The conference involved professionals and consultants in the museum and leisure fields, as well as academics, directors, and government servants, mainly from Mexico. Each conference had a theme: education, new technologies and families respectively. No information about their outcomes has been published.

The main conference focused on education in Mexico is the *National Programme of Interpretation* (PNI), coordinated by UNAM. This has been an annual event since 2005, which celebrated its 9th event in 2013. PNI aims to promote collaborative links, and update and professionalise museum educators within the country (Museos de México, no date)[48]. The speakers at PNI are mostly Mexican professionals, but international guests have included George Hein (Museos de México, no date), Ulrich Schötker, Education Director at Documenta XII, Kassel; and educators from Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza and "La Caixa" Foundation, Spain; and MOMA, US (DiGAV, 2009a, 3; MUFI, 2011).

Some of the topics discussed during the conferences have been: constructivism and learning, museum education in the 21st century and audiences' experiences documentation (Museos de México, no date), the museum as a space for dialogue, learning and play through theatre, the Reggio Emilia proposal (Leyendas de Zacatecas, 2008), learning inclusion and diversity (DiGAV, 2009a, 1), the role of new technologies in artistic processes and education (CONACULTA, 2010b), curation, education and the cultural market (MUFI, 2011), relationships between theory and practice (CASLPC, 2012), and collective memories (Chenillo, 2013)[49].

This variety of topics demonstrates an increasing interest in the museum educator's work and practice over recent years, and broadens the knowledge about learning through experiences, and potentially the promotion of professional dialogue, when the conference provokes discussions amongst its participants. There is no information available about the outcomes of the conferences beyond attendance numbers[50], nor about the type of museums

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[48] The first two conferences took place in Mexico City, and from the third onwards they toured to different cities in the country including Monterrey, Zacatecas, Guadalajara, Querétaro, Oaxaca, San Luis Potosí and Morelos respectively.
[49] The contemporary art museum educators interviewed argued that they have used international experiences and resources to inform their learning practices, particularly Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences, Harvard Graduate School of Education's Project Zero methodology, Guggenheim's Learning through Arts, MOMA Learning Support and Reggio Emilia (educator_8, educator_15, 2009).
[50] The first conference had 145 attendees, travelling from 42 museums in the country (Museos de México, no date). This number increased to 200 by the 5th conference onwards

and professions of the attendees, with the exception of the 6th conference related to technology, which involved contemporary artists as speakers (CONACULTA, 2010b). Neither of the conferences mentioned here have published information about offering subsidies to their attendees. Furthermore, Gabriela López, former Head of the CNAV at INBA, explains:

> We will need a lot of training, information and imagination to establish a real museum services network according to the cultural needs of our publics, and to learn from the 180 years experience of museums in Mexico. The great current advantage, differing from 20 years ago, is that there are forums, academic spaces, and meeting points between the people involved in museums work; as well as technological tools that facilitate the task of making people meet their heritage. Our main resource is the human one (López, 2003, 29)

Interestingly, López emphasises the value of academic opportunities for training the staff, more than other financial and material resources previously discussed. She highlights training as a common issue in museums for all areas and professions, but acknowledges that new possibilities are on offer too, as demonstrated in this section.

The last two cultural management infrastructure groups in Mexico[51], based on Paredes Pacho (2008, 144-145), are the underground and alternative independent scene, which comprise venues, activities, and exhibition spaces managed by artist communities or non-profit organisations that require financial support for further development. These have a growing role in the dissemination and creative practice of Mexican contemporary arts, but will not be studied further in this research, as they do not operate in the same way as museums. For Nivón (2006, 52-53) these have been active for over 40 years offering experimental and innovative spaces for young people, who have worked with graffiti, recycling materials, tattoo, performance art, installation and object art, design, video and photography. Nivón (2006, 53) argues that these spaces have been instrumental to promote social connections and create identity links with art.

(DiGAV, 2009a). However, when there are 1173 museums in the country (CONACULTA, 2012), 42 museums represents a small proportion of potential attendees.
[51] See the beginning of Section 2.2.

One independently-run education organisation that influence today's cultural scene is: IMASE (the Mexican Institute of Art in Service of Education), which aims to create links between art and education, and works with the Lincoln Centre for the Arts in Education (IMASE, no date). Additionally, Tanesque offers consultancy in education projects for museums (Tanesque, 2008). However, there is not much information published about their work, or about their relationship with contemporary art museums in Mexico City. Furthermore, the Board of Contemporary Art (PAC), created in 2000, supports institutions or individuals in the management, dissemination, research and creation of contemporary art projects. It has organised 11 annual symposiums that aim to discuss contemporary art theory (PAC, 2013).

Artists are also mobilising to impact on audience engagement, creating new independently-run spaces "that emerged as a reaction for the lack of academic programs providing institutional structure for contemporary practices, and especially for specialized art education" (Olascoaga, 2009, 6). These organisations seem to target other artists rather than audiences, as they organise residency programmes, workshops, lectures, seminars, art projects, and archive materials[52].

One of the major problems in Mexican museum practice is the lack of registers and historic memory (Arriola, 2003, 118). This issue has also affected this research, complicating evidence gathering during the fieldwork. When museum resources are available online, they are concerned with event programmes or certain exhibitions generally, with no opportunity given to learn more about them. Although INBA (2007, 31) has attempted to find a solution to this problem by proposing to create a Documentation Programme for Contemporary Art, as part of the *National Culture Plan* 2007-2012, this has not yet been publicly achieved[53]. When developing this project, INBA could

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[52] These spaces are SOMA (http://somamexico.org) which opened in 2009, Tóxico (http://www.toxicocultura.com) which opened in 2008, and Casa Vecina (http://www.casavecina.com/) which opened in 2005. As these are not museums they will not be further analysed in this research.

[53] This programme aimed to deal with the problem of the lack of extensive, systematised and accessible information from today's aesthetics' production (INBA, 2007, 31). This seems to be

benefit from including documentation about museum learning practice, events, conferences, magazines and records from independently-run organisations mentioned in this section.

This chapter discussed the current situation of Mexican cultural policy, context, and the specificity of Mexico City that affect museums directly. In particular, it revealed some of the main issues that will have an impact on contemporary art museum education practice. These are an attachment to the ideals of the revolution, indigenism and mural art, the government control over arts production and history through education, the lack of interest and consistency in cultural policy by the Federal government, and the lack of clarity about museum learning policy and guidelines from institutions such as CONACULTA, INBA, art museums and education departments. These affect both the value and role of the educator's work, and will consequently affect the audience experience with contemporary art.

Some organisations such as PNCE at INAH, and professionals such as educators and curators in Mexico City contemporary art museums have forward-thinking perspectives towards greater teamwork, collaboration, and shared practice, with potential learning, which can be achieved using tools such as a professional dialogue. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrates that in 'theory of practice', education and curatorial departments are at the same level of hierarchy in terms of size and management, with increasing opportunities for academic and updated training for museum educators. However, practice shows that work relationships, budgets and support are rather unbalanced limiting the significance of museum education.

There is a recurrent evidencing problem in Mexican museums and cultural institutions, regarding the lack of documentation, information, references, evaluation outcomes, and findings. Evidence is minimal, difficult to find, and rarely shared publicly, which limits the possibility of evaluating them and recognising the importance of the learning role of the museum. Consequently,

mainly related to the artistic process rather than education and learning in museums' practice in contemporary arts.

acquired knowledge is often not passed on and limits to inform future research. Furthermore, the lack of evaluation, the constant rotation of staff and this absence of documentation limit further knowledge about past and current learning projects and future practice improvement: "there is no memory, follow up, or data bank about museum experiences and their outcomes" in Mexico (consultant_3, 2009).

Chapter 3

The University Museum of Contemporary Art Case Study

Jorge Alberto Manrique (1993, 16-23) writes about museums as institutions that preserve and maintain the memory, and belong to everyone, but are also in constant change, which "aim to say and teach something with responsibility"[1]. He acknowledges that the museum should be a proactive institution that promotes education and reflection, with proposals and exhibitions subject to debate and controversy (Manrique, 1993, 23), as will be observed in the University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC). Manrique's 20 years old perspective relates to learning and dialogue, but does not specify how museums respond to audiences. However, his view is still current and raises the question of whether these challenges are acknowledged in Mexican museum practice.

MuAC is a public museum managed by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). It has undertaken an innovative learning project, the Enlaces programme, which aims to create dialogue with audiences, in order to encourage their engagement with, and interpretation of, contemporary art. Prior to discussing this programme, the chapter aims to introduce UNAM, which is one of the most prominent universities in the whole of Mexico. MuAC is a unique example in Mexico City because (a) it commissioned a new building solely for the display and preservation of contemporary art, (b) it has a budget for acquisitions, which is rare in Mexican public museums, (c) it attracts a broad range of audiences despite being located in the University City premises, and (d) it uses dialogue actively to engage audiences with contemporary art, through the Enlaces programme (see Chapter 4).

Education is at the core of MuAC, while being in a university environment. The chapter discusses the learning practice that takes place at the museum based both on promoting experiential learning theories and participation, as

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[1] This responsibility relates to the quality of the artwork (Belting, 2007; Putnam, 2001), and to appealing to people when they are public institutions.

well as considering Mexican professional practitioners' perspectives from research interviews. From this chapter onwards, there is a continuous reference to data collected during fieldwork with the Enlaces participants and MuAC staff (Stage 2, Section 1.4)[2].

The chapter is divided into four sections. Section 3.1 discusses the role and the importance of UNAM, both in Mexico and in particular due to its location in Mexico City, and its management structure and policy. Section 3.2 introduces MuAC's overview in terms of its architecture, mission, organisational structure, collection, and audiences. Section 3.3 refers to the theoretical framework and Mexican practical aspects that define learning and participation with a focus on contemporary art museums. Section 3.4 analyses the concept of learning at MuAC, based on staff's and Enlaces participants' practical perspectives.

3.1. The National Autonomous University of Mexico

The UNAM is a university and high education provider with a prominent reputation in Mexico City, Mexico and the rest of the world. It is the largest university in Latin America "in terms of student enrolment, the number of degree programs, the variety of research projects it develops and the breadth of cultural diffusion activities it sponsors" (UNAM, 2012c). According to a world ranking by a research group linked to the Ministry of Education in Spain, in 2012 the UNAM was the 70th top university in the world ranking, and the 2nd one in Latin America (CCHS-CSIC, 2012).

In terms of its higher education offer, UNAM houses 13 faculties, 26 research centres, 8 research programmes (UNAM, 2009), 9 national foundation study schools and 5 colleges (Perez Tamayo, 2011, 74) in Mexico. It also has an international presence with satellite campuses abroad in Chicago, San Antonio, and Los Angeles, US and in Gatineau, Canada; which promote Spanish and the Mexican culture (De la Fuente, 2010, 32). In 2011, the UNAM had over 300,000 students and 30,000 professors (Perez Tamayo,

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[2] Interviewees' names have been coded in order to maintain their anonymity (See Appendix 1.1).

2011, 94). In 2013 these numbers increased to over 330,000 students and 37,000 academics (UNAM, 2013b).

UNAM had its 100th anniversary in 2010. Originally, the university was established within the context of the Mexican revolution under the idea of constructing and integrating Latin American culture and education (Santana, 2010, 16). According to prominent Mexican writer Justo Sierra, former Secretary of Public Education between 1905 and 1911, UNAM consistently selected groups within the working class that would have the mission to develop political and social aspirations of "democracy and freedom" (quoted by Santana, 2010, 15). Nevertheless, UNAM's origins can be traced further back, between the years 1527 and 1887, becoming the oldest university in the American continent. It was closed for renovations to reopen as what UNAM is today in 1910 (Perez Tamayo, 2011, 94).

Although UNAM is a public university, it has an autonomous administration and independence to manage its own budget, which right comes from the Federal Government (Figure 2.1), and work plans without any government interference. This independence was established in 1929 under the idea that higher education should be free of any political influences (DOF, 1929). This is in agreement with Jorge Olvera García et al (2012, 99), Dean at the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico, who argues a public university plays a decisive role for human development in terms of economic, as much as cultural, moral and personal aspiration values. In this sense, the university should let people have freedom of choice for personal and academic development. This has been reassured more recently by Juan Ramón De la Fuente (2010, 26), former Dean at UNAM between 1997 and 2007, who explains that UNAM aims "to practice respect, tolerance and dialogue within its classrooms, diversity of ideas and thought as a sign of richness". This autonomy differs from previous discussions about government control over arts and education (Section 2.1).

Previously, the university objectives, established in 1945, relate more to the revolutionary ideals discussed in Section 2.1. These aimed to let UNAM be a

mechanism for social mobility, especially for those in disadvantaged economic situations; to be critical offering multidiscipline perspectives about Mexican society; and "to contribute to reinforcing the national identity, promoting academic, scientific and humanistic work to fight against the 'intellectual colonialism' " (Perez Tamayo, 2011, 74). These objectives are routed in the legacy of the identity built from the Mexican revolution and even the independence from Spain. However, the ideas of social mobility, critical thought and equality are increasingly observed in democracy, citizenship participation, museums and contemporary art. Nowadays, UNAM's mission has not changed much:

> To strengthen in a comprehensive, strategic and innovative way, the internationalization process of UNAM in its substantive functions of teaching, research and cultural work; contributing to equal access, inclusiveness and a high-quality education... (UNAM, 2012b)

The new focus on internationalisation can be related to the move towards globalisation increasingly pursued in Mexico since the NAFTA agreement and the use of new technologies (Section 2.1). In terms of the location, the UNAM extends beyond Mexico City's University City central campus (CU) to the suburbs in Acatlán, Cuautitlán and Zaragoza (Perez Tamayo, 2011, 75). CU is located in the south of Mexico City. It has an extensive research, educational, cultural and sports infrastructure, which includes an ecological reserve of over 700 acres (UNAM, 2012a). UNAM houses the National Library, the National Astronomic Observatory, and the National Botanic Garden (De la Fuente, 2010, 21). CU is a significant institution both in Mexico and Mexico City.

For Olvera García et al (2012, 99) the public university has a strategic objective to deliver scientific research with social responsibility. In this sense, UNAM undertakes 80% of this type of research in Mexico City (Secretaría de Cultura de la Ciudad de México, 2004, 94). Up to the year 2010, it produced 8,000 research projects in different areas of knowledge, including the arts; and had one third of its academics registered as members of the National System of Researchers (SNI) in Mexico (De la Fuente, 2010, 32-33). Furthermore, for De la Fuente (2010, 21), UNAM has gathered very important

figures within its including Nobel prizes, worldwide researchers, and "professors that authored texts that have educated the country". The Mexican Nobel prizes that UNAM hosted over the years were poet and writer Octavio Paz, chemist Mario Molina, and diplomat Alfonso García Robles (UNAM, 2008-2009).

Although UNAM has great importance for the country, it also has to deal with general problems that have affected its reputation. For researcher Ruy Perez Tamayo (2011, 85) examples are the inefficiency of its schools and faculties due to the size of the university, also observed in terms of the layers of bureaucracy; the drop-out rate in some schools reaching up to 50%; and the recent decrease in academic standards. De la Fuente (2010, 16) agrees with the drop-out rate issue, as in Mexico only 13% of the population that enrols at primary school achieve a university qualification, despite the government allocating 27% of its resources to public education. This inequality may also affect how people interact with museums and contemporary art.

UNAM's CU has great cultural significance too, registered as a site at UNESCO's world heritage convention in 2007 (Archipielago Revista Cultural de Nuestra América, 2007). CU was built between 1949 and 1952, following the 20th century modern tendency, integrating works of urbanism, architecture, engineering, landscape, and fine arts; and it is considered "one of the most important modernist architectural and urban icons of the whole of Latin America" (Archipielago Revista Cultural de Nuestra América, 2007). CU is also the home to the University Cultural Centre (CCU) where MuAC is located.

In terms of its cultural infrastructure, in 2010, UNAM had 18 museums and over 2 million visitors in its cultural activities (De la Fuente, 2010, 21). UNAM houses the university's symphonic orchestra and a radio station. Further, 8% of UNAM's budget goes to cultural and extracurricular activities (UNAM, 2013b). In Mexico City, it is responsible for cultural and heritage sites such as the Mining Palace, the Former College of San Ildefonso (ACSI), the University Museum of Chopo, Casa del Lago [Lake House], and the University Cultural Centre Tlatelolco (CCUT) (De la Fuente, 2010, 39-41), which are outside the

main CU central campus. ACSI is an interesting example because it is a museum funded by a mix of government bodies, but it responds to and its architecture is owned by UNAM (Alatriste, 2010; Dirección de Planeación, 1997; educator_3, 2009). The university also has had a significant role supporting the arts over the years, as it is home to murals from some of the most celebrated Mexican artists including Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Juan O'Gorman (De la Fuente, 2010, 41):

> The most important visual artists, the best writers and musicians, as well as innovators in dance and music, have been linked to the UNAM (UNAM, 2009, 58)[3].

The UNAM's organisational chart shows the relevance of culture within the university:

Figure 3.1.
UNAM's Organisational Chart Focused on Museums
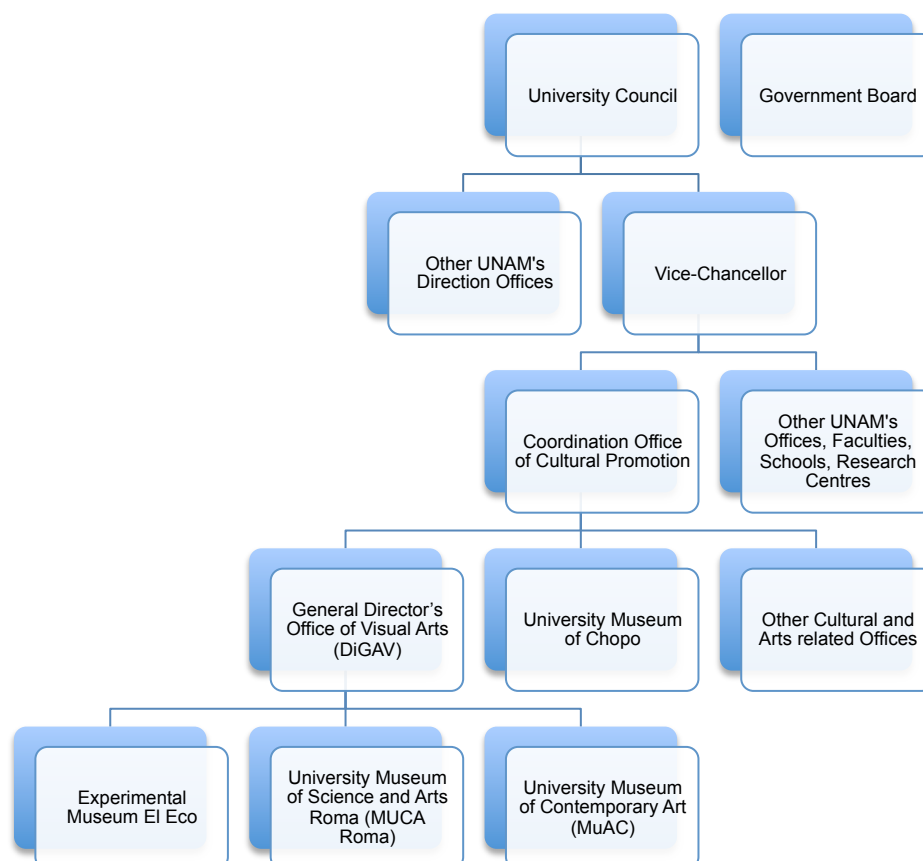
Source: UNAM (2011a) and De la Torre (2004; 2010)

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[3] No other names are mentioned here to evaluate the prominence of these artists.

The University Council is the maximum authority within UNAM. According to De la Fuente (2010, 27) it is responsible to create regulations both technical and operational for academics, administrators and the overall organisation. The participants in this council are the Dean, professors, researchers, students, administrators and academic directors. Below the council, there is the Vice-Chancellor and other UNAM's Direction Offices, which include the schools, faculties and research centres. Figure 3.1 reveals many layers of bureaucracy that can affect the museum decision-making process, which shows to be similar to the case of INBA museums (See Figures 2.1 and 2.3, in Chapter 2).

UNAM's annual records (available online since 1993) register a summary of outcomes from its different offices, including a report from the Coordination Office of Cultural Promotion's work activities (offered at DiGAV's museums and Chopo). The cultural records include the following sections: links to teaching, exchange and projects in collaboration, parallel activities for audiences, exhibitions, and any other relevant projects that happened. These online records provide a broader perspective about UNAM's museums development than that of the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA).

The Coordination Office of Cultural Promotion is responsible for promoting the university's cultural and artistic values (Coordinación de Difusión Cultural, 2001, 1) and manages all cultural activities related to the university. This office is responsible for Chopo (which is administered independently from the rest of the museums), the General Director's Office of Visual Arts (DiGAV), and other cultural offices focused on theatre, dance, film, television, radio, literature, music and publications[4] (UNAM, 2011a). Graciela De la Torre (2004) argues that DiGAV is the body responsible for UNAM's art museums including the Experimental Museum El Eco, the University Museum of Science and Arts Roma, and MuAC, which display contemporary art exhibitions.

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[4] The complete organisational charts can be found at the UNAM website.

Gerardo Estrada (2004, 1), former head of the Coordination Office of Cultural Promotion between 2003 and 2007, provides more detail to its mission including: to contribute to the university students' training, to link cultural activities to teaching and research, and to create programmes that "stimulate creative imagination and artistic sensitivity, which favour further student participation in cultural activities and show the diversity and plurality of national and international cultural life". Interestingly, Estrada refers to diversity being potentially related to varied audiences and participation, and is relevant for learning dialogue[5]. Later on, Estrada (2006, 1) adds that the aim is to turn art into an educational value for young people and the general public, in order to provoke significant learning. The UNAM shows a more progressive approach towards learning, in comparison to INBA, which prioritises audiences and participation, maintaining an academic quality[6]. This is in agreement with Paul Owens (1998, 6) who argues education is an activity used by arts organisations to attract and maintain audiences, participants and funders.

Currently DiGAV's mission is the promotion of national and international contemporary art, sensitivity and critical thought, by offering meaningful content within its museums (De la Torre, 2010). Is this enough to impact on audiences learning experiences? This will be discussed later on. This office's name and purpose have been modified over the years. Previously in 1980, DiGAV's former office operated as a research centre focused on academia, training, research and consultancy of exhibitions and publications (Dirección General de Planeación, 1994). The office added museography and technical support to its services in 1993 (Dirección General de Planeación, 1993)[7].

DiGAV's current responsibilities were established in 1997, when the office transformed from a research centre into a museums' management body, accountable to promote and preserve visual arts and UNAM's collections,

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[5] CONACULTA and INBA did not refer much to diverse audiences (Section 2.2).
[6] These aims have not changed much in recent records (Alatriste, 2010).
[7] DiGAV took its current name and responsibilities in 2004 (De la Torre, 2004, 1). Previously, in 1980, this office was the Research Centre of Museology Services (CISM) (Dirección General de Planeación, 1994). Later on in 1997, it changed its name and functions to the General Director's Office of Plastic Arts (Dirección General de Planeación, 1997).

create links with institutions, exhibitions and publications, and disseminate its activities within the university student community to contribute to their training (Dirección General de Planeación, 1997). In this year the office's records referred to curation for the first time, without giving any further detail about this activity. Later on in 2004, the office established a curatorial research programme that aimed to plan and create future exhibitions (De la Torre, 2004, 816). These records formally recognise the curators' role within the museum revealing over 15 years of practice. For Philip Wright (1989, 123), curators conceive new art histories through research and projects, which sometimes result in temporary exhibitions. While being connected to research this role is highly academic (in agreement with previous discussions from Section 2.3), same as exhibitions that are:

> …[the] result of a long and careful process of decisions and deliberation, of solutions devised in response to explicit goals and agendas, mediated by practicalities, unforeseen events, implicit beliefs and values, and the limitations of time and budget (Knutson, 2002, 6).

Although different museum professionals may contribute to the exhibitions' process, curators are key in their creation. Education services were introduced in UNAM's records in 1998, a year later than curation, as part of a department dealing with public relations and parallel activities such as video projections and roundtable debates offered to university students (Dirección General de Planeación, 1998). This shows an interest in this group as a target audience for at least 15 years.

In 2003, a decision was taken to move education to the University Museum of Sciences and Art (MUCA)[8], in order to operate and attend to audiences directly (Kassner, 2003, 796). Hence, UNAM has demonstrated a clear interest in having direct contact with audiences for over a decade, which differs from other public contemporary art museums. UNAM's view on museum education has been forward thinking. As an example it has promoted learning, academic and professional training further with the creation of the National Programme of Interpretation annual conference (De la Torre, 2004;

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[8] MUCA closed its doors in 2008 when MuAC opened to the public (Female_MuAC_2, 2010).

2006; 2007; Section 2.4). UNAM's policy increasingly refers to audiences, experience and dialogue[9]:

> We understand interpretation as a collection of processes modelled by personal experiences that the visiting public goes through. Every visit, approach and observation implies interpretation. By focusing on the experience, readings and dialogues with the public, we design experiences for the visitor. This way the curatorial spectrum expands, and the dialogue and readings with the objects and visual proposals multiply. Interpretation understands the public as a fundamental part of the museum experience, and aims to integrate its contributions and processes in the museum's dynamic (DiGAV, 2009b, 3)

UNAM's interest in audiences' experiences seems to move towards promoting dialogue in practice, at least for audiences, to enable them to interpret and make sense of the artwork. George Hein (1991) argues that language relates to the way staff members communicate ideas to audiences, either through the artwork, exhibitions or the museum itself, including dialogue; for him "learning involves language"[10]. Hence, the language used at MuAC, or any other museum, has an influence on how audiences experience, understand, and learn about contemporary art (Section 2.3). DiGAV acknowledges audiences' contributions to museums above. However, UNAM's records do not discuss any policies or targets in terms of its language choice, or how audiences' opinions are listened to and integrated in practice. This is significant for the research because in order to have a dialogue, both audiences and members of staff need to participate actively in the conversation, as it will be demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 5.

Today, the UNAM's museums policy is still focused on research, publications and promotion of its collections and artistic values, and strengthening its links with academia (De la Fuente, 2008, 13), also aiming to maintain the quality of contemporary artwork. But the institutional objectives of DiGAV are focused on the management and administration of museums. Furthermore, the

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[9] MUCA Roma has a prior record of dialogue in 2001. This was the main contemporary art exhibition venue for young artists, aiming to reflect, discuss and experiment with arts and to have a creative dialogue between arts and audiences (Dirección General de Artes Plásticas, 2001, 1). However, the records do not offer further information about how this dialogue took place or its outcomes.
[10] G. Hein (1991) based this principle on Vigotsky's views of learning and thought from the book *Thought and Language*, from 1962.

UNAM's records do not mention any links between the curatorial and education departments, but neither do INBA museums' records (Chapter 2).

In summary, UNAM's art museums policy sees observation and dialogue as being part of the experience offered, which link to learning individually (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000) and in the organisation (Eraut et al., 1998). UNAM is the only institution that refers to participation in public museums within its objectives, as a form of active engagement [11]. UNAM also refers to considering audiences' contributions, without showing how these are assimilated in museums' practice. While UNAM aims to develop dialogue to promote observation, participation and learning within its policy, the Enlaces programme at MuAC works as a practical example, to observe how learning dialogue actually takes place on an daily basis.

3.2. The University Museum of Contemporary Art

MuAC opened in November 2008 in Mexico City. According to Estrada (2008, 15), this museum is the organisation that connects visual arts to the other artistic disciplines (performing arts, music, and film), already offered by the University Cultural Centre. DiGAV has been responsible for coordinating the project of the creation of MuAC since 2004 (De la Torre, 2005, 822). Sealtiel Alatriste, head of the Coordination Office of Cultural Promotion between 2007 and 2012, writes about MuAC's position within the university, and argues that the museum "strengthens the UNAM's commitment with the generation and diffusion of knowledge, and the vital importance of culture" (Alatriste, 2008b, 11).

Built in a former car park (González et al, 2012), the museum's new building was designed by Mexican architect Teodoro González de León, and aimed to create a fully operating contemporary art museum in terms of preservation, lighting, security, exhibition and communication (De la Torre, 2004, 736)[12].

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[11] Henning (2006, 75), MLA (2011) and Wenger (1998, 88).
[12] The physical and operational characteristics of a contemporary art museum will not be discussed here, as these are out of the thesis' scope.

This is one of the most recent public institutions built with the exclusive intention of operating as a contemporary art museum in Mexico City. Olivier Debroise (2007, 26) describes MuAC's structure as "an open 2,700-square meter space with a ceiling over five meters high and no dividing walls, much like a factory warehouse with indirect, natural light". Debroise's view relates to artist and writer Brian O'Doherty's (1976, 14-18) white cube perspective, which argues that the white walled gallery space separates and frames the artwork from everything –people and the "outside world"- and allows an uninterrupted experience[13]. MuAC's walls are white, however, the interaction with the artwork at MuAC is not necessarily undisturbed, as Enlaces' participants and other people may be involved in it. MuAC has 8 galleries, three patios and two terraces, which can all be used as exhibition spaces (Aranda Márquez, 2008).

MuAC houses the university contemporary art collection, which includes 19,000 works collected since 1952 (11,000 of these are popular art and crafts objects; Aranda Márquez, 2008). MuAC is the only public museum that currently has a budget for artwork acquisitions provided by UNAM and donors aiming to create a "collection that is representative of Mexican contemporary art", preserves this artwork and also supports the "consolidation and evaluation of artists", constantly displayed in the museum's temporary exhibitions (Debroise, 2007, 30). Because the university museums' buildings and collections should also contribute to academia and the university purpose (Edson, 2001, 8), MuAC's collection and acquisition process support the UNAM's mission of offering high quality education and internationalisation (Section 3.1). However, inclusiveness through the collection is more difficult to evaluate, in terms of the artwork selection and audiences experiences. The study of artists, as well as curatorial research and exhibitions, can also be seen as MuAC's contribution to academia.

The acquisitions' budget was formally established in 2004 through the Committee for the Acquisition of Artistic Pieces for the University Museum of

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[13] Michelle Henning's (2006, 7) perspective was used to discuss the issue of the contemporary art museum acting as a frame for the artwork (Section 2.3).

Contemporary Art (Narro Robles, 2008, 9). This committee consists of specialists who participate taking acquisition decisions. The participants on the committee are staff from UNAM including the director of DiGAV, the curatorial coordinator of MUCA (now MuAC), the director of the School of Architecture, a representative from the Coordination Office of Cultural Promotion and another member from the Institute of Aesthetic Research; as well as three independent curators, and a visual artist who should be a former student at UNAM (De la Fuente, 2004, 27).

There is an entrance cost of $40 pesos to visit MuAC (just under £2). A 50% concession is given to students, teachers, staff at UNAM, and also on Wednesdays and Sundays. The entrance fee is about twice as much the cost to visit INBA's art museums. This cost could impact on visitor numbers because of the museum's location, while being in a public university where the students do not pay fees.

In terms of exhibitions, between 2009 and 2013, MuAC had an average of 11 national and international temporary exhibitions per year (MuAC, 2012), which for educator_4 (2009) reflect that the "museum is always in movement, changing, nothing is established" (in agreement with Manrique, 1993, 23). Exhibitions are the initial point of learning in the museum. For Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 124), they are the main tool to offer experiences to audiences, where museum staff usually expect that the artworks and texts presented in them will communicate with people.

G. Hein (1998, 136) agrees and adds that exhibitions can lead to learning when visitors remember them with pleasure and the work exposed influences their behaviour. However, the qualitative benefits such as audiences' pleasurable memories or behaviour are difficult to evaluate in practice. Furthermore, as previously discussed in contemporary art, audiences also remember exhibitions with disgust or disappointment rather than pleasure (Section 1.1). In this sense, Nina Simon (2010, 26) explains that when people have information about, or a personal connection with exhibitions, regardless of whether they love or hate them, "the staff can motivate dialogue and

relationship building around the core focus of the institution". This link with audiences does not always happen in contemporary art, where activities such as the Enlaces programme are offered to communicate at MuAC.

For Estrada (2008, 15) MuAC not only creates exhibitions from the collection to the public, but also generates "theoretical and historical research, suggesting new ideas on conservation and aesthetic and historical interpretation." This view demonstrates an innovative approach to contemporary art museums in Mexico, and clear links to academia, expected in a university museum, in terms of being a research organisation that preserves and studies the ephemeral and complex artwork of our time, but also in relation to the interpretation of contemporary art. Furthermore, for Alatriste (2008b) the artworks from MuAC's collection refer to:

> … an open question about the vitality of contemporary art, its legacies and proposals, and about the progress of artistic creation in Mexico and the cultural dynamics that weave around its diffusion and reception (Alatriste, 2008b, 11).

Both Estrada and Alatriste recognise the relevance of contemporary art within the culture of Mexico, and interestingly demonstrate distance from the consistent government, historic and cultural approaches to the revolution's legacy. Both cultural promoters have a managerial voice that refers to research as being a highly important activity at MuAC, also central for a worldwide renowned university. Alatriste's view does not provide information about how implicit and direct the contemporary art "open question" may be, but this implies a need for reflection, which has learning potential. MuAC differs from CONACULTA and INBA public museums' views, which have not discussed learning in contemporary art thoroughly (Section 2.2).

MuAC's mission aims to "establish avant-garde public programmes aimed at generating knowledge, facilitating education, provoking meaningful experiences and stimulating experimentation" (UNAM, 2008). These are all highly significant for learning (Section 3.3). MuAC's website adds to this mission the importance to "promote learning and aesthetic enjoyment, its contents, architecture and [where] interpretation tools offer the public the possibility of creating their own personal tour" (MuAC, 2009-2010a). John Falk

and Lynn Dierking (2000, 132) see the museum as a facilitator of learning socially, and explain that this should be identifiable in its goals, conceptual aim, and mission, as demonstrated with MuAC. Some museums are becoming more aware of how to communicate with audiences, have changed their ways of displaying art significantly, or use informal communication strategies that are livelier and interactive (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 6-7). In this sense, MuAC's leaflet, available to all visitors, states the audience is a participant agent in the creation of knowledge (MuAC, no date).

Figure 3.2.
MuAC's Organisational Chart
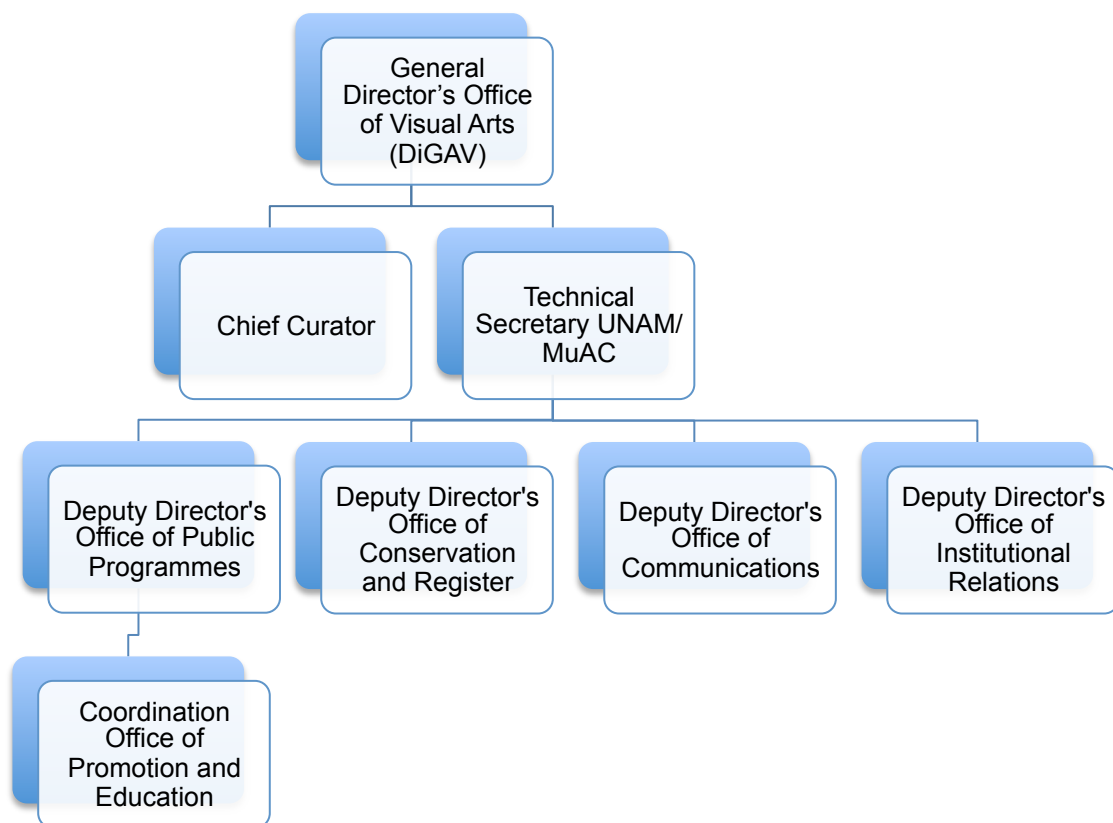
Source: MuAC (2009-2010c), fieldwork interviews (2009-2010)

Based on the organigram, the Public Programmes department is responsible for the Education department, and for delivering activities that involve audiences, including academic programmes, collaborations with artists, and other learning-related events. MuAC's organisational structure positions learning at the bottom of the hierarchy, where the curator's role is just below

the Director's Office, and vertically above education, which differ from INBA museums. Does this mean their relationship is unbalanced in practice? There is no evidence to support this, but MuAC's mission has given greater thought to the promotion of learning and the importance of audiences, facilitating meaningful individual experiences demonstrates a greater interest in museum education. This diagram does not show the position of support services such as front of house or security guards, which are probably below education in this hierarchy.

During the planning and creation of MuAC, the museum staff used UNAM's records to learn about its potential audiences prior to the opening of the museum. Surveys undertaken at the CCU in 2000 demonstrated that 75% of its audiences were less than 25 years old, and were mainly students from colleges and universities (Dirección General de Artes Plásticas, 2000, 3). At this point, UNAM did not have much information about what audiences expected from contemporary art, but participants in the survey said that they were interested in learning more about it. In March 2009, five months after the museum opened, a report of activities by the education team described MuAC's audience profile demographics as follows (Departamento de Enlace Educativo, 2009, 25):

- 51% women
- 51% aged between 18 and 29 years old
- 61% students
- 50% from the UNAM

This audience profile did not change much, a year later in April 2010. The main finding about MuAC's audiences is that half of them are part of the local community: the university[14]. According to Arte en la Red (2010), a website about art in Latin America and Spain, the museum received 500,000 visitors by April 2010, with 55% of students as the majority of audiences. More recent

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[14] Arte en la Red (2010) has more detailed information about audiences' age groups at MuAC. By April 2010, 7% of visitors were under 12 years old, 16% between 12 and 17 years old, 43% were between 18 and 29, 23% were between 30 and 49, and 11% were over 50 years old.

audience numbers indicate that by January 2012 (less than 2 years after the opening), MuAC was close to receiving 1 million visitors (Notimex, 2012), which also shows that the museum lost popularity during 2010 and 2011. During 2013, MuAC together with MUCA Roma and El Eco, received over 327,000 visitors (De la Torre, 2012, 6). MuAC's audience numbers are significant because in 4 years the museum had the same number of visitors than the National Museum of Art in 8 years, which is one of the most visited in Mexico; and 66% more than other Mexican contemporary art museums in those 8 years (between 2000 and 2007; CONACULTA, 2008, 18) [15]. Nonetheless, this data does not provide any information about the quality of audiences' experiences in practice.

In terms of communication with current audiences, MuAC staff undertake surveys, receive comments, and consider observations and experiences through the Enlaces participants (fieldwork interviews, 2010). Staff member Male_MuAC_1 (2010) sees two main groups of audiences: 1) communities with similar knowledge –possibly those interested in contemporary arts or university students-, and 2) "…those with little knowledge about contemporary art, who leave with vague notions about it… that have conventional ideas about art." This staff member's perspective demonstrates a limited approach to audiences. On an opposing view:

> I thought there were two groups: the ones who know and do not know about contemporary art, but I realised there is a range of audiences with different experiences. Someone that seems reluctant can become open-minded because of an interest. (Female_Enlace_11, 2010)

Although this participant initially viewed audiences in a similar way as Male_MuAC_1, she discovered that in reality they are very diverse. Staff member Male_MuAC_3 (2010) also refers to an audience without knowledge about contemporary art, in which some educated people just say: "I am sorry but I cannot see this as an artwork". However, Female_Enlace_5 and

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[15] Fieldwork professional interviewees in Mexico City contemporary art museums consider their visitors as (1) specialised audiences, which mainly comprise people related to contemporary art, either by an interest or professionally (4 of 11 curators), and (2) young adult audiences (CONACULTA, 2009, 40), aged between 18 and 35; who are generally art related students. Professionals referred to other minor audience groups in contemporary art, such as non-specialists, families, children, and schools (fieldwork interviews 2009-2010).

Female_Enlace_8 (2010) feel that each person appreciates art differently, which agree that contemporary art has multiple interpretations[16], highlighting the existence of a range of audiences. For Male_Enlace_12 (2010), this diversity was unexpected, ranging from the most educated to the ones that have not read any information about contemporary art.

Conversely to Enlaces participants perspectives, MuAC staff interviewees reveal they have created assumptions about audiences, ignoring the learning potential that could be gained from the Enlaces participants' experiences. For example, staff member Male_MuAC_1 (2010) argues that his understanding of audiences has not changed through the Enlaces programme. Is this because of a lack of dialogue and reflection about the participants' experiences? MuAC seems a very good example of a contemporary art museum facilitating learning, but how effective is this in practice?

3.3. Museum Learning Experiences and Participation

Learning is not every audience member's motivation for visiting the museum, but providing additional information, background and references about the work can be actual strategies to provoke further reflection and understanding, for those audiences who may need them. In particular because it has been demonstrated that contemporary art is sometimes complex and unfamiliar (Section 1.1). G. Hein (1998, 253) argues that museums are not places to learn "specific facts and concepts, because people don't spend enough time" on them. Both G. Hein and Hooper-Greenhill (2000) agree that museums are places where education is offered as an option, but without the need to teach hard data to audiences. Museums are considered as places for informal and non-formal education:

> All learning is a cumulative, long-term process, a process of making meaning and finding connections… People do not learn things at one moment, but over time… One of the aspects of learning that makes it so challenging to understand is that it is always both a process and a product, a verb and a noun (Falk and Dierking, 2000, 12-13)

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[16] Barthes (1991, 30), Barnard (2001, 73) and G. Hein (1998, 179).

Falk and Dierking (2000) agree with the above authors but add that learning takes time, not only in the process of how people learn and make sense of museum objects, but also of what audiences actually learn: learning outcomes. Although Falk and Dierking's research is about science museums, some of their points can be applied to contemporary art. They argue that even in an art museum, the staff can aim to show audiences that art can be appreciated (2000, 132), which is a greater challenge in contemporary art. But when will appreciation turn into learning? Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 2) also defines learning as a process offered through life that "involve[s] the acquisition of new knowledge and experience, and also the use of existing skills and knowledge." Furthermore, the abolished Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA, 2011) [17] adds that learning involves "active engagement with experience".

Barbara Taylor (2008a, 61) also speaks about a learning process and a product in this programme's findings. The process of learning includes aspects of collaborating (sharing learning and dialogue); experimenting (engaging, taking risks, maintaining open-endedness); analysing and reflecting; questioning, contextualising, reconsidering; and engaging holistically (responding emotionally, physically and intellectually). These are all continuously taking place. The learning products instead refer to the active outcomes of reflection, meaning, engagement, responsibility, and empowerment (Taylor, 2008a, 61). These elements related to processes and outcomes add to the previous definitions showing more specific actions that take place through learning, which will be observed in different levels when experiencing contemporary art and in the Enlaces programme.

Falk and Dierking (1992) proposed a museum's learning Interactive Experience Model based on three contexts: personal, social, and physical[18].

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[17] The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) decided to abolish the MLA by 1st October 2011 (DCMS, 2011b), transferring some of its responsibilities to the Arts Council England. The DCMS argued that this decision was taken to reduce administrative costs and operate more efficiently.
[18] The physical context comprises the setting from the architecture to the building and the objects within it (Falk and Dierking, 1992, 146-150), which will not be further analysed due to being part of the limitations of this thesis.

The authors see learning in the personal context influenced by individual knowledge, experiences, motivations, interests, and concerns, which affect how audiences enjoy and appreciate the museum experience. This individual learning will be further observed as an outcome of dialogic interactions with the Enlaces participants and contemporary art. Falk and Dierking (1992, 136-142) argue that audiences learn differently, adjust the museum's message to their own understanding and experience their own interpretation, which creates multiple interpretations, as discussed in the previous section. Falk and Dierking (1992, 123) further define a learning experience as an assimilated one, where audiences understand or make sense of the artwork or exhibition.

Learning definitions vary across Mexican museum practice, which replicate the conception of education at the government institutional level (Sections 2.2 and 2.3). In this matter, Jillian Barker and Jane Sillis (1996, 31) question understanding the concept of learning across the museum, as there are differences when this is shared throughout the organisation or proposed just by an "isolated education officer". In Mexican contemporary art museums, educators naturally provide more insight about learning, as this is their job, whereas curators have only vague knowledge about it. One of the most relevant insights in practice demonstrates that professionals do not like to use the word 'understanding' in relation to learning (curator_5, curator_8, curator_10, 2010). For example, curator_8 (2010) states: "I do not like the word 'understand', but [in museums] there is an interest to question and enjoy what you are looking at". These curators argue that they prefer to use terms such as 'appreciate', 'approach', or 'question', with regard to contemporary artwork. These can become learning when they are meaningful experiences, as demonstrated earlier.

For G. Hein (1998, 152) audiences' learning experiences connect to what they already know, and manage to link what they bring to the exhibition (own knowledge) with what is already offered there (museums knowledge)[19]. Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 15) agrees; for her people recognise things when

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[19] G. Hein (1998, 153) argues that audiences develop a personal knowledge while learning about themselves, the world, and the concepts presented in the exhibitions.

they have prior knowledge about them. Furthermore, Falk and Dierking (1992, 130) state that exhibitions are only effective for learning when they are reinforced through audiences' previous knowledge following the experience, inside and outside the museum[20]. These authors highlight the importance of recognising the artwork, in relation to their own prior individual knowledge. In Mexican practice, educator_9 and educator_19 (2009) also talked about the person's previous knowledge and background, and the exhibition content (new knowledge). However, for 55% of the directors (5 of 9) and 36% of the curators interviewed (4 of 11), previous knowledge is not always needed to relate to contemporary artwork; but if this is the case how will audiences recognise and relate the work to what they already know? Furthermore, authors both in Mexico and elsewhere, quoted in this thesis, have constantly referred to specialist knowledge required to access contemporary art, which is in opposition with these practitioners' views.

Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel (1991, 39-40) refer to the issue of understanding contemporary art arguing "works of art only exist for those who have the means of appropriating them, that is, of deciphering them." These sociologists refer to an "artistic competence" as the skill to engage with art, or the "specialist knowledge" discussed by Hooper-Greenhill (1992, 210) and throughout this thesis. These abilities imply prior knowledge about art principles, styles, and representation, as well as references to art history and the processes behind the artwork (Stallabrass, 2004, 170; director_1, 2010). Although professionals in Mexican museums argued previous knowledge is not always needed to experience the artwork, interviewees constantly referred to contemporary art as an art for specialists (3 of 20 educators and 3 of 11 curators; fieldwork interviews, 2009-2010). Furthermore:

> The specialist information needed to give room to contemporary art ruptures and explorations are not provided through school nor university education. Only a group of art professionals and students, and a few more, are familiarised with recent innovative tendencies (García Canclini, 2010).

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[20] Falk and Dierking (1992, 135) argue that the staff also offer programmes and museum experiences as communication means, such as the case of the Enlaces programme, which create learning experiences too.

Néstor García Canclini's perspective is in agreement with this "artistic competence" in relation to contemporary art, but does not explain where this information is available from. In this sense, Falk and Dierking (1992, 150) consider that the museum should offer skills to audiences that enable them to link the work with their own experience, so they know 'what to look for' or 'how to do it', and then make sense of it. When audiences do not know how to connect with contemporary artworks, they lack this mentioned "artistic competence". Bourdieu and Darbel (1991, 55) explain that audiences' confusion will decrease when they acquire relevant knowledge about art, no matter how vague this may be.

In this matter, Mexican professionals interviewed referred to a need to balance how much information, or levels of information (fieldwork interviews, 2010), should be provided in museums. Director_1 (2010) argues that if audiences want to know more about contemporary art, "they will have to work more", for example by researching and accessing more information. This way they will acquire more specialist knowledge. Although decisions on the amount of information offered to audiences are important, it is also relevant to consider how this is delivered, particularly because curators and directors are usually more distant from audiences due to the nature of their work, and educators end up creating additional tools to provide access to the exhibitions.

Irrespective of this need for specialist knowledge, museum experiences offer learning potential "regardless of the intentions of either the museum staff or the visitor" (G. Hein, 1998, 14). For G. Hein (1998, 35) staff should recognise that audiences inevitably build up personal knowledge when they visit the museum, so it is not feasible for staff to try to restrict them, for example to one interpretation. Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 118) agrees as "there is always more to say, and what is said may always be changed. Meaning is never static". Henning (2006, 109) also concurs, as interpretations and value judgments are in constant competition in museums, which allows for re-evaluating objects, "devaluing some, newly valuing others".

Staff and audiences interpret, give value and judge contemporary artworks, but these meanings change throughout their lives because their interests and knowledge transform too. In particular in the case of Mexican art, which is highly related to past cultural influences that consequently create strong reactions and prejudices against contemporary art today[21]. Nevertheless, the experience of art can have powerful effects that go beyond the learning we can gain from it:

> …the discovery might terminate simply with pleasurable, aesthetic enjoyment of the experience as an end in itself –a "wow effect"… If the experience is complex and transformative, it may even resemble a religious epiphany or the rapture of enjoying art. (H. Hein, 2000, 85).

All these effects can happen with contemporary art. However, in order to know how transformative the experience was, museums need to do further audience evaluations, which can be intricate, expensive and time-consuming.

Not all experiences will be learning ones. Although museums can provoke a range of remarkable experiences in people, G. Hein (1998, 2) argues that only those that are provoking or stimulating are learning ones, which brings about a "pedagogic challenge for the museum" (G. Hein, 1998, 38). In agreement, scholar Alma Wittlin (1970, 51) argues that museum staff cannot assume that just by exposing people to art, they will have a learning experience[22].In this matter, H. Hein (2000, 126) argues that: "it may be that the experience of learning is what museums now curate and preserve." This challenge to offer meaningful experiences is very interesting for museums focused on learner-centred approaches and audiences.

Mexican educators and some curators (5 of 11) also agree that learning relates to experiences that can be meaningful. Educator_6 (2010), argues that this happens when audiences take something from the museum that may be applied in their own lives[23]; and curator_10 (2010) mentions significant experiences that can contribute to audiences' learning; but neither of these

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[21] According to director_1 (2010), educator_1 (2009), and Viveros-Fauné (2014, 84).
[22] This relates to Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 124) (Section 3.1), who argues that artworks in an exhibition do not necessarily communicate with audiences.
[23] Falk and Dierking (2000, 12-13), Dallow (2005, 136-137) and Low (1942, 36).

professionals provide examples of how this process takes place. For educator_12 (2010), learning is difficult to identify, as finding connections only happens in the long-term[24]. Furthermore, director_5 (2010) refers to the experience with contemporary art as being active rather than passive, where the museum's aim is "that audiences are able to confront artists' proposals". In this case the staff may need to offer the necessary tools to achieve this interaction.

Falk and Dierking (1992, 23) refer to a social context related to learning in their Interactive Experience Model, where the people around influence the museum experience, from staff to groups, companions and other audience members during field trips or visits. G. Hein (1991) agrees, and sees "learning as a social activity", which relates to audiences' interactions with people, who are "before us or next to us at the exhibit"[25]. Audiences can visit the museum as part of a social group, where the people involved mediate what is seen and remembered by others[26]. Hooper-Greenhill (1992, 2; 1997, 210) also refers to relationships with people within the museum experience, which together with knowledge make the experience holistic, further:

> The act of knowing is shaped through a mix of experience, activity, and pleasure, in an environment where both the 'learning' subject and the 'teaching' subject have equal powers. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, 214)

Hooper-Greenhill introduces the notion of power in learning, in terms of an equal relationship between the learner and the teacher; for the museum these are normally the audience and staff respectively. However, in reality these interactions are not necessarily equal, especially when relations internally in the museum are unbalanced to begin with, as previously demonstrated with curators and educators (Section 2.3). Nevertheless, for Etienne Wenger (1998, 52) meaning is related to a process of negotiation, which involves interaction and participation, as well as experience related to previous knowledge, where:

> …we produce meanings that extend, redirect, dismiss, reinterpret, modify or confirm –in a word, negotiate anew- the histories of meanings of which they are part (Wenger, 1998, 53).

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[24] Long-life or long-term learning are out of the scope of this thesis.

[25] This is one of G. Hein's principles of learning (G. Hein, 1991), see footnote 10 page 88.

[26] Also discussed by García Canclini (1987; 2010) in Section 1.1.

Hence, this negotiation of meanings can involve and be influenced by other people. Falk and Dierking (1992, 143-146) and museum consultant Lois Silverman (1993, 237)[27] agree and further establish human interaction during the museum visit is the most important determinant for audiences learning and understanding. Simon (2010, 152) agrees as "the most reliable way to encourage visitors to have social experiences with objects is through interactions with staff through performances, tours, and demonstrations". Simon (2010, 29) explains that staff can offer the most consistent social experiences, but they cannot be everywhere, so they design spaces and activities that promote engagement with the artwork, without the needed to be in direct contact with audiences, such as audio guides or separate spaces for reading further references and catalogues. These indirect interactions do not always involve dialogue or other people. In particular, with contemporary artwork there may be an implied interaction, participation and collaboration already needed to activate it, which does not involve staff, for example:

Image 3.1.
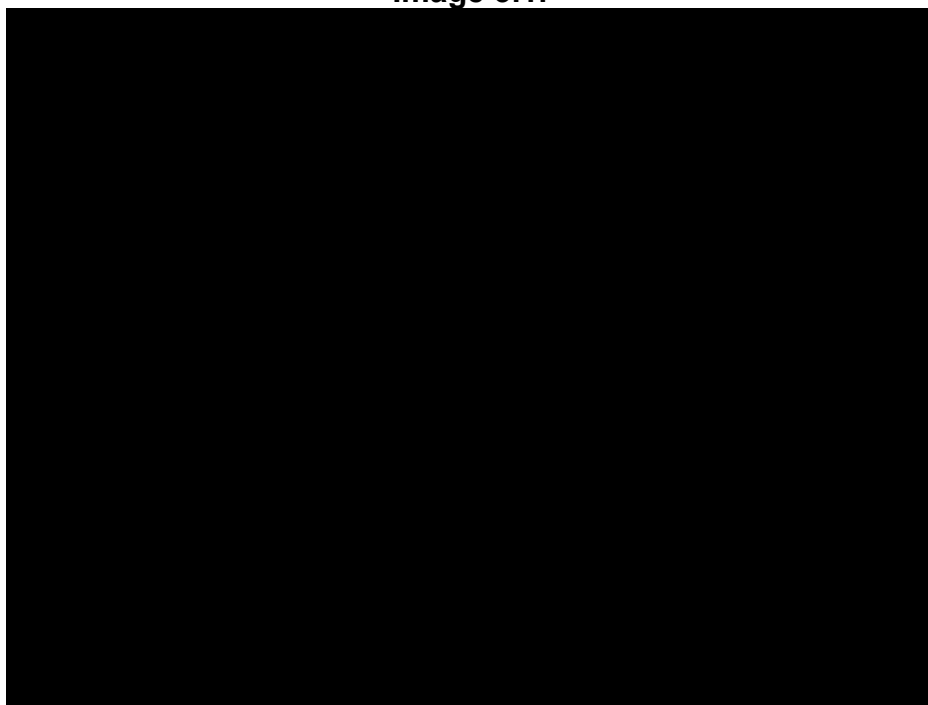
Reyes, Pedro (2006) *Leverage.* [Detail] Powder coated steel and wood. Variable dimension. Los de Arriba los de Abajo [The ones on top, the ones below], Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico City. 13th November 2009-14th February 2010[28]

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[27] Silverman refers to history museums, but this argument can also apply for contemporary art.
[28] The artwork was displayed with a label found on one of the white walls, with information about the work's medium. This was followed by a paragraph that provides an interpretation of

Image 3.1 illustrates Mexican artist Pedro Reyes' *Leverage* work, which is an altered seesaw that requires a group to lift the single plank, the missing seat on the left hand side, and activate the artwork. The artwork questions the strength between groups and individuals (Berlanga Taylor and Artforum, 2010). Audiences probably do not need previous knowledge to experience this artwork, but additional information and even interactions with staff could help to provoke a more meaningful understanding about contemporary art processes and concepts. Especially when audiences do not know that they can go on the seesaw or they expect it to be a work observed and experienced in the same way as a painting.

This section introduced participation in relation to learning, which will be discussed as significant for dialogue later on (see Chapters 4 onwards). Wenger (1998, 55) defines participation as "a process of taking part and also relations with others that reflect this process." Participation means being active and connecting with the artwork and other people. It is a personal and social complex active process that involves "doing, talking, feeling, and belonging" (Wenger, 1998, 56). For Patricia Torres (2011, 21), Mexican museum educator and former director at Caracol Museum INAH, participation is an action, a dynamic activity of public interaction, involving a diverse museum offer for audiences. She gives the example of "participatory visits" that encourage dialogue between the public and the museum through mediators. Furthermore, Georgina Dersdepanian (1998, 12), from INAH's Centre of Museology Documentation, explains that audiences have been seen as passive because there have not been enough spaces for active participation in museums, and argues dialogue gives an opportunity to complete their experiences. Interestingly both Torres and Dersdepanian refer to dialogue as a tool to activate participation in Mexico. Although these authors work in history museums, their views can also be applied to contemporary art.

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the work, in terms of the asymmetry of the ride. Nine people are required to move the single plank on the other side and this relates to power relationships (fieldwork observations, 2010).

There are benefits for institutions that produce participatory learning projects. For Simon (2010, 13), these will also contribute to participants and audiences, when museums are able to give value to aspects of their mission. For example, participating in the Enlaces programme supports the facilitation of learning and potentially provokes meaningful experiences, which can contribute to MuAC's mission in theory. Some authors like G. Hein, H. Hein, Hooper-Greenhill and Simon argue that museum staff are responsible for inviting, providing confidence, encouraging and attracting audiences to participate in learning activities:

> Every museum will send a message (or multiple messages); every exhibition will evoke feelings, memories, and images; every encounter with an object brings about reflection (even if it is only incomprehension and frustration); every social interaction reinforces connections, stimulates new ones, or triggers personal anxieties... Visitors do learn in the museum. What the cumulative result of these experiences will be is up to future exhibition designers and museum educators working together with their audience. (G. Hein, 1998, 179)

For G. Hein, teamwork and collaboration within the museum are essential to provoke learning experiences, both from an exhibition and education perspective; although he does not explicitly refers to curators or directors. In this matter, Simon (2010, 3) argues that institutions that encourage participation must "design opportunities for visitors to share their own content in meaningful and appealing ways", offering audiences new forms to express and engage with the institution. Hence contemporary art museums need to stop appearing as intimidating organisations to become more attractive, and fully provoke creative and critical thought:

> Contemporary art is usually related to education and high class. Then some people are afraid to talk about their impressions, as they do not want to feel ignorant, out of the arts scene, or uncool (director_1, 2010).

Museums learning and participation can help to encourage audiences to communicate further and more significantly, as well as to appear more welcoming and less intimidating. In this sense, Simon (2010, 4) argues that participation has a greater impact when it creates collaborative opportunities to all interested audiences, allowing them "to contribute to the institution, share things of interest, connect with other people, and feel like an engaged and respected participant". But how much are the participants' contributions

and feedback taken into account and influence institutional change in the museum's further practice? This will be discussed in the following chapters.

3.4. Learning at MuAC

MuAC considers learning within its mission (UNAM, 2008; Section 3.2). The museum's website (MuAC, 2009-2010b) establishes that education takes place "through various formats, experiences that seek to complement and open other channels of approach to the museum's exhibition program and contemporary art in general." MuAC's view relates to learning in Mexican contemporary art museums, which is seen as an experience offered through additional information and education programmes that can be meaningful (fieldwork interviews, 2009-2010). MuAC offers learning activities that add to the exhibition's experience such as conferences, talks, workshops, guided tours, and outreach programmes[29].

Male_MuAC_1 (2010) divides the learning activities into two groups: education programmes (which include the Enlaces Programme) and the ones that take place at the Experimental Space for the Construction of Meaning (EECS). EECS is an area designed by MuAC to encourage community exchange and critical discourse, offering access to exhibition curatorial records and archives. This space can be used for talks, interviews, projections, forums, debates, and has a wall of comments (MuAC, 2009-2010c). Furthermore, for Male_MuAC_1 (2010) participation in learning activities makes audiences' museum experiences less strange and alien, supporting them to familiarise with contemporary art[30]. Potentially these activities provide additional information or access to specialist knowledge. In this sense, Bourdieu and Darbel (1991, 54) have referred to the love of art is an experience of long familiarity. This can be achieved by being constantly exposed to art.

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[29] These will not be explored further as this thesis is mainly interested in dialogic learning experiences offered through the Enlaces Programme in the museum.
[30] Section 1.1 referred to this issue of audiences' lack of familiarity with contemporary art (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991, 54; Dallow, 2005, 136-137; Stallabrass, 2004, 25).

MuAC also considers socialising as being part of learning (MuAC, 2009-2010b), discussed in the Section 3.3. Based on fieldwork interviews with professionals at MuAC, Male_MuAC_3 and Female_MuAC_3 (2010), agree that everyone participates in learning, which is offered as an option for audiences[31]. Nevertheless, some members of staff still feel the experience with art should take place alone. Male_MuAC_1 (2010) sees learning as a tool to enrich the museum's visit, where the experience to "recognise the artwork has to be subjective and free". Hence, there can be different influences but eventually learning will be an individual experience. Moreover, everyday direct experiences with audiences reaffirm this need for specialist knowledge, as 29% of the Enlaces participants interviewed (10 of 34) argued that having additional information supports learning about contemporary art:

> Understanding contemporary art is complex, for example when it is some bottles [or other everyday objects] rather than a landscape. Audiences ask us why the information we give is not in the gallery space… contemporary art needs an explanation (Male_Enlace_4, 2010)

> No one expects an installation to be an artwork. It is important to introduce concepts of what contemporary art is (Female_Enlace_1, 2010)

> Understanding the artist's life and the process of doing the artwork provide feedback to audiences and Enlaces participants' ideas (Female_Enlace_7, 2010)

These practical views refer to relevant contemporary art knowledge additional information considered as an audiences' need, such as introducing concepts, artists and the processes behind the artworks (Putnam, 2001, 32; Stallabrass, 2004, 167; director_1, 2009). In this sense, according to Female_Enlace_11 (2010), Enlaces participants answered to audiences' basic questions: "Why? How? Who are the people behind it?" In this matter, educator_1 (2009) states that although historically contemporary art has always existed as a way for artists to communicate their concerns about society, today there are barriers that limit our understanding:

> To think people are fools when they do not get this, when the fools are the museums. [How can audiences] consider contemporary art an artwork, when people do not have any tools to approach the contemporary process differently since mural painting (educator_1, 2009).

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[31] This is in agreement with Hooper-Greenhill (1992; 2000) and G. Hein (1998).

Audiences in general may need support provided by the museum to encourage access to the artwork and learning. In the case of Mexico, people may need to move away from the traditional conceptions about art and culture discussed in Chapter 2. In particular when audiences expect to see monumental works that refer to the pride of the past, but at the same time need to be encouraged to relate to an unpleasant rather than beautiful contemporary art (Male_MuAC_2, 2010).

For Male_MuAC_2 (2010), understanding happens even when audiences' experiences are negative or when they feel the object is not an artwork. Stephen Weil (2002a, 203) and Reesa Greenberg (2001, 86) agree that audiences also find connections with alien and unpleasant contemporary artworks. Consultant_3 (2009) concurs, and adds: "why not explain to audiences that contemporary art today is not a landscape, but it can be something that offends or hurts you?"

Image 3.2.
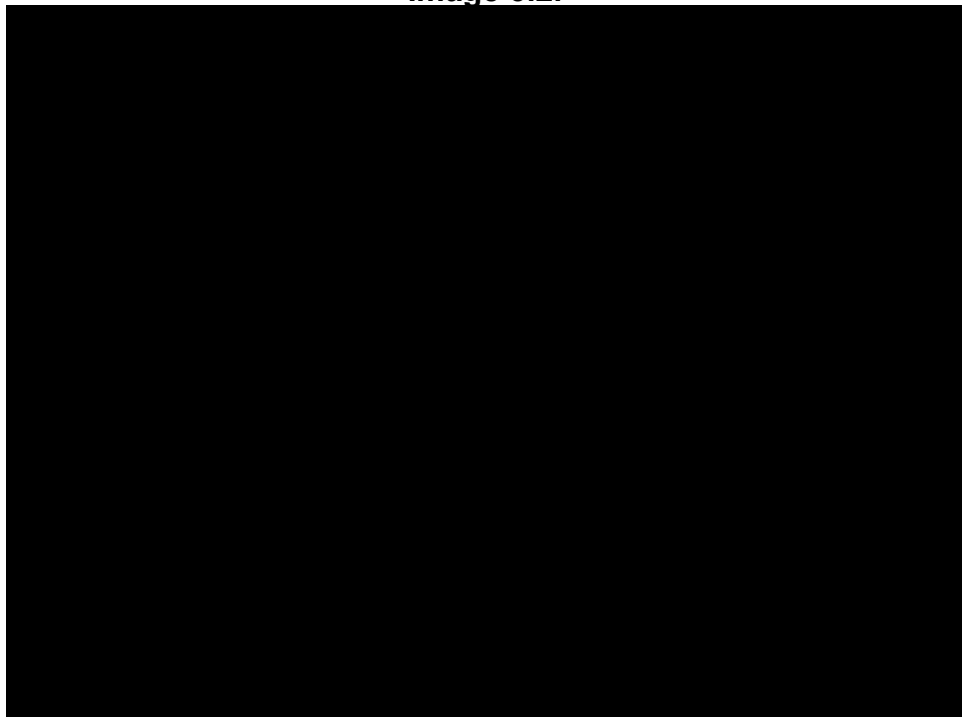
Dias & Riedweg (2000) *Meu Nome na Tua Boca [My name in your mouth],* video installation, variable dimensions. La Periferia de tus Ojos [The Surroundings of your Eyes], MuAC, Mexico City. 19th December 2009-14th March 2010[32]

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[32] This image only shows the front view of the artwork. There another video projected on the back of the installation (MuAC, 2009b). The work was displayed with a label on one of the walls (fieldwork observations, 2010).

Image 3.2 shows a video installation by Brazilian/Swiss artists Mauricio Dias and Walter Riedweg, which experienced on its own looks like a clothes line projecting a video of mouths talking. The exhibition's booklet explains that these mouths are from 50 different people who were asked to name all the persons they had sex with (MuAC, 2009b). The artists relate the work to the otherness, where memory plays an important role "in the emotional conditions of a human being", which brings back the other person, who still remains anonymous, after the couple is separated (Kunstaspekte, 2009). This information will affect the experience and understanding of the artwork, which may not be pleasing to some audiences with conservative views about relationships for example. Additional tools, information, and dialogue help to communicate unknown aspects for those audiences who may need it, and potentially provoke learning:

> In my perspective learning is not about entering the museum and leaving more illuminated. It is about experiences, informal education and that people -through tools from the museum- will have access to certain themes that the museum works with. Education at MuAC is about people talking to people, a dialogue. How you can learn from a person instead of an exhibition text (Female_MuAC_3, 2010)

Educator_4 (2010) agrees about the use of dialogue for learning, which will be discussed in depth in the next chapter. Female_Enlace_14 and Female_Enlace_19 (2010) concur with Female_MuAC_3 explaining that although audiences have their own interpretations about the artwork, sharing these opinions creates richer experiences and potentially learning. In this sense, contemporary art offers new ways to support audiences to recognise themselves (Male_Enlace_14, Female_Enlace_10, 2010), in comparison with more traditional art forms, which is in agreement with Taylor's learning process. Staff members Male_MuAC_2 and Male_MuAC_3 (2010) argue that contemporary art provokes audiences' reflections in relation to their own realities too. Although dialogue and sharing ideas are seen as social tools to support other people ultimately learning takes place individually:

> After audiences saw the exhibitions and had more information, they changed their perspective. They did not understand it better, but realised they dismissed certain things that the artist was pointing back at them. Then audiences started to think about their own experience. It becomes a personal learning. (Female_Enlace_17, 2010)

Although Female_Enlace_17 feels that audiences "did not understand", through reflection, question and recognition in relation to previous and new knowledge and experience, there is learning potential[33]. Researcher and artist educator Emily Pringle (2006, 40), speaks about the outcomes of learning from the *Enquire* programme [34], including reflection, meaning (shared knowledge and skills), engagement, and responsibility. In this sense, audiences finding meanings seems to be taking place at MuAC based on comments by the Enlaces participants (see Chapter 5). Educator_13 (2009) agrees with Female_Enlace_17, and argues that talking about the artwork helps audiences to notice things that otherwise may be missed. Nevertheless, for educator_16 (2010), museums cannot convince audiences about what they are looking at, what they can do is help to broaden their perspectives and provoke open-minded attitudes in relation to contemporary art. For example, showing them the shift from mural painting to contemporary art installation (See Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

Furthermore, Male_MuAC_2 (2010) acknowledges that audiences' understanding may differ to what curators and critics originally aimed for during their exhibition proposals and discourses (in agreement with G. Hein, 1998, 35; Henning, 2006, 109; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 118). Especially because staff members are the first ones to interpret the artwork in museums, and hence to influence audiences' further understanding and learning:

> Traditionally, most museum exhibitions have been a one-way conversation… Curators assembled the objects, established the conceptual framework, and wrote the exhibition "statement" and labels… educators prepared interpretive materials that could help visitors make sense of the exhibition experience. While this process ensured that the depth of a curator's passion and knowledge made it out into the galleries, it was fraught with problems, particularly the curator's true affections were aimed at other scholars, leaving a majority of visitors in the dark. (McLean, 1999, 89)

Consultant_3 (2009) agrees and feels in Mexico curatorial discourses target other experts rather than audiences (Section 2.3). Educator_18 (2009) concurs, establishing that the texts used in some exhibitions turn into messages from one curator to another, rather than being written for an audience with an accessible and familiar language. This issue puts at risk the

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[33] Based on Falk and Dierking (1992), G. Hein (1998), Hooper-Greenhill (2000).
[34] See footnote 32 in page 59.

access to contemporary art, audience development, and the promotion of learning. In this matter, Hooper-Greenhill (1992, 208) speaks about a need for exhibition teams, with leaders managing their process and delivery. Furthermore, communication between the staff is essential in order to achieve exhibitions with successful results (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 137). In terms of learning in particular:

> In some museums, museum educators are now a valued part of the exhibition team, but in a great many this is not the case. Exhibition plans that do not specify intended audiences, and that do not include research into the knowledge and interests these audiences have in the exhibition themes, are likely only to attract those people whose level of specialist knowledge almost matches that of the exhibition curators. (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 137)

Although this perspective is 14 years old, many contemporary art museums, including the ones in Mexico City referred to in this thesis, do not consider audiences enough in the exhibition-making process. But further evidence to affirm this in the case of MuAC is needed, as understanding audiences is out of the scope of the research.

Louise Ravelli (2006, 88) summarises the multiple directions of internal communication, which imply "selection, interpretation, a point of view: meaning can only be made in relation to other possible meanings". Furthermore, for Ravelli (2006, 93), when museum staff say an artwork is very important using an authoritative tone, they imply judgments of "fake objectivity" and are actually being subjective. Audiences assume that the museum has knowledge and is in a position of authority, and may not question these judgments; but through dialogue these views can be contested, as demonstrated through some contemporary art in Mexico.

Multiple interpretations, both for staff and audience members[35], were also demonstrated through interviews with the Enlaces participants. For example, Male_Enlace_2 (2010) feels that people have very different opinions even to what the artists originally aim to say in their artwork. Also for Male_Enlace_6 (2010), as all of these different perspectives contribute to the understanding of

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[35] Barthes (1991) argues that images, as well as the contemporary artwork, have multiple meanings. Bourdieu and Darbel (1991) explain that meaning varies according to the subject position of the interpreter. Interpretation is multidirectional rather one-way.

the work. These varied interpretations also provoke learning at MuAC. These views also relate to Mexican practical perspectives, which referred to minimising hierarchies and balancing relationships with audiences, as part of learning. Especially when their contributions and interpretations are seen as valid.

The chapter has discussed the significance of UNAM as a higher education provider and in terms of its input to arts and culture worldwide, within Mexico and Mexico City. While MuAC is a part of UNAM, it is positioned in a socially, educationally, architecturally, and culturally privileged place, having autonomy from the bureaucracy of government. Despite this, UNAM has its own levels of hierarchy that may affect MuAC's decision-making process about learning practice.

MuAC has demonstrated to have a clear interest to promote, display, collect, research, preserve and educate in relation to contemporary art. It is a public institution with innovative and forward-thinking views in relationship to museum education and interacting with audiences directly. MuAC's mission considers both experiential learning and participatory theoretical perspectives. However, practical perspectives can be re-evaluated and whether learning actually takes place in MuAC comes into question. Furthermore, although some staff members argue that learning is for everyone, others say that the experience with the contemporary artwork should take place alone, which is not always conducive to learning. How do staff learn about their audiences? In particular, about the university student community, the closest one to MuAC, in order to avoid making assumptions about them. The Enlaces programme will be used to answer to these questions, incorporating dialogue as a major part of learning in contemporary art.

Chapter 4

The Enlaces Programme and Dialogue

The Enlaces programme is one of the University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC)'s most significant learning activities, run by the education department. For the museum, the programme aims to facilitate audiences' interpretation and support their access to contemporary art, positioning the Enlaces participants to interact with them directly through dialogue in the museum galleries (MuAC, 2008; MuAC, 2010a), or at least in the busiest ones (6 participants per turn on average daily; fieldwork observations, 2010). The programme recruits and trains university students, as Enlaces participants, who are either volunteers or on work placements. The participants are knowledgeable about contemporary art and are able to have dialogue with other university students and audiences who visit the museum. The programme intends to promote a relaxed, friendly and welcoming environment that facilitate the experience with the intricate and sometimes uninviting contemporary artwork and the museum.

Dialogue is a key element in the Enlaces programme. It is a tool that facilitates communication with the artwork, audiences, and staff members. Nina Simon (2010, 17) refers to dialogue as one of the museum participatory tools that are accessible and easy to use for audiences, which potentially create more engaging experiences. Dialogue, like all forms of visual, verbal and written language used by staff members, influences how audiences interpret art. But it also has the potential to provoke learning, as it offers additional information and supports the understanding of contemporary artworks. Equally dialogue has the potential to create knowledge about, and reflect on, audiences at MuAC, by understanding the Enlaces participants' experiences with them (See Chapter 5).

The findings analysis demonstrated the existence of three types of dialogue between Enlaces participants and audiences (Section 5.1), which evidenced dialogue in the way staff, colleagues and peers talk to one another

(professional and peer dialogues, Section 5.2), and even between staff members and contemporary artists that work and exhibit in the museum[1]. This thesis suggests that professional dialogue, the internal dialogue that takes within the organisation, is essential to share information and learn about audiences, which sometimes can also be further promoted (limited dialogue, Subsection 5.2 (iii)). Professional dialogue has great potential to influence future practice and visitors' engagement, as it is suggested by MuAC, and some UK and international museum experiences discussed here.

This chapter uses practical views from interviews with the Enlaces participants and MuAC professionals. It connects this data with theoretical approaches about the use of dialogue to promote learning in museums. Section 4.1 discusses the Enlaces programme's background, aims, training offered, and how it operates at MuAC. Section 4.2 analyses how the participants use dialogue to approach audiences and how this concept is understood within the museum. Section 4.3 looks at theoretical perspectives and Mexican professional's views about dialogue and communication, which affect learning in contemporary art museums. Finally, Section 4.4 refers to international examples of museums that have used dialogue in their practice to engage audiences, and their learning gained from these experiences.

4.1. Background and Way of Working

The Enlaces programme has operated since the opening of the museum in 2008. Enlaces literally translates to English as links. Following interviews with Enlaces participants (2010), 35% (12 of 34) saw themselves as links between audiences and the artwork (fieldwork interviews, 2010). Female_MuAC_1 and Female_MuAC_2 (2010) agree that the aim of the museum is to create connections between audiences and the artwork, in order to diminish contemporary art unusualness and promote connections with its artistic process. Female_Enlace_17 (2010) speaks about an absent reference that makes people feel very distant from contemporary art, without necessarily

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[1] Dialogue with artists is out of the scope of this research.

realising that it is an art close to society and current life. The Enlaces programme was created to support this missing connection. This possibly relates to the lack of artistic competence and the need for specialist knowledge discussed in Sections 1.1 and 3.3, highlighted by the Mexican identity inherited from the revolution (Section 2.1).

Innovative structured learning programmes in museums, such as the Enlaces one, are usually the work of individual staff members or small teams rather than institutional initiatives (Xanthoudaki, Tickle and Sekules, 2003, 2). The Enlaces participants was created and report directly to the education team. For educator_1 (2009), the idea behind the programme was to help audiences appropriate the space, to benefit the university community, and to create tools to translate contemporary art and the museum. These demonstrate an interest in supporting engagement with audiences from the local community (the university students), which as seen in Section 3.2 are at least half of MuAC's visitors (Male_Enlace_4, 2010; Departamento de Enlace Educativo, 2000, 25; Arte en la Red, 2010). Interestingly, educator_1 speaks about translation in contemporary art instead of interpretation or learning. Artist and curator Gavin Jantjes (2001, 22-23) refers to translation as an incomplete action, relevant for communicating contemporary art, but while it is unfinished it opens up to multiple interpretations of the same topic[2].

Educator_1 (2009) explains that when the programme was created, the focus was to have a young person actively talking to people, with no scripts, where each participant had to discover the best way to communicate with others. Contrary to other learning dialogic activities, educator_1 (2009) argues that the Enlaces programme did not aim to provide guided tours, but rather to find ways to share information with university students, to offer contemporary art audiences a kind person to talk to, and "to attend to elemental doubts and immediate needs of audiences" (educator_1, 2009). In this sense, the participants were trained to deal with visitors' questions and consequently learn about their interests. Educator_1 referred to appropriating the space and

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[2] Translation is a form of interpretation. This term and its outcomes will not be discussed further in this research.

promoting a friendly image, which are contrary to many museums that keep offering unwelcoming, intimidating, and uncomfortable experiences for audiences, even when they do not mean to:

> Welcoming audiences has an impact. Galleries [and museums] are the hardest places to engage, as audiences expect to be absolutely quiet, without thinking and just awaiting for things to make sense (Male_Enlace_12, 2010)

Male_Enlace_12 talks about museums generally seen as uncomfortable and possibly temple-like places (Manrique, 1993, 16). Female_Enlace_15 (2010) agrees, as although MuAC's audiences are very diverse, some visitors feel intimidated by everything presented including the space itself, which is described by educator_7 (2009) as a "white and majestic structure". In this matter, Garrick Fincham (2003, 2) argues that museums should offer a variety of ways to learn in a relaxed context, which allows exploiting its "potentially powerful education role". Male_Enlace_3 (2010) agrees with this view, and feels that people are more willing to talk when they are relaxed. Educator_7 (2009) also sees the Enlaces participants' role as friendly and welcoming, being specialist in contemporary art and able to interact with audiences through dialogue and conversation, in agreement with educator_1. Although promoting a welcoming and relaxed environment are important to engage audiences, George Hein (1998) argues that comfort on its own may not necessarily lead to learning:

> Even if I feel relaxed, comfortable, and in control in a physical setting, I cannot access an exhibition that provides me with no clues to what is known to me already (G. Hein, 1998, 161)

Hence, both physical and intellectual access offered in the museum promote a welcoming atmosphere that facilitates audiences understanding of contemporary art. This is favoured by the Enlaces participants, for example, Female_Enlace_14 (2010) believes that their dialogue with audiences becomes more open instead of being perceived as intellectual, which demonstrates an accessibility focus on the museum visit. Furthermore, MuAC's education team started with the belief that a university student could feel more comfortable interacting with another peer student (educator_7, 2009). This is still the case as for Male_MuAC_1 (2010) a positive end of the

Enlaces programme is that it offers "direct and special attention" to university students and peers.

Fieldwork interviews with Enlaces participants (2010) evidence that their role involves talking to and questioning audiences in a welcoming manner. Male_Enlace_2 (2010) believes that participants should be humble and smile at audiences to make them feel comfortable and want to return to the museum, while providing support to get close to and question the artwork. Female_Enlace_8 (2010) agrees that smiling and creating a human connection without exaggerating, gives audiences the confidence to have a dialogue. Female_Enlace_5 (2010) agrees that talking to someone as an equal, in a friendly manner, is useful to invite people to the conversation. These views relate to a friendly attitude that balances relationships despite the participants are more knowledgeable about contemporary artwork. Having a pleasant quality experience affects audiences' potential return and whether they recommend the museum to their friends (Black, 2005, 267).

The Enlaces programme has shown a major interest in university students since its creation. It recruits 40 participants average per year (De la Torre, 2012, 6). However, Male_Enlace_4 (2010) claims that the education department recruits to reach the required numbers, rather than finding participants that show more interest in the programme. Other participants reinforce this view, such as Male_Enlace_3 (2010), who explains that when he started his placement, he was expecting to use his degree doing museum design, but then realised that the participants' role involved a different type of work. This demonstrates a lack of clear commitment between staff and Enlaces participants.

The recruited students come from diverse disciplines, including visual arts, design, communication, architecture, philosophy, pedagogy, performing arts, engineering, physics, and sociology degrees (MuAC, 2008). This diversity allows a broad range of perspectives to be shared within the museum[3]. The

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[3] Male_Enlace_1, Male_Enlace_4 and Male_Enlace_8 (2010).

Enlaces participants are unpaid and take on part-time work, either as volunteers, for at least 3 months (26% of interviewees, 9 of 34, 2010); or as work placements, for a minimum period of 6 months (74% interviewees, 25 of 34, 2010). These placements are a university requirement to graduate in Mexico, entitled Social Service (DOF, 1945, 9-10), which demand a minimum period of six months (480 hours) with no labour obligations or remunerations for students. While being a service, placements are also expected to be in benefit of the Mexican society (UNAM, 1998)[4]. Although their work is volunteer, the participants (7 of 34) feel that the museum is not very flexible with their working hours, despite they are students and have course work and university commitments.

Participants receive a specific training about contemporary art, which supports their interaction and ability to create further conversations with MuAC's audiences (educator_7, 2009). This view agrees with Paul Owens (1998, 26), as training in organisations also supports "flexible skills (communication, problem-solving, and so on), which can be applied to other types of employment."[5] Training sessions relate to Eduardo Nivón (2006, 53)'s argument of a need to strengthen informal education in the arts, in order to improve the quality and the participants' link to professionalisation and, communication, which direct the skills and interests of young people.

Educator_1 (2009) explains that when the programme started, participants attended weekly training sessions with different professionals from MuAC and other organisations. These meetings aimed to provide sufficient confidence to let each participant explore how to talk best to audiences. The training included offering references to basic contemporary art concepts, for example: "this is an installation, which some people didn't know about" (educator_1, 2009). The research fieldwork observed the Enlaces participants' training divided in three parts:

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[4] These requirements are from UNAM's Social Service, but are the same all over the country.
[5] Taylor (2006a; 2008a) and Pringle (2006) agree with skills, which can be gained during the contemporary art museum and gallery experience.

1) An intensive two-week introductory training offered (Female_Muac_3, 2010) when there was a great number of new Enlaces participants. This would normally happen twice a year, during busy university start periods, around autumn and spring. Participants that joined at other times may not receive this extensive training. During the fieldwork, the sessions were observed as formal teacher-student training consisting of an introduction to the museum, contemporary art concepts and artworks, MuAC's current and upcoming exhibitions, and presentations by some members of staff (mainly those interviewed during this research).

2) Regular training sessions during the work placement. During the fieldwork, these meetings took place twice a month in average (fieldwork observations, 2010). More sessions were added when the exhibition's opening date was closer. These meetings could involve contemporary artists' and curators' guest speakers, professionals within MuAC or from other institutions, or simply meetings with the education team. However, during the research these mainly involved the education team (fieldwork diary, 2009-2010). For Enlaces participants, these sessions provide a greater overview and knowledge about contemporary art and MuAC exhibitions [6]. According to staff member Female_MuAC_1 (2010), training encourages the participants to define their own criteria rather than giving them absolute truths about contemporary art (G. Hein, 1998, 177; Manrique, 1993, 23). However, the research observed that most of these sessions also had a formal teacher-student format, rather than being conversations, which limits their dialogic potential.

3) Informal training that took place in the exhibition space where participants were shown different ways to communicate and create dialogue with audiences, either by other Enlaces participants or an education team member. For Female_Enlace_11 and Female_MuAC_3 (2010), practical experiences with audiences are an essential part of the participants training too. Furthermore, Female_MuAC_2 (2010) talked about offering the participants

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[6] Based on views by Female_Enlace_10, Male_Enlace_1, Male_Enlace_6, Male_Enlace_7 (2010).

support and confidence to their human development, as part of their informal training.

Enlaces participants interviewed (18 of 34) referred to other additional activities that completed their training such as reading materials and additional research. For example, when they do not know or lack the information to answer to audiences' questions, they go back to investigate more:

> There were more things to study: [reading] materials, what was happening outside the museum. It was important that we did research outside our working hours (Female_Enlace_17, 2010).

Director_1 (2010) also claims there is a need for research in contemporary art as the process behind involves a specific investigation and context where the artist worked, which audiences do not necessarily know about. Furthermore, participants also felt that talking with their peers (peer dialogue, Subsection 5.2 (i)) had an impact on how they reflect on their own ways of communicating, provoking them to ask questions, and directing their further research to what audiences want to know[7]. Barbara Taylor (2006a) refers to the importance of reflection as part of training:

> …time needs to be invested in planning to develop the appropriate questions and methodology and to ensure that all participants understand and are committed to the process, to achieve a proper understanding of the learning benefits research needs to follow participants' progress over a longer period and take into account a range of other factors and influences. (Taylor, 2006a, 10)

This applies not only to training, but also reflecting during and after participating in education projects. John Falk and Lynn Dierking (2000, 194-195) agree that the institution needs to invest time and resources in the participants' training in order to have "good facilitators", who are knowledgeable about the exhibitions' content, but also, who know how to communicate with others and listen to audiences; which are key to promote learning in socially mediated environments. Fincham (2003, 27-28), who writes about working with volunteers in museums, agrees and explains that

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[7] Communication is a skill gained at the Enlaces programme, which was discussed in practice by Male_Enlace_12, Female_Enlace_2, Female_Enlace_12, Female_Enlace_19 (2010), in agreement with Owens (1998, 26) flexible skills (see Subsection 5.2 (ii)).

the museum requires spending time getting to know the participants and to provide better ways to involve them in the museum[8]. Hence, MuAC staff need to fully acknowledge that investing time in programmes such as the Enlaces enables the opportunity to gain significant insight about both participants and audiences, and to make them feel more committed to the museum's work. Fieldwork evidence demonstrated that MuAC staff interviewed spoke briefly about being involved in further discussions with Enlaces participants, failing to demonstrate learning depth from their experiences and interactions with audiences too[9]. Furthermore:

> A week after I started, I was sent to the museum galleries even though I did not know anything about contemporary art. I spoke to audiences about the city and social issues… Training sessions become like a dictionary. The museum does not take enough time to prepare the sessions or to promote an in depth talk. The education team is more focused on the administration [rather] than having a dialogue with the participants (Male_Enlace_4, 2010).

Male_Enlace_4's view complains about a shortage of training, and feels the lack of staff's time to communicate with the Enlaces participants (limited dialogue, Section 5.2). A group of Enlaces participants (6 of 34) also felt that their training was insufficient. Others agree that to improve the training sessions, the staff can keep them informed in advance about the dates and not just two days before (Female_Enlace_8, 2010) and provide some information about the artworks before the meetings, to allow the participants time to reflect and consequently enable more dialogue (Female_Enlace_9, 2010). Female_Enlace_4 and Female_Enlace_5 (2010) agree with Male_Enlace_4 that there is a need for more sufficient information to be provided at the beginning of their placements. Furthermore, Male_Enlace_4 used the term 'dictionary' above that may suggest listing concepts and activities, instead of having a dialogue that enables participants and staff to share ideas and experiences, and reflect about them. Female_Enlace_14 (2010) agrees with this view, and argues that staff give participants very specific definitions about everything but ask them not to do this with

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[8] According to Fincham (2003, 27-28) some questions that support the museum to know its volunteers are: "Who are they? What have they done in other areas/times of their life? What skills and experience do they bring to the team? Are there any obvious weaknesses in their skills… that you could help address?"
[9] The learning lessons from the Enlaces participants will be discussed in depth in Chapters 5 and 6.

audiences. Hence, staff can set the example of acting more conversationally, in order to impact on the Enlaces participants practice.

These comments also suggest reduced dynamism and engagement of MuAC staff with the Enlaces participants. Female_MuAC_3 (2010) recognises this problem and speaks about her frustration of having limited time to talk with participants, because of the amount of time she spends dealing with bureaucratic issues. Getting to know the participants' interests, experiences and outcomes are time-consuming tasks for the staff[10], but can also be rewarding and useful to improve future practice, target programming better, and to understand and acknowledge the participants' value for the museum.

UNAM has collected data about the Enlaces participants interactions with audiences in its annual records. The current director of the museum Graciela De la Torre (2009, 3) establishes that in 2009 the participants undertook 6,700 mediations, and in 2010 they had conversations with 12,157 visitors (De la Torre, 2010, 3). Further, in 2011, participants had 112,161 interactions with visitors, both during tours and in the museum spaces directly (De la Torre, 2011, 3), and in 2012 they undertook under 3,000 mediations (De la Torre, 2012, 7)[11]. These numbers are incongruent and vary enormously between 2009 and 2012. They are also incomparable data as they use different words to refer to the Enlaces participants' dialogue with audiences (mediation, conversation or interaction). These numbers do not provide any information about the quality of audiences' experiences and limit learning about the progress of the programme.

Part of the Enlaces participants' role is to have a dialogue with audiences. Female_Enlace_15 (2010) feels that one of the reasons behind the programme's aim of providing supporting connections between audiences and the artwork is that people have a lot of questions in relation to contemporary art and need to talk to someone about these. Consequently, the Enlaces

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[10] Fincham (2003), Falk and Dierking (2010) and Taylor (2006a) previously discussed this.
[11] UNAM's annual records of 2013 are not publicly available yet, as the different offices have to submit their reports by end of February 2014 (UNAM, 2013).

participants will need to listen to these questions. In this sense, Simon (2010) argues that participatory projects encourage audiences to:

> …create their own stories, objects, or media products; adapt and reuse institutional content to create new products and meaning; or take on responsibilities as volunteers, whether during a single visit or for longer duration. (Simon, 2010, 194)

Simon's view demonstrates that all the participants are able to engage with the artwork, the museum and understand it further, as other people and the institution itself will do. Participation hence becomes a tool to achieve learning while having a dialogue with the Enlaces participants[12]. The programme also creates a community of practice, which according to Wenger (1998, 72-83): (1) shares mutual engagement, as participants interact and engage with other university students and belong to the programme; (2) have a joint enterprise, as they not only negotiate meaning and ways to communicate with audiences and peers, but are also responsible for supporting contemporary art understanding at MuAC; and (3) have a shared repertoire, where participants adopt concepts and specialist knowledge, act in a similar way, for example in terms of the dialogue they create with audiences.

Interviewees referred to companionship, with referred to listening, as an additional attribute of their role in practice. Male_Enlace_14 explains that participants are companions and let audiences share ideas, rather than acting as guides who only give information. In this sense, Simon (2010, 28) sees guides as staff members who encourage dialogue between people with particular and related interests, but who are also companions for audiences that make their museum visits more sociable. The difference between Male_Enlace_14 and Simon's views is that Enlaces participants adapt their dialogue to a variety of audiences with very diverse interests, whereas a guide may have to stick to a script that may not necessarily be flexible. Furthermore, Enlaces participants are knowledgeable companions who listen to audiences' diverse opinions (Female_Enlace_11, 2010), which guides and interpreters may not necessarily do.

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[12] Participation supports the negotiation of meanings (Wenger, 1998, 62) and creates value for the museum (Simon, 2010, 5), but also is rarely balanced and equal (Ravelli, 2006, 145). See Section 3.3.

> Many people had different opinions about many things, and we listened. We were echoes and audiences took this [conversation] somewhere else. (Female_Enlace_11, 2010)

Listening in practice (Knights, 1985, 86; McLean, 1999, 84) is an important part of dialogue[13]. Female_Enlace_16 (2010) speaks about listening to audiences' questions and concerns that allows them to reflect and define contemporary art in their own way, instead of being told what it is. Male_Enlace_14 (2010) agrees that the dialogue, companionship and relationships with audiences are more balanced, because they do not tell absolute truths about contemporary art. These views differ from previously discussed perspectives about museums and curators who sometimes promote one-way communication, or highly academic curatorial discourses, and fail to accept multiple interpretations that limit learning (Sections 2.3 and 3.4). Instead, for Jorge Alberto Manrique (1993, 23), "the teaching museum should not force one-way readings of the exhibited artworks. It should be careful to create a balance." In particular, he argues that truths and situations change over time, so the museum should communicate responsibly but accept that its exhibitions are subject to dispute and controversy (Manrique, 1993, 23).

For Female_Enlace_11 (2010), the Enlaces participants' role adapts to the museum's needs, for example, to support security guards or to provide guided tours when it is required. However, this flexibility goes beyond activities undertaken by participants to their ability to adapt dialogue according to diverse circumstances and audiences, which make each interaction unique. In this sense, Richard Layzell (1997) refers to his former experience as gallery invigilator, where being flexible was important to communicate with audiences in practice, and mediators need to have a "broader-based approach" to be able to adapt the conversation to each person's needs. Female_Enlace_12 and Male_Enlace_13 (2010) feel their approach also varies according to audiences' age. Furthermore, Enlaces participants need to be flexible to be able to distribute the information in different ways, as some people may want

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[13] See this thesis definition of dialogue in pages 3 and 4.

to get 'hard' data from the artwork, whereas others just want to talk about their impressions with the artwork (Female_Enlace_19, 2010)

The Enlaces participants decide when to interact with audiences. For Female_MuAC_3 (2010), they "need to learn to read the people", be intuitive, create a natural dialogue, and learn how to approach audiences without being invasive. There are contradictory views in this matter, as some participants interviewed (2010) argued that staff ask them not to interact with audiences, but to let them look at the artwork and be the first ones to talk[14]. In an interview MuAC's former Chief Curator, María Inés Rodríguez, claims that each visitor should have their own space and be able to have a dialogue with other people, in order to fulfil the museum's project (Palacios, 2012). Nevertheless, according to Male_Enlace_7 and Female_Enlace_5 (2010), the majority of audiences do not approach Enlaces participants. Male_Enlace_1 (2010) feels the staff create confusion into "how and when" to approach audiences, because at the end participants generally talked to them first. There is no straight answer to this matter, but the staff and participants need to reach a clearer agreement considering the level of flexibility to decide how and when to approach audiences more effectively. For example, some participants decided to talk to people when they looked like they did not understand (3 of 34)[15] or when they hear a question that audiences could not answer themselves (Male_Enlace_12, 2010):

> Audiences frequently do not understand contemporary art and ask: "why is this in the museum?" A subtle and friendly approach provides them with a better understanding of the artwork, without giving or forcing all the information; and helps audiences to create their own meanings (Female_Enlace_14).

Male_Enlace_7 (2010) agrees and refers to a conversational approach that allows broadening audiences' perspectives and solves their questions. The Enlaces participants' role relates to writer Ann Rayner (1998, 46) who considers the museum staff permanently in the gallery space as potential "walking labels" that support audiences. However, the Enlaces participants normally have more information that the one from these labels, and are able

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[14] Female_Enlace_4, Male_Enlace_1, and Male_Enlace_9 (2010) discussed this issue.
[15] Female_Enlace_4, Male_Enlace_4, Male_Enlace_9, 2010 talked about this.

to promote unique mediated experiences for audiences. In this sense, Female_Enlace_7 and Female_Enlace_18 (2010) argue their role involves creating a personalised environment, speaking to others using a common and friendly language, and being open to any comments. All these views demonstrate that the nature of the Enlaces programme offers great potential to engage in a learning dialogue with audiences, which facilitates their understanding about contemporary art.

4.2. Dialogue: Key Element of the Enlaces Programme

Dialogue has been discussed as a tool that offers great potential for sharing new information in practice. In particular, due to the complexity, processes, and references to art history that may be needed to understand contemporary art; dialogue offers an immediate and direct way to communicate this information to audiences, and potentially create learning experiences. Staff member Female_MuAC_3 (2010) defines dialogue as follows:

> [It] has to do with an exchange of minimum two people, although there can be a dialogue of one person with an artwork. Dialogue is established between an intention of the artist and the visitor. In my area, it has to do with a cultural exchange of what the person has in his/her head with what the person in front has in his/hers... [It] is bidirectional, and can involve more people having this exchange of analysis, reflection and experiences. (Female_MuAC_3, 2010)

The idea of bidirectionality potentially relates to offering balanced opportunities to share ideas, which implies two-way communication (in agreement with Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, 21). Female_MuAC_3's perspective mentions an intention between the contemporary artist and audiences, which some people may find difficult to recognise without a dialogue. Irrespectively, this view demonstrates that MuAC staff have thought very carefully about the importance of dialogue. Another staff member that speaks about balanced participation is Male_MuAC_2's (2010), who feels dialogue only works when the participants' perspectives coincide, which suggests everyone may talk and listen to the other's opinions. However, there can also be a dialogue when people disagree.

Emily Pringle (2006, 40), in agreement with Barbara Taylor (2008a, 61) (Section 3.3), refers to analysing and reflecting, which Female_MuAC_3 relates above to dialogue, to enable the development of critical skills and adds collaborating, questioning and listening, and providing feedback on the work of others as part of the learning process. These all relate to dialogue and contemporary art too. In this matter, Male_MuAC_3 (2010) concurs that dialogue should open questions, which have to be created together with audiences [16]. Some Enlaces participants agree and spoke about the dynamism of dialogue. For Female_Enlace_6 and Female_Enlace_8 (2010) part of their role is to keep the dialogue going rather than turning it into an interrogation. Female_Enlace_3 (2010) agrees that the dialogue needs to be interactive, asking questions and letting audiences talk more. As an example, Female_Enlace_17 (2010) claims that remembering audiences' names during the visit helps to engage them more dynamically.

Some Enlaces participants explain that they do not necessarily need to respond to audiences' questions, but rather support them to find the answers themselves[17]. However, there are varied opinions regarding this issue. For example, Female_Enlace_2 (2010) feels the participants are not teachers that will say to audiences something is right or wrong. In particular, Female_Enlace_12 (2010) considers there is an inability to have immediate answers, which is a common characteristic of contemporary art and feels that although audiences want to have answers, sometimes more research may be needed to respond to them (Female_Enlace_2 agrees). Staff member Male_MuAC_2 (2010) concurs explaining with this type of art "we don't necessarily know how to answer to questions that are unknown to us". Enlaces participants have a specialist knowledge, and although there are no wrong answers in contemporary art and all interpretations are valid. Male_Enlace_6 (2010) feels that artists usually want to communicate an initial idea about their work. This demonstrates that dialogue may be used to provide a greater background and familiarise audiences with contemporary art.

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[16] Educator_17, educator_19, and educator_20 (2010) agree that dialogue is constructed together.

[17] Female_Enlace_1, Female_Enlace_8 and Female_Enlace_14 (2010) discussed this issue.

Enlaces participants' interviewed continuously discussed the use of dialogue and questioning in relation to reflection, beyond merely asking and answering questions to provoking thoughts about yourself (Female_Enlace_6, 2010), new things and ideas (Female_Enlace_3, Male_Enlace_6, 2010), inciting imagination (Male_Enlace_5, 2010), challenging what we know (Female_Enlace_18, 2010), and liberating people from prejudices and "absurd ideas" (Male_Enlace_12, 2010) –such as the ones related to the Mexican artistic and heritage legacy previously discussed in Section 2.1. In this matter, Simon (2010) argues that in participatory projects:

> … the institution supports multidirectional content experiences. The institution serves as a "platform" that connects different users who act as content creators, distributors, consumers, critics, and collaborators. This means the institution cannot guarantee the consistency of visitor experiences. Instead, the institution provides opportunities for diverse visitor co-produced experiences. (Simon, 2010, 2)

As previously discussed, the research will not analyse the consistency of audiences' experiences, but it is interested in the idea of balanced participation as a potential learning dialogue experience, where all the dialoguers have something to contribute to the organisation. Fieldwork with Enlaces participants demonstrated that in practice there is a range of "multidirectional content experiences" in relation to contemporary art[18].

Earlier in this Section, Female_MuAC_3 referred to two types of dialogue: one between people and another one as the direct muted dialogue with the artwork (visual internal dialogue, Subsection 5.1 (a)). In this matter, Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel (1991, 49) argue that any interventions with the artwork, such as the dialogue with the Enlaces participants, do not compensate for the audiences' lack of knowledge or education, they simply "minimize the apparent inaccessibility of the works and of the visitors' feeling of unworthiness". This is a very common feeling when experiencing contemporary art:

> Without a conversation, audiences only keep what they read. They can have a 'million' more questions. (Male_Enlace_9, 2010)

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[18] Female_Enlace_5, Female_Enlace_8, Female_Enlace_11, and Male_Enlace_12 (2010) referred to audiences' multiple interpretations in Section 3.2.

This perspective demonstrates that some interventions can ease audiences' understanding and access to contemporary art. Bourdieu and Darbel's view may not appreciate that some artworks can be closely related to experience and everyday issues rather than to art history and academic knowledge. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 116) discusses verbal knowledge as a way to examine and evaluate what is known, compare ideas, share and discuss the artwork with others. Mexican art historian and former director at the National Museum of San Carlos, Graciela Reyes Retana (1993, 58), agrees as regardless of whether opinions are brilliant, when no one else knows about them they will not matter and will "remain in the void". These views demonstrate how dialogue can help to validate people's opinions and support access to the artwork. Female_Enlace_5 (2010) concurs and feels that by talking to audiences and supporting their interpretation, they make them realise that their contributions are valid. This validation provides confidence to engage with contemporary art, especially in a country like Mexico where people are distanced from the current production of art:

> In giving voice to the powerless, a process of self-discovery and empowerment will take place in which the curator becomes a facilitator rather than a figure of authority. (Witcomb, 2003, 79)

Professor and researcher Andrea Witcomb's view relates to enabling knowledge to empower audiences. Enlaces participants and MuAC staff did not refer much to the issues of empowerment or having a voice explicitly during their interviews. However, they talked about dialogue as a way of gaining confidence and changing audiences' attitudes, broadening their interests towards contemporary art, and eliminating their prejudices (20 of 34 Enlaces participants and Female_MuAC_2, 2010). For example:

> Dialogue made audiences look at the artwork twice, take longer, remember things about their lives, and relate it to their personal baggage. (Male_Enlace_12, 2010)

> People change their attitude after talking to Enlaces participants… even when they are not convinced. Audiences keep something that changes their feeling [about contemporary art] (Female_Enlace_9, 2010)

Female_Enlace_9 (2010) claims that even when audiences are not necessarily satisfied with contemporary art, at least dialogue broadens their

interest in it, which relates to having a dialogue even when perspectives disagree, discussed earlier in this section. This also relates to one of the main characteristics of dialogue, which is listening[19]. In particular, Male_Enlace_13 (2010) feels that listening to audiences helped the participants see something different in the artwork, which created an "amazing flow of ideas". Staff member Male_MuAC_3 (2010) agrees as listening to people's questions is important to show them "the 'guts' [inner workings] of the museum". Listening to audiences support enabling the participant's own reflection (Pringle, 2006, 40).

The concept of dialogue at MuAC involves elements related to learning such as balanced participation, reflection, questioning, listening and providing the specialist knowledge required to understand contemporary art further. However, participants and staff referred to the importance of providing confidence and changing audiences' attitudes towards this type of art, previously discussed in relation to contemporary art generally and to the particular case of Mexico (Sections 1.1 and 2.1 respectively). Furthermore, it was demonstrated that dialogue supports multiple interpretations and co-produced experiences where all the dialoguers have learning potential.

4.3. The Impact of Dialogue on Learning

Researchers, writers and academics have constantly referred to different aspects of dialogue that have an impact on museum learning. Falk and Dierking (1992, 100) argue that audiences "learn while talking to, listening to, and watching other people." This is not exclusive to audiences, as all participants in the dialogue, including the museum staff, can learn. For these authors, audiences use other people's ideas, feelings and physical reactions to shape their own opinions, which they assimilate in their learning. Falk and Dierking's perspective differs from Bourdieu and Darbel's view related to the lack of interventions needed to experience the art. In Mexican contemporary art museums' practice, educator_4 (2010) agrees that learning involves

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[19] Observed in the thesis' definition of dialogue (Chapter 1) and in practice by 10 of 34 Enlaces participants and 4 of 6 members of MuAC staff.

talking to other people. Other Mexican educators (3 of 20; fieldwork interviews, 2010) referred to dialogue as a bidirectional exchange of agreeing or differing ideas that involves analysis, reflection (Freire, 1996, 61) and experiences between at least two people[20]. These views agree with MuAC's concept of dialogue discussed earlier by Female_MuAC_3 and Male_MuAC_2.

For Simon (2010, 152) there is a potential dialogue between the museum and audiences that creates "unique and powerful social experiences", which suggests that staff members ask "meaningful questions", allow audiences to respond, and ease group conversations[21]. Interestingly, although Enlaces participants and MuAC staff referred to answering queries and questioning yourself as part of their dialogue with audiences, not all questions and answers necessarily provoke learning, but only those meaningful ones. Simon (2010, 157) further argues, "when staff members are trained to facilitate discussion rather than deliver content, new opportunities for social engagement emerge". This potential can be exploited by the Enlaces programme, while focusing more on the conversational experience offered. Hooper-Greenhill writes:

> …effective communication can sometimes only work as a two-way process… 'natural' or face-to-face communication… which is capable of reflexivity, immediate modification and exploration of unfamiliar concepts or ideas, [this] is a more useful tool. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, 21)

These characteristics of reflecting and recognising the artwork through dialogue also impact on learning, for example, the ability to modify dialogue was discussed in Section 4.1. Etienne Wenger (1998, 62) refers to face-to-face interaction too, where words "affect the negotiation of meaning through a process that seems like pure participation." The use and selection of words during dialogue in Mexican contemporary art museums could be an interesting topic for further research. However, the Enlaces participants'

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[20] Educator_4, educator_12, and educator_20 (2010) defined dialogue in this way. Curator_11 (2010) also sees dialogue as an exchange of ideas but focused on artists rather than audiences, which is out of the scope of this research.
[21] Simon (2010, 153) uses the example of Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) developed by psychologist Abigail Housen and museum educator Philip Yenawinein, created in the 1980s to question and listen to audiences, in order to validate their opinions and create conversations, approach that will not be discussed further.

friendly and welcoming attitude suggests a choice of words that may not be intimidating and have the potential to provoke learning dialogue.

Furthermore, Wenger relates participation to dialogue -concurring with G. Hein, Hooper-Greenhill, and Falk and Dierking-, which allows the possibility of mutual recognition and may involve relationships of all kinds: conflictual, harmonical, political, competitive, and cooperative (Wenger, 1998, 56). Some of these relations can be observed with all stakeholders, from audiences to museum staff. However, in practice the Enlaces participants interviewed shared a feeling of lack of mutual recognition from MuAC staff that will be discussed later on (Subsection 5.2 (iii)).

In Mexican practice, consultant_2 (2009) sees the museum as a place for dialogue and to coexist, where people relate and talk to others and staff members can get involved with audiences too: constructing meaning together (educator_17, 2010) and promoting more horizontal relationships with them (educator_19, 2010). Educator_20 (2010) agrees referring to learning in terms of minimising hierarchies to promote "horizontal platforms where the museum is not the only one to rule the legitimisation of knowledge". These educators' views agree with theoretical perspectives that acknowledge an intention to balance relationships between audiences and staff members to impact on learning dialogue[22]. Most Mexican curators and directors did not speak about this subject, which questions the potential effectiveness of constructing meaning and learning together in practice throughout the entire organisation. Director_1 (2010) was an exception:

> Dialogue intends to share and raise points of view, to express opinions freely and questions openly... dialogue is not complex but delicate while talking about new information and being in an institution where there are hierarchies between the person that knows and the one that doesn't. With dialogue you can share information, provoke reactions or something in the people involved (director_1, 2010).

Director_1's perspective adds that dialogue is open but is also complicated due to specific characteristics of contemporary art, and does not concur with educators' views of balanced relationships. While talking about hierarchies,

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[22] Falk and Dierking (1992, 100), McLean (1999, 84), and Freire (1996, 58).

director_1's view relates to structures of power and knowledge, which may influence understanding and learning in Mexican contemporary art museum practice[23]. Nevertheless, for Simon (2010, 20), participation provides value to all participants, especially when institutions listen to them, give them feedback, and demonstrate how their contributions will be used.

Consultant Susan Knights (1985, 86) argues that from a management perspective, "talking is common; what is far less common and far harder to obtain is good listening". However, the audience equally may not listen. The thesis has evidence that Enlaces participants develop listening skills to understand and respond immediately to audiences (Section 4.2), but staff at MuAC fail to do this (Chapter 5). Knowing about museum visitors implies listening to their opinions, but also acting on those views, without necessarily committing the staff's professional ethics (as discussed in Section 2.3). Interestingly Mexican museum educators did not refer to listening to audiences, but other professionals recognise this is important:

> Projects are decided considering the possibility to attract audiences. There is an increase of power where opinions of audiences are listened to (academic_2, 2009).

> … it is also [learning] for us. We listen to audiences and consider their opinions in our upcoming projects. We want them to feel this space is theirs (curator_2, 2010).

Further evidence is needed to evaluate how museum professionals use their opinions about audiences in future project planning and delivery. Listening is a time-consuming task, which requires analysis and dissemination, just like evaluation (Section 3.3). In most cases, audiences are the ones:

> …doing the most of the "listening." Museums are getting to know them better, particularly since they have become more vocal in recent years, and possibly more discriminating. And museum professionals are coming to think of them less as passive spectators and more as active participants. Visitors now sit on exhibit-development committees, speak their minds in research and assessment programs, and even contribute to visitor-generated exhibits and labels in exhibition galleries. (McLean, 1999, 84)

This view evidences that some museums increasingly recognise the benefits of working together with audiences, assigning them a more active role as

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[23] Theoretical perspectives suggest these existing hierarchies, where members of staff act as persons of knowledge (Foucault, 1977, 199-200), spokespersons (Bourdieu, 1991, 109), or the connoisseurs (Henning, 2006, 2).

participants and stakeholders in the museum, which is in agreement with MuAC (no date) and G. Hein (1998, 179) (Sections 3.2 and 3.3 respectively). Louise Ravelli (2006, 72) agrees adding that museums should increasingly endeavour audiences "to explore information and ideas, … enabling them to participate in the formation of knowledge". For her participation in museums is rarely equal. However, if audiences' opinions and inclusion are seriously considered, the museum should allow opportunities for feedback (Ravelli, 2006, 145). Lois Silverman (1993, 234) agrees that communication is "a process in which meaning is jointly and actively constructed through interaction." The question to these views is whether audiences' contribution to knowledge and learning really affects the museum practice, and if dialogue is an effective tool of communication to enable these. In a study with museums and community partners, Bernadette Lynch (2009, 11) refers to a problem of feigning interest to audiences' contributions:

> Conflict and any form of difference in opinion – central to democratic dialogue – are effectively avoided. The institution thus maintains order and control, but through an institutional culture in which the values of the institution subtly become the 'common-sense' values of all. (Lynch, 2009, 11)

According to Lynch, it is not easy to have a dialogue where both museum and audiences participate equally. It becomes problematic when decisions are taken on behalf of audiences that have participated in discussions, without carefully listening to their opinions, because this clearly shows assumptions about them. Just as the dialogue to support contemporary art understanding may create disagreements, dialogue with staff members can do too. Lynch referred to the power exercised by the institution that will limit the benefits of working together, audiences' contribution to decision-making, and their right of citizenship participation (Section 2.1).

Dialogue has potential to listen to different voices in the museum. Previously, Paulo Freire (1992, 27) referred to listening as part of a progressive education practice (Section 2.1). Simon (2010, 1) argues that through participation people have a voice that can develop valuable experiences in museums, potentially learning ones. François Matarasso (2008, 11) agrees, referring specifically to art programmes that engage young people, supporting them to

create aspirations, exploration, wonder and empathy, define values, and find a voice. Matarasso (2008) argues that:

> Finding a voice, and the confidence to use it, is the other side of the empathy required to listen to others: collectively, they are essential to becoming an autonomous member of a democratic society. (Matarasso, 2008, 11)

Veronica Sekules, Head of education and research at the Sainsbury Centre (2011, 30) also agrees. She refers to young people, at her former practice at Tate, who wanted to have a voice that enabled them to share their own opinions. Simon's, Matarasso's and Sekules' views relate to the importance of talking and listening to allow further engagement, confidence, and potentially learning. Enlaces participants did not refer to having a voice during interviews (Section 4.2), but they talked about how audiences seem more confident after having a dialogue with them. Over the past few decades, the museum's communication role has gained more relevance:

> … communicators act as enablers and facilitators. The task of communicators –or in the museum, curators, educators, and exhibition developers- is to provide experiences that invite visitors to make meaning... The task is to produce opportunities for visitors to use what they know already to build new knowledge and new confidence in themselves as learners and as social agents. (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 139-140)

Hooper-Greenhill sees the communication's role taken by different members of staff. This research has evidence that Enlaces participants act as communicators, but there is not enough data to evaluate other staff members' effectiveness undertaking this task. Consultant_2 (2009) believes that in Mexican practice the communication role varies where the educator's focus centres on the audience while the curator concentrates on the artwork. However, for this practitioner normally there is a lack of communication with contemporary art and the curator, where "people visit, but what happened to them is not important" (consultant_2, 2009), and contributes this issue to a lack of working together internally.

In this sense, Philip Wright (1989, 146) claims that museums need to lessen the difference between curators, interpretation specialists, educators and

communicators[24], in order to achieve their programmes and activities' aims. This view relates to the previous discussion about minimising hierarchies with audiences to facilitate learning. Although Wright's perspective is over 20 years old, currently understanding the experiences, needs and interests of audiences is gaining increased relevance in museums. This recurrent hierarchical problem seems to have existed for at least 40 years, as demonstrated by Alma Wittlin (1970, 51), who referred to a need for communication specialists to act as mediators between the curator or specialist. In particular, in Mexican contemporary art museums' practice:

> We cannot interact with each visitor… If there is a scientific [well informed and researched] discourse and a good communicator, the exhibition will manage to communicate. [However] exhibition texts have developed into messages from one curator to another instead of being for audiences. Using an accessible language does not devalue the artwork (consultant_3, 2009).

This demonstrates that some curators and museums fail to create effective communications with audiences, in agreement with consultant_2 (2009) and educator_16 (2010) (Section 3.4). In these cases, launching communicative programmes such as the Enlaces one will have great relevance for the museum. Contemporary art curators commonly use a complex language, and rarely engage in dialogue with museum visitors. While curators and other members of staff remain highly intellectual and academic in their exhibitions, use of language and interpretations, audiences will keep feeling alienated by the unfamiliarity and complexity of contemporary art (discussed in previous chapters).

The staff influence audiences through the way they speak about the artwork (verbally, visually, and written), which involves a form of power (Lynch, 2009, 16; in agreement with director_1, 2010). Bourdieu (1991, 109) and Michel Foucault (1977, 213) agree that the authority of language comes from the person who speaks, such as the intellectual or the Enlace participant. For Bourdieu (1991, 109), the language used in a particular situation involves the speaker's own style, rhetoric and social identity. The spokesperson "provides words with 'connotations' that are tied to a particular context, introducing into

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[24] The curators' complex decision-making process and unbalanced relationships between curators and other members of staff was discussed in Section 3.4.

discourse that surplus of meaning" (Bourdieu, 1991, 109). In this sense, previous sections referred to Enlaces participants as friendly and welcoming intermediaries, who define their own style to communicate individually, their influence to audiences will certainly be different to academics or curators. The impact's evaluation of the participants choice of language will need further research.

Dialogue as a form of communication that relates to learning in terms of giving value and feedback to the individual and the institution both in theory and practice. Dialogue is a social activity that involves conversation, talking and listening to one another. It is a flexible, non-restrictive and modifiable tool, useful to learn more about the opinions, needs and interests of the dialoguers. Listening, questioning, having a voice, participating and providing confidence have been argued as factors that affect learning dialogue, as long as they provoke a meaningful dialogic experiences. However, while contemporary art relates to a specialist knowledge held by limited people, the choice of words and attitude during any dialogic interaction will also have an effect on learning.

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that in theory, the contributions, learning and outcomes of audiences and intermediaries can give value to the museum, and affect future practice. Nevertheless, staff relationships are already complex. Dealing with excess of work, bureaucratic issues and established hierarchies limit and may complicate dialogue within the organisation, inevitably affecting communications with volunteers such as the Enlaces participants. These characteristics and issues of dialogue are observed in different ways in the Enlaces programme's practice, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.4. International Lessons from Dialogue in Museums

This section discusses some examples of museums around the globe that have practically used dialogue to engage audiences and learn from their experiences. These cases offer an interesting comparative context for the conception of learning dialogue discussed in this thesis. Some of these

examples refer to contemporary art museums, and others to history or art museums that have effectively worked in dialogue with specific groups or the community. The lessons from these experiences are only a few examples, but there may be other organisations that use dialogue successfully, which are out of the scope of this research.

Two main examples working with contemporary art in the UK are BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in Newcastle and Engage. Crew, the front of house team at BALTIC, operates in a similar way to the Enlaces programme. Emma Thomas (2012, 8), Head of Learning and Engagement at BALTIC, explains that Crew became part of the learning department in 2009. The aim of this move was to "understand the needs and motivations of our audiences in order to be relevant and responsive to them" (Thomas, 2012, 8). Crew has contributed to achieve BALTIC's mission, which is "to create exceptional access to important and innovative contemporary art in a unique setting, that encourages learning and transformational thinking" (quoted by Thomas, 2012, 12). Although this aim is actually apparent at the Enlaces programme, and that MuAC's mission refers to learning, the knowledge gained from audiences has not been fully considered enough at the museum.

The Crew members receive a systematic training, containing a formally published themed structure that involves an induction, informal peer learning, and talks with artists and staff (Boutell et al., 2012, 17-20), which are similar to the Enlaces programme. However, there are differences amongst both programmes, as the talks given to Crew are recorded and available to access at the BALTIC Archive. Furthermore, all the participants have access to "study bags" on each gallery floor, to enable reading during quiet times (Boutell et al., 2012, 20). Differing from the Enlaces programme, Hayley Duff (2012, 24), Learning and Engagement Manager at BALTIC, explains that the Crew's training "could not be the usual boardroom presentation training; it needed to be dynamic, easily enjoyable and useful to everyone regardless of existing skills or levels of confidence", in order to develop the participants communication skills. Hence, it included improvisation techniques such as eye contact and body language taught by actors (Duff, 2012, 26). BALTIC

developed a specific session designed to share Crew members' experiences with staff called "In a Pickle". For Duff (2012, 27), these meetings involve two-hour conversations with up to ten members of staff that enable participants to discuss their knowledge about audiences, to "formally have time together and speak about their experiences", and to talk about difficult situations encountered when talking to people.

A more direct way of sharing knowledge is conducted on a daily basis, where the Duty Manager collates Crew's information gained from audiences' comments and thoughts (Kopko, 2012, 53). This data formally registers the progress of the programme and highlights the learning and front of house teams' interest to understand audiences "to offer the very best tailor-made experience for their needs… [and to] be able to shape our offer specifically for their requirements" (Kopko, 2012, 53). BALTIC has shared the outcomes of this programme further with other organisations such as the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham and the Science Museum London (Thomas, 2012, 12). Duff (2012, 23-24) also speaks about some of the main lessons from the programme so far, which are that: 1) the conversations between Crew and audiences make a difference on welcoming and engaging visitors with contemporary art, and 2) Crew members have become specialists to assess visitors and react accordingly in a "bespoke and special way", responding to individual needs (Duff, 2012, 24). These lessons are very similar to the ones observed in the Enlaces programme, but MuAC staff have not given enough recognition to the participants, as BALTIC has done with Crew members. Furthermore, MuAC staff have not managed to formally acknowledge the importance of sharing the Enlaces participants' experiences and learning from their bespoke dialogues with audiences, which could be very useful to improve practice to attend to both participants' and audiences' needs. BALTIC has not referred to the staff's specific learning from Crew nor if they use this knowledge in practice.

Engage believes education in galleries and museums offers opportunities that promote young people's learning with greater responsibility, in order "to make choices, to become the experts, to learn together in partnership" (Taylor,

2008b, 21). Engage (2009) has developed projects in contemporary art galleries and museums around the UK, involving young people, artists and teachers, such as *Encompass* (1998-2000), *Enquire* and *Watch this Space* (2004-2011) (Taylor, 2006a; 2006b; 2006c; 2008a; 2008b). The Enlaces programme differs from Engage because its participants are young adults.

In particular, Barbara Taylor (2006a, 9) refers to three key learning benefits that relate to dialogue from the Enquire programme: 1) the acquisition and development of skills, 2) the ability to work collaboratively with peers and professionals, and 3) increased engagement, motivation, self-esteem and confidence. In the following stage of the programme, Taylor (2008a, 57-58) observes further benefits such as: learning from one another, from discussions with peers where young people learned to question and debate; the ability to take control and make their own decisions; and the appreciation of being respected and treated as equals. Some of these skills are also observed in the Enlaces participants' experiences, but some are missing such as the feeling of being valued by the museum (Chapters 5 and 6).

Another example in the UK that shows effective audience engagement was *The Peopling of London* exhibition (1993-1994) at the Museum of London. The display was the outcome of extensive consultation and outreach events that promoted cultural diversity, in response to the lack of mentioning London's ethnic minorities' histories in museums since 1945 (Merriman, 1997, 335-336). The consultation involved a mobile trailer travelling to 10 locations within London between 1992 and 1993, which invited people to share their stories or lend items for the exhibition. Nick Merriman (1997, 346), Director of The Manchester Museum, explains that after the trailer experience, 65 interviews took place, where participants were left to decide which parts of the conversation were used in the exhibition. The display attracted over 94,000 people, which included an increase of ethnic minority visitors from 4% to 20%, achieving a higher profile amongst communities previously excluded from the museum (Merriman, 1997, 356). Working with the participants and sharing control is another learning lesson from the Enlaces programme.

In Dublin, Ireland, the Irish Museum of Modern Art, which reopened in 1991 after a restoration project, had an inclusive focus to "create access to visual arts as well as engagement both in meaning and practice for all sectors of society" (O'Donoghue, 2003, 77). Helen O'Donoghue, Head of Education and Community Programmes at IMMA explains that working with artists and local communities was key to achieve this aim. O'Donoghue (2003, 79) uses the example of the *Unspoken Truths* exhibition that engaged 32 women exploring the impact of Dublin as a city in their lives. The participants were members at the Family Resource Centre, which is part of one of the local parishes, and were coordinated by an artist. IMMA's intention was to develop new audiences "as active voices in the unfolding policy of the museum" (O'Donoghue, 2003, 79). Besides the exhibition, the outcomes of this collaboration were a national conference, a publication and a video documentary, where during the opening:

> The experience of mediating their own work was hugely significant for the women on that night… This process of engaging the wider public in this direct manner revealed the strength of the exhibition and its ability to communicate to a wider cross section of the public. (O'Donoghue, 2003, 81)

This demonstrates how participants used dialogue to share their experiences directly with audiences in the museum. O'Donoghue (2003, 86) explains that after this collaboration, the participants were more interested to analyse their experiences, took more control over their participation, and promoted equal relationships for everybody. Furthermore, O'Donoghue (2003, 82) argues that the project helped to set up ground rules for communities' engagement, previously excluded at IMMA:

> These programmes seek to create an atmosphere of genuine exploration, encouraging freedom to respond, interpret, experience, react, perceive and express, therefore coming to a greater knowledge of oneself and the world... The museum programme operates in the understanding that the participant is at the centre of the dialogue (O'Donoghue, 2003, 87).

These are interesting learning lessons for MuAC, as the museums can use the dialogue that is already taking place between the Enlaces participants and audiences, to further understand the university student community and the participants' interests. In particular MuAC needs to balance the relationships between Enlaces participants and staff, and also let them take more control

and pride over their own practice in agreement with Merriman and O'Donoghue (See Chapter 5). The lessons from IMMA relate to long-term collaborations between the community and artists, and from the Museum of London refer to extensive consultation and outreach projects, which can be explored for the Enlaces programme and Mexican contemporary art museum practice in future research.

A couple of studies in the US at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History in Washington (Perin, 1992) and the Chinatown History Museum (today the Museum of Chinese in America) in New York (Tchen, 1989) offer some lessons to develop audiences through dialogue. After an ethnographic study at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History, cultural anthropologist Constance Perin (1992, 183) discovered that audiences' understanding does not always mean they agree with what they see, despite this they rarely have a chance to say what they think, which results on making assumptions about the museum's visitors. Perin (1992, 184) was interested in a communicative circle in the museum that included audiences. After having discussions with various staff members and siting on an exhibition-planning meeting, Perin (1992, 184) realised that professionals assume there is one-way communication and do not recognise that audiences' understanding is complex and affected by numerous factors, which are beyond their prior knowledge and the information already offered by the museum. She concluded that:

> Considering now how to listen to audience voices requires that we understand more about how curators, designers, educators, and administrators talk among themselves and how their discourse is affected by bringing others into it. (Perin, 1992, 188)

This brings out an interesting lesson in terms of the importance of professional dialogue amongst staff in order to share knowledge and through this affect audiences' interpretations and learning. Over 20 years later, this is still a current issue in many museums. For Perin (1992, 193-194), when the exhibition message is ambiguous, curators and designers have less control over how their discourse will be interpreted, despite how clear they feel this may be, similar to what is observed with contemporary artwork. Perin (1992, 197) investigated audiences as part of the communicative circle, and chatted

with three groups at the museum's restaurant. These conversations revealed that people were not interested in the selection of exhibitions' topics or on the way in which stories were told, instead they were willing to discuss their experiences amongst strangers. These demonstrate an example of the potential for learning dialogue. In this matter, lessons about what audiences want may differ in each country due to diverse interests affected by values, heritage and education levels. However, Perin's example is similar to the Enlaces programme, because its participants believe that audiences were willing to talk about their experiences.

On the other hand, the Chinatown History Museum was, and still is, a community museum. For Professor John Kuo Wei Tchen (1989, 290) this museum lacked of contact with audiences after the exhibition opening, which detracted to engage the local and New York community in Chinese history. For Tchen (1989, 291) the museum's intention moved to engage in a dialogue with audiences that improved "the planning and development of the organization". Tchen (1989, 293) argues the museum discovered that when the process behind its exhibition and programmes was made public, people became more active and eased to relate to these. For him, the authority of the curator or the museum "should be viewed as a shared and collaborative process" (Tchen, 1989, 297). Although the curator communicates with audiences through the exhibition content, Tchen (1989, 309-310) discusses the importance of listening to audiences, both to their explicit comments and implicit statements, which may indicate what works and what does not within the exhibition:

> …the concept of a dialogic museum needs to be thought through with the entire organization in mind… We have learned that the various levels of dialogue produce critical insights that, when taken to heart, reshape all museum productions and the museum itself. (Tchen, 1989, 314)

Hence, Tchen view agrees with Perin, that dialogue and listening are important sources for learning about audiences' and peers' experiences within the whole organisation. Despite these perspectives are over 20 years old; they uncover a relevant lesson for museums today. In particular, these

reaffirm the importance of professional dialogue that could be exploited more through the Enlaces participants at MuAC.

Other relevant international examples in Australia, Canada, and South Africa demonstrate how museums use dialogue to engage the community in practice. Viv Szekeres (2002, 234), former curator and director at the Migration Museum in Adelaide, refers to community experiences in this museum, which has the aim to document, collect and preserve the immigration history and cultural traditions of South Australia. For Szekeres (2002, 239) the museum opened a space called The Forum to allow community groups to create displays and share their own histories, rotating every three months since 1989 to date. The aim of the space was to balance the voices of different participants and to build up the profile of the museum within the community. This sounds very positive, but Szekeres does not mention any specific outcomes of community engagement success, which will need further research.

In Ontario, Canada, the *Underground Railroad* exhibition (2002-2003), at the Royal Ontario Museum, aimed to tell "the story of the escape of many Black slaves from the US into Canada through the early 1800s" (Ashley, 2005, 494). For Professor Susan Ashley (2005, 494), due to the sensitivity of the topic, the museum made a decision to deliver the exhibition with support of a consultative committee including key stakeholders such as African-Canadians. In this sense, "the production moved from being a controlled, in-house representational project, to a very public project with great symbolic meaning to the minority group it depicted" (Ashley, 2005, 494). Ashley (2005, 497) explains that the exhibition success was attributed to the ongoing dialogue with the participants, which proved "that museum policies and methodologies have the potential to be egalitarian and cohesive".

The case of District Six Museum in Cape Town, South Africa, where the museum served as a community project to explore the memory of the District Six neighbourhood, which was home to different communities of Capetonians and immigrants throughout the years (Rassool, 2006, 286-288). For Professor

Ciraj Rassool (2006, 290), the museum is perceived as "an independent site of engagement, a space of questioning and interrogation". As an example, it produced the *Streets: Retracing District Six* exhibition in 1994, which had a large map in the gallery floor that invited visitors to write any missing locations or comments (Rassool, 2006, 290). Through this experience, the museum invited the community to get "together and share their experiences and memories", allowing a dialogue between the creative and curatorial process, and affecting how people perceive art (Rassol, 2006, 291). However, this does not refer to the specific communicative relationships amongst staff. Rassool (2006, 292) explains that the museum had further impact intervening in the debates about the city's future and regeneration.

All these examples demonstrate how some museums have been interested for decades to engage in dialogue with audiences, either to work specific projects that raise the profile of the organisation or to become more inclusive of communities previously excluded. These cases refer to specific examples working with certain community groups, but have some common characteristics: sharing information about the process behind exhibitions, promoting balanced relationships and equal opportunities for stakeholders at the museum, and giving more control to and listening to audiences. These characteristics are relevant to learning dialogue, in agreement with the definition discussed in Chapter 1, when the emerging dialogues become meaningful. These lessons are observed in different levels at MuAC's Enlaces programme, because some of the learning from audiences stays with the participants only, as it will be demonstrated later on. Furthermore, these international examples recognise that there are lessons to be learned when museums take their audiences seriously in practice. However, it would be interesting to find out how much do these experiences have an impact on practice throughout the whole organisation.

In this matter, a recent study in four contemporary art museums in France and Spain[25] establishes that visitor research is unable to influence the internal management (Romanello, 2013, 63). The two French museums evaluate audiences' experiences formally since 1989 and communicate the results to major funding institutions; whereas the Spanish ones have only undertaken visitor research more recently, sporadically and by personal initiatives (Romanello, 2013, 67). The study shows that education staff undertake visitor studies because of their personal motivation, but this is not a general interest or demand of the museum (Romanello, 2013, 69):

> …contrary to what we generally tend to think, the interests that lead museums to collect information on their public do not emerge from a general need for an audience development strategy, nor from the desire to democratize culture or, in this specific case, to democratize access to contemporary art. (Romanello, 2013, 69)

Researcher Gloria Romanello (2013, 69) suggests the knowledge of audiences is still not a priority for these museums, which contradicts the previous discussion of promoting equal relationships with the public. Educators interviewed in her research talked about their difficulties to communicate, collaborate internally and their lack of influence at other levels of their organisations (Romanello, 2013, 69-71). The move "from knowledge to action" does not seem to be part of the aims of visitor studies, and although museums consider them important to show institutional sponsors an interest in audience development, these do not seem to influence decision-making within the museums (Romanello, 2013, 71). These ideas relate more closely to what happens with educators in Mexican contemporary art museums in practice, as well as the Enlaces participants at MuAC. These Mexican experiences suggest that audiences' knowledge is not collated, summarised and reflected on sufficiently, nor this influences decision-making within the organisations or promotes further citizenship participation. Most of the cases discussed here refer to developed countries, contrary to Mexico.

This chapter introduced the Enlaces programme and the way it operates to interact with MuAC's audiences. Due to the importance of dialogue for the

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[25] These are Centre Pompidou and Palais de Tokyo in Paris, and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (MNCARS) and Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza (MTB) in Madrid.

programme, its conception has been thoroughly discussed considering the museum staff's and Enlaces participants' perspectives; as well as Mexican contemporary art museum professionals' views, theoretical aspects and international museum practical examples. These viewpoints provide a wider context for dialogue, distinguishing common characteristics such as listening, questioning, confidence, having a voice and participation; which have an impact on learning.

The chapter has demonstrated that programmes such as the Enlaces one, have great potential to facilitate learning, while the participants offer accompanied, welcoming, mediated, and specialist content dialogic personalised experiences. However, international museums' experiences and theoretical aspects add other aspects that are relevant for dialogue, such as working together with audiences, offering them balanced opportunities of participation, creating equal relationships for them, sharing control, and validating their opinions and contributions; which have also great potential to create learning within the museum. Enlaces participants, the intermediaries of museum-audiences experiences, through professional dialogue, can support sharing knowledge and practices internally. This task requires the staff to spend time gathering, collating and evaluating the main implications from learning dialogue that could be useful when shared across the organisation, as will be discussed next.

Chapter 5

Implications from the Enlaces Participants Learning Dialogue

This chapter discusses the main research question of the thesis: how does dialogue impact on Mexican contemporary art museum learning of the Enlaces participants and museum staff? The research has evidence that the participants, as mediators between contemporary art and audiences at the University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC), engage in dialogue with two different stakeholders: audiences and museum staff. Section 5.1 analyses the dialogue between Enlaces participants and audiences. Evidence from fieldwork interviews demonstrates that participants engage in three types of dialogue with audiences that have learning potential, which are: (a) visual internal dialogue, related to looking at the artwork. According to participants, this takes place in order to experience contemporary art prior to any further conversations with audiences, and then continues and overlaps with other types of dialogue. (b) Content dialogue, comprises providing specialist knowledge about contemporary art and exhibitions, and facilitates understanding and familiarity with this type of art. (c) Participatory dialogue, involves interacting actively with people during the museum visit, where all the dialoguers co-create meanings about contemporary art.

María Engracia Vallejo (2002b, 14), key developer of education departments in museums at the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), refers to communication with visitors on three levels, which relate to the learning dialogue with audiences observed at MuAC. For Vallejo the museum communication takes place through: 1) the collection as the centre and facilitator for the public, this experience involves visual internal dialogue; 2) a direct discourse and interaction with the audiences' individual knowledge and references, this can include content dialogue when ideas are shared verbally; and 3) additional activities, which sometimes involve participatory dialogue.

One of the learning limitations of engaging audiences with contemporary art is when visitors' needs, interests and understanding are ignored or assumed in

museums (Perin, 1992, 184; Wittlin, 1970, 51). Hilde Hein (2000, 63) argues that staff should not make assumptions about audiences, but be realistic about them. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1992, 210) agrees, as she recognises that the knowledge of audiences is as important as the knowledge of making exhibitions:

> …museums develop new ways of finding out about audiences and their attitudes, beliefs, values, and habits in so far as these affect museum-going habits, so new practices are developing to incorporate the findings of museum work. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, 210)

These perspectives are still current and highlight the relevance of reinventing the museum operations to deal more directly with audiences, who consequently can also affect its practice. In the case of Mexico, for director_9 (2010) museums have meaning when they understand their audiences better; acknowledging their importance for the museum too. Furthermore, the varied roles of museum professionals individually have "their own viewpoint in relation to the missing member of the group, the audience" (Layzell, 1997, 3). It has been argued that dialogue involves both agreeing and differing opinions, even those of museum staff, which Paul Owens (1998) notes as follows:

> Differing individual perspectives do not matter in themselves. Problems arise when there is no dialogue between these viewpoints, when tensions are not identified and discussed, and there is a resulting confusion over core purposes (Owens, 1998, 31).

Although the dialogue at MuAC in this research only considers the interactions between staff and the Enlaces participants, the thesis suggests that MuAC staff can gain significant knowledge by having more discussions about the participants' experiences, which have not been fully acknowledged and utilised so far. Communicating this knowledge can influence museum practice, and potentially enable professional learning dialogue. Considering this perspective, Section 5.2 discusses the lessons of learning dialogue with MuAC staff, observed in three categories. First, peer dialogue, as the participants demonstrate their learning is affected by having conversations with one another, which enriches their own understanding and learning about audiences and contemporary art. Second, professional dialogue, offers the potential to share practices and expertise in the museum internally. Third, limited dialogue, which refers to areas of improvement, where the museum

has not exploited the full potential of learning through the experiences of the Enlaces programme[1]. This investigation findings' analysis identified three key areas of limited dialogue: communication, recognition and teamwork, which constrain the staff's learning potential, and impact on future museum practice.

5.1. Learning Dialogue with Audiences

The Enlaces programme has proved to be an effective tool to support audiences' further understanding and potentially their learning about contemporary art. The quality of the museum visitors' experiences and their significance are out of the scope of this research. But the thesis has argued they are key stakeholders in the museum (Sections 2.3 and 4.3). For Male_Enlace_8 (2010) audiences are "protagonists, as without them there is no art"[2]. Is there an effective dialogue between audiences and Enlaces participants? Does it become a learning dialogue? The participants' perspectives have been used to identify the meaningfulness of their dialogue and their perception about their effect on audiences. For 24% of participants' interviewed (2010) (8 of 34), audiences are an unexpected source of learning, during their experience as part of the Enlaces programme:

> Enlaces participants learn a lot from audiences, who make us question things, everyday issues, and ideas. How do we speak to audiences and on which terms? We need to know how to talk to people to get answers from them. We learn to approach audiences and help them create their own questions, but we are also influenced by the way in which they respond (Female_Enlace_19, 2010).

This participant's view refers to the impact of audiences on her own practice and how this affects future dialogue with other people. Female_Enlace_17 (2010) agrees as dialogue is important, not only as a tool to provide information to audiences, but it also helps her finding better ways to respond to and support audiences' further questioning and understanding of contemporary art. These views relate to asking meaningful questions to engage audiences further (Section 4.3). Male_Enlace_13 (2010) concurs, and adds that listening to audiences' opinions reveals issues or elements of the

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[1] Both professional and limited dialogues were also evidenced from interviews with Mexican contemporary art museum professionals (fieldwork research, 2009-2010).
[2] Putnam (2001, 195) and director_9 (2010) agree that audiences give value to the museum (also see Section 4.4).

artwork that Enlaces participants have not noticed before [3] . These perspectives also suggest that dialogue supports the co-creation of meanings[4]. Based on Emily Pringle's (2006, 40) view learning outcomes involve shared knowledge and skills, observed through "the ability to work with others and the ability to see from others' point of view". Female_Enlace_1 (2010) agrees with the importance of dialogue with audiences for the participants:

> It is more useful for the Enlaces participants as we keep the audiences' opinions and ideas, which allow us to create further explanation about what the artwork is (Female_Enlace_1, 2010).

This Enlaces participant view suggests that an "explanation", which is one of many possible interpretations, can provide depth of knowledge to familiarise audiences with contemporary art and support understanding the process of creation and the idea behind the artwork. Male_Enlace_9 (2010) agrees adding that more information can profoundly change the emotional response to an artwork. However, an explanation may not lead to participation if it is given as a monologue that does not allow the other person to respond, for example, allowing the audiences to remain passive. Furthermore, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 123) suggests explanations are useful when audiences have trouble "grasping the meanings and relevance of certain displays". Adriana Lara's *Banana Skin,* is an example of an artwork that will not make sense on its own:

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[3] Male_Enlace_6 and Male_Enlace_12 (2010) also agree with this, as audiences' views broaden the Enlaces participants' perspectives.
[4] Previously, Male_MuAC_3 (2010), Lynch (2009), Ravelli (2006), Roberts (1997), Silverman (1993) and Simon (2010) referred to audiences participating in the co-creation of knowledge.

Image 5.1.
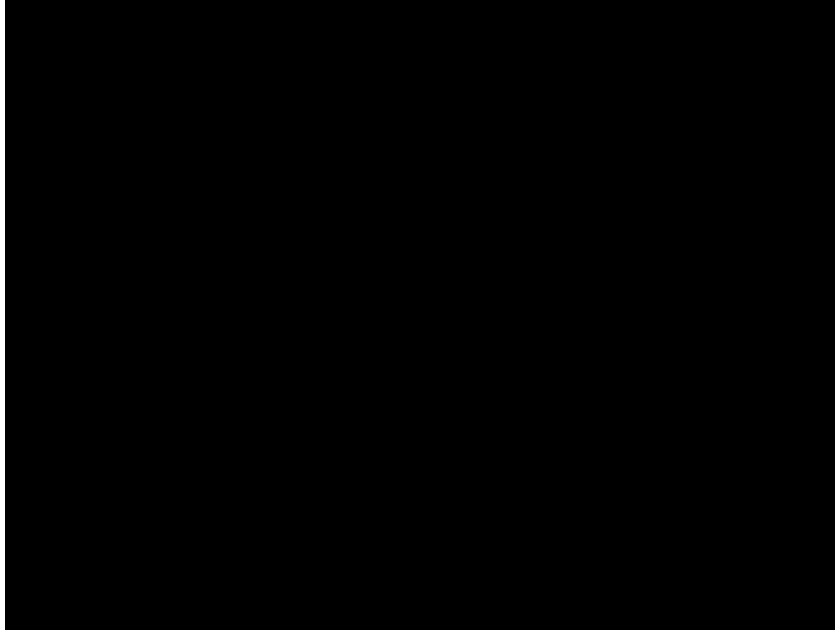
Lara, Adriana (2008) *Installation (Banana Skin)*, variable dimensions. An Unruly History of the Readymade, Fundación/Colección Jumex, Mexico City. 8th October 2008-February 2009[5]

Banana Skin, by Mexican artist Adriana Lara, requires the participation of a museum employee to eat a banana every morning and discard the skin anywhere in the exhibition space, having a security guard invigilate it (New Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009). The work is commonly seen as "out of place", not belonging to the museum (Brion, 2009), and the artist achieves the creation of "a small mess of life into the hallowed halls of art" (New Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009). Lara is pushing the boundaries of artwork creation, tests concepts of what is accepted as an artwork, and can provoke questions such as: why is this object in the museum[6]. Without more information or an explanation, audiences are likely to perceive *Banana Skin* as rubbish in the gallery floor. For this reason, some artworks require museums to offer communication programmes such as guided tours, or the Enlaces programme, which will benefit their audiences' access to contemporary art (curator_5, 2010; educator_6, 2009).

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[5] The exhibition displayed the arworks in a chess-like format. *Banana Skin* was in one of the squares, identified by a number. There was an exhibition leaflet with the map of the exhibition that included the name of the artist only (Fundación/Colección Jumex, 2009; fieldwork observations, 2009). There was no further information available for the audience in the exhibition space.
[6] This thesis does not argue whether the works in the museum are art or not, as this is out of its limitations.

Beyond providing an explanation, Paulo Freire (1996, 61) explores the notion that dialogue requires reflection and action to be able "to transform the world". In this sense, dialogue on its own may not have an effect on people when they do not spend enough time thinking about what they have said, and in the case of the museum also what they have seen. Furthermore, for Freire (1996, 73) only true "dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking". Freire's view relates to the Enlaces participants because they constantly rethink and redirect their approach and their way of communicating in future dialogues with audiences, as demonstrated earlier in this section. This reflection does not necessarily transform the world but affects their practice and how they will influence future audiences' interpretation. Mexican professional interviewees also spoke about being critical as a crucial aim of contemporary art museums, but without referring to dialogue with other people explicitly (educator_4, 2009; curator_6, 2010; Male_MuAC_2, 2010). Freire's view suggests the importance of dialogue to promote criticalness, demonstrated through the Enlaces participants' reflection about audiences, which can be promoted further within MuAC:

> We aim to provoke reflection and knowledge, where both audiences and Enlaces participants learn from each other (Male_Enlace_11, 2010)

> We learn from audiences and teach them about contemporary art. The museum does not like to refer to the Enlaces programme as a form of education but this is what it is. (Male_Enlace_4, 2010)

These participants' views emphasise dialogue's two-way learning potential, with the possibility to create a learning dialogue. One of the key things aimed by the Enlaces participants is opening audiences' perspectives about contemporary art. In particular, when Mexican citizens have been predisposed by the government to certain heritage and arts ideas for over a century (Section 2.1). In this matter, Female_Enlace_1 (2010) feels that in her experience some people were not very interested and seemed bored by contemporary art initially, but left the museum astonished after having a dialogue with her. Female_Enlace_9 (2010) agrees and feels that some of her comments made audiences reflect and feel less inhibited. Further:

> The experience at MuAC overcame my expectations because of the audiences, and not the museum or the Enlaces Programme. I thought that audiences were not going to be interested, and that MuAC was just fashionable, but in reality they were interested (Female_Enlace_12, 2010).

These opening of perspectives and increasing interests relate to supporting audiences' confidence to approach and interpret contemporary art, which was discussed as an outcome of dialogue in Section 4.3. Male_Enlace_1 (2010) speaks about the issue of broadening perspectives, explaining that after the dialogue, audiences would commonly tell him: "if you would have not been talking to me, I would have not understood the artwork". The analysis of evidence gathered from interviews with the Enlaces participants revealed three types of dialogue with audiences, discussed as follows:

(a)   Visual Internal Dialogue

Interviews with some Enlaces participants exposed the importance of looking at the artwork prior to having a dialogue with audiences[7]. However, this visualisation can overlap or take place instead, during and after the dialogue with Enlaces participants. Visual internal dialogue is defined as the ability to look at contemporary artwork individually at any time. In Mexican contemporary art practice, some professionals still aim to offer an individual and uninterrupted experience with the artwork only:

> As curators, sometimes we explain too much and sometimes nothing, it is complicated. Art is a dialogue on its own and dialogue with someone else is not needed (curator_10, 2010).

> Mexican contemporary art curators oppose to any education processes, because they think anything between the artwork and audiences acts as an interruption (consultant_2, 2009)

> I do not agree to give lots of information to audiences, as then people only take the information and do not see the artwork. I prefer the direct experience with the work (curator_11, 2010)

These professionals incline for the sole experience of visual internal dialogue. In this matter, writer Lisa Roberts (2004, 215) explains how in art museums many staff members feel that anything intervening with the artwork "alters, simplifies, and trivialises not only the art on view but also the experience of

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[7] Male_Enlace_3, Male_Enlace_11, Male_Enlace_12 and Male_Enlace_13 (2010).

looking". Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 117) also suggests that "meaning is dialogic –a dialogue between viewer and object", which is not necessarily verbal, but rather a mute dialogue that every audience member experiences when visiting the museum, at least for a few seconds:

> Visual experience cannot always be articulated verbally, and this makes it more difficult to discuss, to share, to understand. (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 4)

For Hooper-Greenhill, sometimes it is not easy to talk about the artwork. This will happen especially when it is unfamiliar or difficult to connect with, as is the case with contemporary art. John Falk and Lynn Dierking (1992, 129) agree, as they suggest "vision is the most distancing of the senses, and in museums this meant visitors kept their distance from the displays." This distance gap increases when contemporary art museums are not welcoming. In some cases, visual internal dialogue can be enough to promote learning, especially because verbal dialogue may not be for everyone. Nina Simon (2010, 4) claims that some audiences prefer not to "share their story, talk with a stranger" and still fancy exhibitions that show authoritative knowledge. However, considering these theoretical views and the ones from Enlaces participants discussed earlier, sometimes visual internal dialogue alone is not enough to promote understanding and learning, especially when contemporary art is complex, for example with Lara's *Banana Skin*. The Enlaces programme moves audiences from isolated experiences to conversations and participation, which can turn into learning dialogue when they are meaningful, for example:

> Visually there is always something that makes us feel, remember, associate our personal individual experience, which can become a permanent experience (Male_Enlace_1, 2010).

This participant's view refers to relating the artwork to and making connections with what we know (Section 3.3). A changing visual experience suggests that it is potentially significant, and hence it can become a visual internal learning dialogue. Contrary to the previous quotes from Mexican curators, writers such as Néstor García Canclini (1987, 56) argue that the experience with the artwork should not always be isolated, as discussed in

Section 1.1, in particular when contemporary artworks may require further information and explanation.

Mexican museums share a common problem of audiences complaining about their inability to understand contemporary art. For example, a visitor wrote in the comments book of the Modern Art Museum in Mexico City in 2010: "I tried to understand the artwork, but I found it very difficult. Maybe this art is not for me". Other books of comments show similar opinions to this one (Appendix 1.10). These confirm that sometimes contemporary artwork alone is not able to communicate and engage with audiences in practice. A visitor at MuAC agreed there is a need for further dialogue beyond the visual internal one, stating: "your eyes do not see what your mind does not know"[8]. These comments reinforce the Enlaces participants' role to put visual internal dialogue into words, to provoke further critical thought and potentially learning. François Matarasso (2008) supports this idea through his example of art programmes engaging young people, which are supported to:

> …externalise developing ideas in communicable form and learn how they are similar and different from others, and how to communicate better what they want to share. (Matarasso, 2008, 9)

This demonstrates that verbal dialogue supports sharing ideas and interacting with other people after visualising the artwork, which can improve further ways of communication, as observed with the Enlaces participants. Former Executive Director at the Arts Council England, Clive Caseley (2008, 11), speaks about the findings from a youth art education programme. He refers to the promotion of visual literacy as an opportunity "to develop the tools and vocabulary to experience and respond to art" (Caseley, 2008, 11), which provides confidence to its participants. This vocabulary potentially refers to specific topics, issues, techniques and media used in contemporary art, which are not necessarily known by audiences, such as the example of what an installation is (educator_1, Section 4.1), which can be discussed through content dialogue[9].

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[8] This comment was heard during fieldwork observations at MuAC, on 24th January 2010.
[9] Further research will be needed to understand visual literacy in Mexican contemporary art museums.

Female_Enlace_6 (2010)'s view relates to Matarasso and Freire. She speaks about the importance to move on from contemplation (visual internal dialogue) to analysis of everyday objects and topics, in order to change ways of thinking and questioning your own self through contemporary art. This perspective reinforces the previous argument that learning ultimately takes place individually (Female_Enlace_17, 2010; Section 3.4). Female_Enlace_6's view concurs with Pringle (2006, 40) who observes reflection as a learning outcome, in terms of "increased understanding and appreciation of art as a body of practices and concepts… [and] critical skills." Dialogue can support this individual reflection and learning. Furthermore, views by H. Hein (2000, 36), George Hein (1998, 35) and Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 118) argued that it is inevitable that audiences will use their personal knowledge to connect with the artwork, as discussed in Section 3.3. However, more information also makes audiences look and reflect further:

> You learn new things, but this depends on the skill of observation and disposition to observe the artwork's textures, materials, and techniques; to visit its diverse dimensions; to recur to additional information and texts that escape our eyes. We learn about techniques but also ways of communicating things and recognising and recreating symbols (Male_Enlace_12, 2010).

Male_Enlace_12 agrees with Matarasso and provides great detail about developing an ability to look at contemporary art through visual internal dialogue. Interestingly, this participant refers to 'recognising symbols', which relate to Roland Barthes (1991, 237) perspective about signs as elements that repeat themselves and become familiar through repetition[10]. This stresses the fact that repeated experiences with contemporary art will make people feel more comfortable and able to engage with it. Furthermore:

> Dialogue is not only important in the way you talk, but also as a visual form of listening and stimulating our senses (Male_Enlace_6, 2010).

The experience of visual internal dialogue can involve reactions provoked by talking to others, having more information, and looking at the artwork again. Hence, the Enlaces programme takes visual internal dialogue one-step-ahead,

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[10] Dodd (2002), Hood (1983) and García Canclini (1987) also referred to art museums that communicate with audiences, who aim to understand and look for certain codes within the artwork.

offering further verbal dialogue to understand the artwork: providing specialist knowledge through content dialogue or promoting active and balanced discussions by using participatory dialogue. For Male_Enlace_12 (2010) dialogue helps audiences to look at the artwork differently and revalue previously dismissed elements, such as everyday objects that suddenly become clearer. These participants reinforce that visual internal dialogue constantly takes place at the same time of other verbal dialogues, where reflection or even acknowledgment provoke audiences to look at the work again, reengaging in visual internal dialogue. Falk and Dierking (1992, 128) agree suggesting observation supports new and consolidates previous learning.

The Enlaces participants' experiences with audiences claim visual internal dialogue as a prerequisite to provoke further reflection, questioning and critical thought, both socially and individually. Nevertheless, visual internal dialogue can take place simultaneously with content and participatory dialogues. This is the only type of dialogue discussed in this research that does not necessarily involve conversations or verbal interactions.

(b)   Content Dialogue

Findings from fieldwork analysis reveal content dialogue as another category from learning dialogue with audiences, due to the existing difficulty to experience contemporary art[11]. Content dialogue is verbal and face-to-face, where Enlaces participants share specialist information about contemporary art (techniques, media, processes, artworks, artists, themes, and any other issues related to it)[12]. Content dialogue also involves the dialoguers' opinions and ideas about their experiences with this type of art, which relate to everyday life. It enables further understanding and can turn into a content learning dialogue, for both audiences and Enlaces participants, when it

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[11] Male_Enlace_7, Male_Enlace_9 and Female_Enlace_1 (2010)
[12] Some Enlaces participants (10 of 34) agree that dialogue increased audiences' understanding about contemporary art's processes, techniques, medium and topics (fieldwork interviews, 2010).

becomes meaningful. Content dialogue at MuAC takes place after, and at the same time as, visual internal dialogue[13].

For Male_Enlace_7 (2010), contemporary art breaks with the traditional or "the art that audiences are used to". Male_Enlace_8 (2010) gives the example of audiences experiencing an art installation for the first time, and feels that after they became interested they will be more able to interpret another work from this medium in the future. Female_Enlace_2 (2010) concurs. For her an installation can be very conceptual, hence talking about its background helps audiences to understand it better. Further, Female_Enlace_12 (2010) agrees with director_1 above (see Chapter 1), that the process is sometimes more important than the actual artwork. For her, when people do not know about this, they say: "I can do that", despite that the final artwork could have taken four years to be completed. Content dialogue creates awareness of certain characteristics of contemporary art. However, it is difficult to know how much one experience will be influential in future museum visits, without evaluating audiences' learning directly. Content dialogue also helps to recognise elements in the artwork:

> The experience with contemporary art is not idealised anymore; we provide hints of signs and symbols (Male_Enlace_14, 2010)

> In the process of dialogue, I provide elements so audiences can decode the artwork (Female_Enlace_9, 2010)

Although knowing about these clues can be useful for some people, very directed hints can influence interpretation too, rather than leaving it open and free[14]. For Male_Enlace_10 (2010), the important thing is that content dialogue gives concrete references to audiences. Mexican professional interviewees claim audiences increase their awareness when they recognise contemporary art, and identify techniques, topics or elements in it. For example, director_4 (2010) feels that audiences participating more actively

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[13] Although content dialogue has been defined based on Enlaces participants' practical experiences at MuAC, it can similarly take place in other institutions or museums that intend to enable share content dialogically with audiences.

[14] Directing audiences' thoughts is not exclusive to dialogue. Education programmes or curated exhibitions can also do this.

with the artwork broaden their vision and even transform[15] or surprise themselves, when they realise that contemporary art can refer directly to current life issues. Furthermore,

> We introduce contemporary art, which breaks and goes beyond painting or sculpture. This turns into something bigger. When audiences notice contemporary art is new, innovative and extraordinary, they become more interested, they want to come back to the museum. (Male_Enlace_8, 2010)

Female_Enlace_16 (2010) agrees with Mexican museum professionals that contemporary art communicates the reality of Mexico and the world, based on diverse aspects of life such as daily life, politics, society, or culture, which can provoke empathy or reactions leading to thoughts or emotions. Curator_6 (2010) gives another example, suggesting that the contemporary art museum has the freedom to discuss major current issues such as drug trafficking, which may surprise audiences that do not expect to find discussions of this kind in this venue. This can be challenging for those who expect to see "beautiful artworks that talk about the country and its glory" (curator_6, 2010), in particular because these audience members may not like to be questioned about difficult topics. Moreover, Female_Enlace_10 (2010) feels that contemporary art responds to current generational needs, deficiencies, "and to what we are". These topics may refer to society problems and present day issues, which some Mexican audiences may have difficulty relating to. Staff member Male_MuAC_2 (2010) reinforces this problematic:

> Contemporary art proposes an open system that is possibly not happening in other disciplines; it is a type of rubbish dump, where things that do not fit anywhere else are thrown. Contemporary art provokes questions about being, science, reality and attitude with your own self. It helps to construct a meaning to reality, and to find other ways of relating with reality. (Male_MuAC_2, 2010)

There is no reason why audiences should know that contemporary art acts as rubbish dump (see Image 5.2 below). In particular when they are used to the idea of monumental art and greatness promoted from the muralism onwards (discussed in Chapter 2). In this sense, Female_Enlace_1 (2010) refers to another aspect of how contemporary art breaks with the traditional, as "you can touch, trespass, and damage the artwork even when you don't want to."

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[15] Transformative experiences have the potential to become meaningful and learning ones (H. Hein, 2000, 85; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 116).

This clearly will affect the experience, as audiences will not necessarily be looking at the artwork only. The Enlaces programme helps audiences relating contemporary art to daily experiences, which initially can be confusing or unusual, as people may not have done this with art before.

Image 5.2
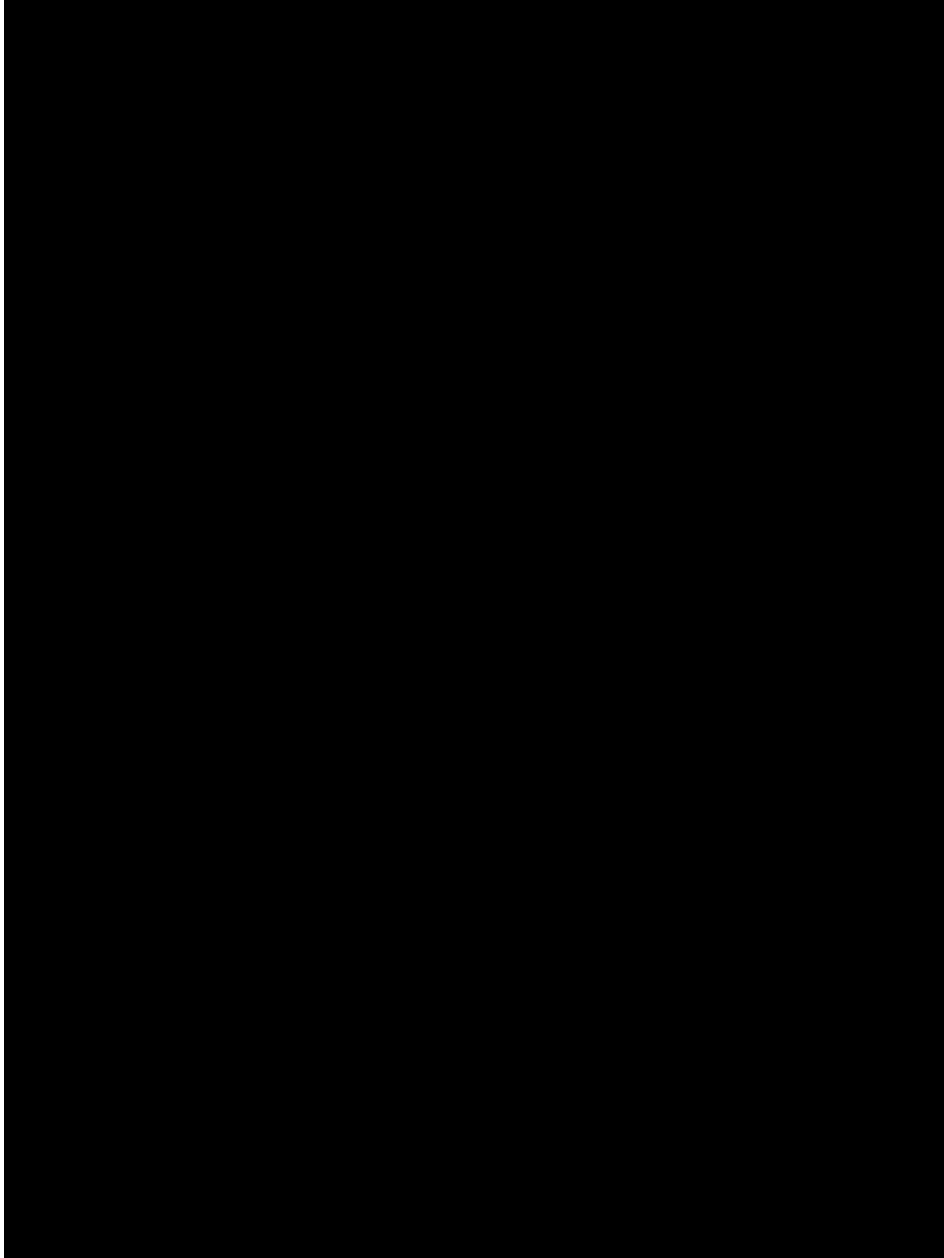
Artwork in the background by O'Connell, Antonio (2009) *Jazzercise.* Installation variable dimensions. Recycling Programme 2009-2010, University Museum of Contemporary Art, Mexico City. 14th September 2009-21st March 2010[16].

Content dialogue can support understanding a work like *Jazzercise* (Image 5.2)*.* It is an art installation created with waste materials from UNAM's

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[16] The artwork was displayed with a short exhibition panel (fieldwork observations, 2010).

warehouses, such as pianos, music stands and seats; which according to MuAC (2009a), were everyday pieces of past actions and stories. Regardless of its monumental size, the artwork used recycled waste materials, but the final product shows more creativity than works like Lara's *Banana Skin* (See Image 5.1), which are also made from rubbish. Image 5.2 does not demonstrate dialogue with Enlaces participants but only one conversation between audience members; there is no information about the nature of this dialogue. However, Image 5.2 illustrates social interaction with contemporary artwork at MuAC and visual internal dialogue (fieldwork observations, 2010).

As it has been demonstrated, the Enlaces participants offer specialist knowledge to audiences, who feel there is a need for more information because of the following reasons. For Female_Enlace_14 (2010), people that do not understand contemporary art ask why certain artworks are in the museum. She feels that the role of the Enlaces participants is to provide information and let audiences create their own meanings. Female_Enlace_1 (2010) agrees and adds that without the Enlaces programme, audiences would not be able to ask questions. For her, a large number of audiences leave the museum without understanding and feeling "contemporary art is ugly, strange and inexplicable"; Adriana Lara's *Banana Skin* (Image 5.1) is an example of this. Moreover, Male_Enlace_9 (2010) explains that although some audiences may have liked contemporary artwork, they usually do not know why. Hence, content dialogue supports answering questions about it[17]. In this matter, Roberts (1997, 226-227) argues that greater knowledge can empower audiences' reflection and thought, which potentially affect learning, also observed by some Enlaces participants:

> [The programme aims] to let audiences have another argument and the freedom to decide if they do or do not like contemporary art (Female_Enlace_10, 2010)

> I like to research more concepts to be able to link them to audiences, in order to stimulate their own criteria based on their experience (Female_Enlace_7, 2010)

Both participants' views relate content dialogue to providing confidence so that audiences participate, give their own opinions, and feel free to share

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[17] Some Mexican professionals also agree that contemporary art provokes questions (curator_11, 2010; educator_17, 2009). See Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

ideas too, in agreement with Roberts. Hence, their interactions with audiences have learning potential. Barbara Taylor (2006a, 9) also proposes increased engagement as a potential learning outcome of art learning programmes, which incites greater "motivation, self-esteem and confidence". In relation to this:

> Learning is not so linked to us because of the society we live in, but it is part of our everyday life, experience, vision, as seen in photography or music too (Male_Enlace_6, 2010)

> We approach people to inspire them, to show them art has a feature for social change (Female_Enlace_15, 2010).

Contemporary art is closely related to experiences and everyday life, according to (21 of 34) Enlaces participants[18]. Female_Enlace_10 (2010) feels that in some cases the artwork helps to makes sense of contemporary life topics. Male_Enlace_12 (2010) agrees that linking the artwork with personal experiences, anecdotes or the artist's life, is useful to engage audiences with contemporary art. However, he prefers to detract from using these topics because he feels they are not to do with the artwork. Some Enlaces participants (fieldwork interviews, 2010) add that audiences associate contemporary art easily to things that they know from everyday life. This is in agreement with Falk and Dierking (2000, 194-195), who suggest that these references, for example stories, help audiences to relate to the artwork. It also relates to theoretical aspects of learning experiences discussed in Section 3.3.

As an example Female_Enlace_10 (2010)speaks about her experience with audiences in relation to Cuban artist Félix González-Torres' work *Untitled (Perfect Lovers).* The work, displayed at MuAC in 2010, was created in 1991, the same year in which the artist's partner died of AIDS. It consists of two clocks set exactly at the same time, which may go out of sync through the course of the exhibition (Modern Teachers, no date). The idea of being in and out of sync can be commonly related to human relationships. Female_Enlace_10 (2010) relates this work to the feeling of losing someone, which for her helps to provoke deeper connections with audiences. In this

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[18] This is in agreement with director_8 (2010), Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 142-143), and Stallabrass (2004, 187).

case, providing more information about the artwork through content dialogue can create more meaningful experiences.

Open-minded attitudes about contemporary art were an outcome of content dialogue observed through (9 of 34) Enlaces participants' experiences with audiences. Mexican professionals also referred to this issue in relation to existing prejudices against contemporary art that affect learning, where audiences react strongly against this type of art (director_1, educator_15, educator_16, 2010; Section 2.1). In this matter, for staff member Male_MuAC_2 (2010) when audiences have open-minded attitudes, they understand and learn about contemporary art easily; 17% of Enlaces participants (6 of 34) concur with this. However, Male_Enlace_12 (2010) speaks about dialogue offering additional information that may change audiences' perceptions about contemporary art:

> "What is this?" is the most common question from people. The approach from audiences is very judgmental. We help them to eliminate prejudices, and start observing and reflecting, in order to have a complete museum experience (Male_Enlace_12, 2010).

The Enlaces participants may help audiences overcome these prejudices through content dialogue. As an example, Female_Enlace_16 (2010) refers to honesty about her contemporary art knowledge limitations, which was highly appreciated by audiences, who in many cases became more open-minded when she openly said that she was only giving them an opinion. Furthermore, Female_Enlace_11 (2010) feels that Enlaces participants' impact was beyond giving access to contemporary art: "we were changing the conception of the museum from a tedious to an open space without the usual prohibitions."

Enlaces participants discussed increased understanding of contemporary art, as part of their content dialogue with audiences, which is another learning outcome from their own experiences[19]. This knowledge starts developing during their training sessions (Section 4.1). There is barely any evidence about the staff's learning from these content dialogue experiences, with the

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[19] Pringle (2006, 34) and Taylor (2006a, 9) argue that museum education promotes participants' engagement and understanding about contemporary art, which involve the acquisition and development of analytical and reflective skills.

exception of Female_MuAC_1 (2010), who argues that she has learned a great deal and everyone in the staff needs updated training in contemporary art because it changes all the time.

Content dialogue has learning potential for all dialoguers, who actively learn and gain new specialist knowledge about contemporary artworks, while having a visual internal dialogue. In particular, content dialogue aims to create open-minded attitudes towards contemporary art increased understanding, and to support audiences' familiarisation and confidence with it. Content dialogue may also take place between Enlaces participants and MuAC staff, for example during training sessions, or as demonstrated through special meetings dedicated to sharing experiences in the example of Crew at Baltic (Duff, 2012, 27), discussed in Section 4.4.

(c) Participatory Dialogue

Participation has an impact on learning, which Etienne Wenger (1998, 55) referred to as a social activity that involves taking part and relating to others, in Section 3.3. For G. Hein (1998, 2) and Hooper-Greenhill (1992, 211) participation means that audiences need to be more active in the museum, using their minds and acquiring knowledge. Participatory dialogue enables all the dialoguers to actively talk, listen, respond and react to one another's views, in order to promote further connections, debate, negotiation and meaning about the artwork, the museum and the people around. Participatory dialogue was observed as another type of dialogue in the Enlaces programme's practice. It does not focus on specialist knowledge only, although it can involve content dialogue, but rather on more active discussions that can relate to experience and emotions.

Enlaces participants' opinions are varied in relation to how active audiences in dialogue are. For 26% of Enlaces participants (9 of 34), there is balanced participation, where audiences are talkative and receptive when they engage in dialogue. Conversely, 12% of participants (4 of 34) explicitly say that audiences do not want to talk and prefer to listen quietly, which limits dialogue,

and the Enlaces participants' intervention possibly turns into a monologue or a passive guided tour. Another 21% of respondents (7 of 34) explain that some audiences decide not to take part in dialogue because they are timid or feel that what they say will be wrong. Whereas 21% of the participants (7 of 34) argue that participation varies according to the audiences' attitudes and interests. The remaining 20% of respondents did not comment on the issue of participation. Interestingly, the above 26% of Enlaces participants who feel that audiences do take part in participatory dialogue are mostly men, and the 21% who argue that audiences do not partake in dialogue are women. This indicates the participants' gender possibly influences their attitude towards social interaction with other people at MuAC. More research will be needed to analyse this issue. Furthermore, although many audiences take part in the dialogue, Female_Enlace_4 and Male_Enlace_7 (2010) feel that it is unlikely they will approach Enlaces participants.

Not every audience member will be interested in participating in dialogue (Simon, 2010, 4), as demonstrated through some of the Enlaces participants' views, but those who do are able to share ideas, connect with others, engage with, and contribute to the institution. Female_Enlace_9 (2010) agrees and feels that in practice participation helps to provoke people's thought, and Male_Enlace_10 (2010) adds that focusing on audiences' participation is "essential as the artworks arise and activate debates" in contemporary art. These participants' views demonstrate that participatory dialogue is useful to provoke critical thinking and debate in the museum. Professor Declan McGonagle (2004, 15) agrees that participation involves "the negotiation of meaning and value in the art process, where the 'non-artist' becomes essential for the completion of the artwork." Both staff and audiences can take on this 'non-artist' role and participate in the interpretation of the work.

In terms of encouraging participation, Male_Enlace_1 (2010) feels that dialogue should be dynamic and avoid showing that Enlaces participants know everything about contemporary art. This relates to the previous argument of being in a position of authority in relation to knowledge, which can be intimidating for some audiences (Section 2.3). Learning to 'read'

people (Male_Enlace_4 and Female_MuAC_3, 2010) has been discussed as relevant to promote this dynamism and a flowing dialogue, being perceptive and able to react to audiences' behaviours and comments. However, according to Male_Enlace_2 (2010), participants also needed to know to improvise when it was required. Participatory dialogue is effective, not only to negotiate points of view, but also to co-create meanings. For example, Male_Enlace_1 (2010) explains that he encourages audiences to talk more, and when they participate and refer to their experience this enriches their understanding of the artwork. Female_Enlace_12 (2010) differs, as she feels that she talks more at the beginning, but afterwards audiences need to be heard, and sometimes they even explain the artwork to her. Both experiences suggest finding connections through participation, which reinforce McGonagle (2004) view:

> Key to this is a dynamic of bridging – a process of connecting and reconnecting, and of negotiation with the ideas, with material, with tradition, with identity, with the social and political, as well as the aesthetic. (McGonagle, 2004, 16)

McGonagle suggests that meanings and interpretation constantly change and are affected by a diversity of factors. Following this perspective, because the Enlaces participants constantly listen to reinterpretations of the same works from varied audiences and staff members, they are negotiating, reconnecting and redefining their own understanding of contemporary art.

Image 5.3
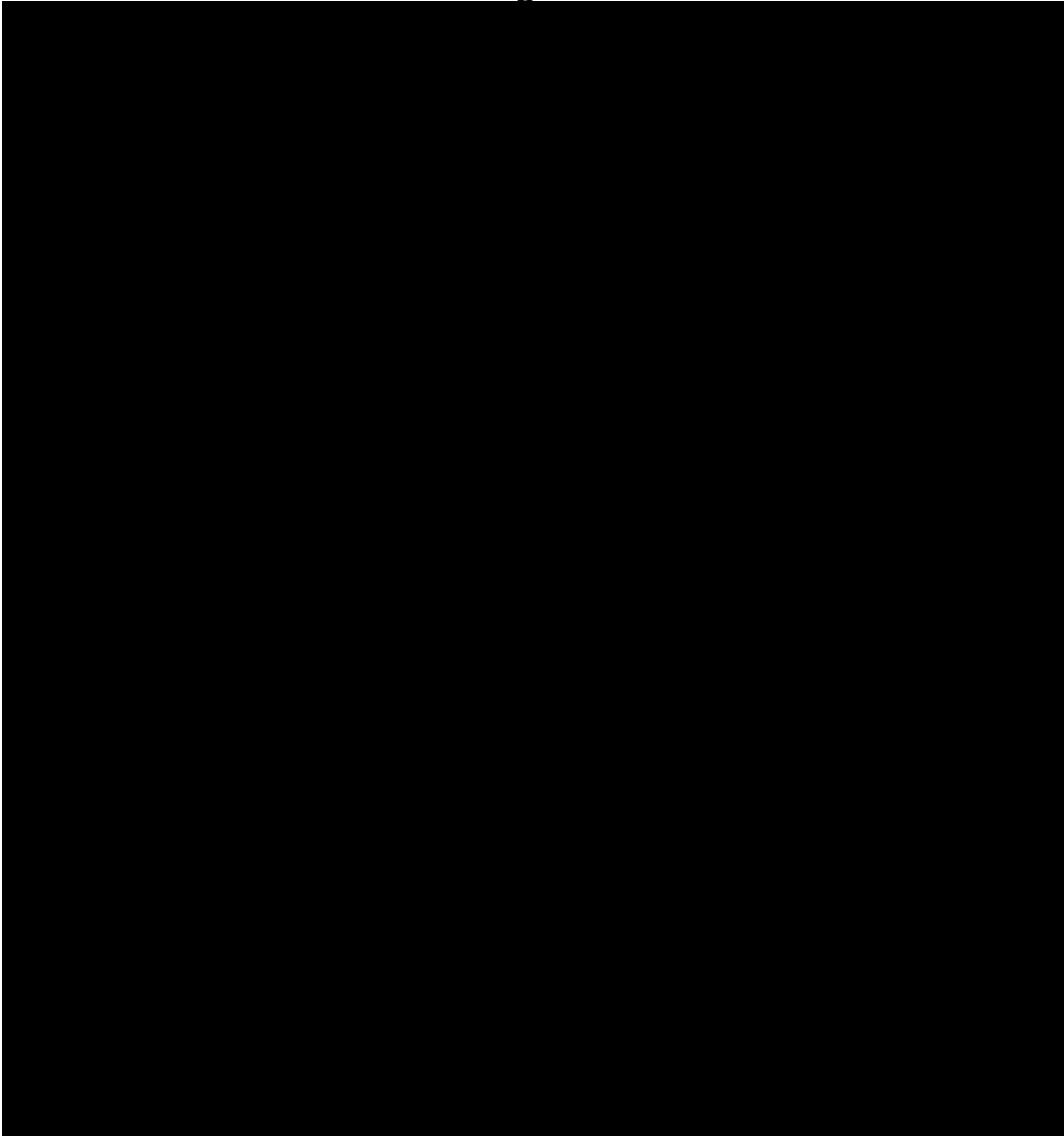
Artwork in the background by Rodriguez Romero, Idaid (2009) *Salón de Cardas* [The Wool Room], Wall Painting variable dimensions. A Factory, A Machine, A Body…, University Museum of Contemporary Art, Mexico City. 24th October 2009-14th February 2010[20].

The Wool Room is part of an interdisciplinary project by the artist entitled *Lost Fame*, based on a textile mill that gave its name to the neighbourhood where the artist was born: La Fama [The Fame] in Mexico City. The mill was a pillar of the community open from 1831 to 1998. When it closed the people were denied access to the property, so the artist decided to reconstruct the memory of the place. *The Wool Room* is a drawing of the machine rooms made by following descriptive directions of a former worker at La Fama, as the artist did

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[20] On the left-hand side there was another work; a video entitled *Dictionary* (2008) about the same project. The works were displayed with a label next to them (fieldwork observations, 2010). There was also an exhibition leaflet available with specific information about the exhibition and artworks (Sánchez Balmisa, 2009).

not have physical access to it either (Sánchez Balmisa, 2009, 16). Image 5.3 illustrates a dialogue at MuAC between an Enlace participant (left) and an audience member, where another person is behind them listening to their conversation from afar. The image shows different levels of participation, as well as distance between the dialoguers.

Section 4.1 explained that the Enlaces participants are welcoming with audiences. Female_Enlace_2 (2010) argues that dialogue is more effective with a good and pleasant attitude that provides confidence to audiences and enables them to take part in the conversation. This position avoids an authoritative relationship. In this matter, Freire (1996, 61) refers to the importance of dialogue for learning considering a teacher-student relationship, which can be adapted to the museum-audience respectively. Freire argues that the teacher (museum) is not the only participant teaching, but "is himself being taught with the students [audiences], who in turn while being taught also teach" (interpret, inform, share and learn). Furthermore,

> Yet only through communication can human life hold meaning. The teacher's thinking is authenticated only by the authenticity of the student's thinking. The teacher cannot think for her students, nor can she impose her thought to them. (Freire, 1996, 58)

Hence, Freire suggests that this teacher-student relationship should offer more balanced opportunities to reflect on and share opinions, where the student or audience also validates the teacher or the museum's thinking. This view reinforces the importance of negotiation of meanings, which can be achieved through participatory dialogue. Interestingly, for Freire this dialogue expects all the participants to be critical to engage in critical thinking, as discussed earlier in this section. Evidence from fieldwork analysis demonstrates that Enlaces participants seem to engage in dialogue with audiences in a teacher-student relationship focused on Freire's perspective. The outcomes of these experiences could be potentially very useful if shared within the museum to promote learning about both audiences and Enlaces participants internally. Wenger (1998) agrees that both the museum (the staff and the organisation) and audiences can learn, reinforcing the position of programmes such as the Enlaces one:

> Participation in social communities shapes our experience, and it also shapes those communities; the transformative potential goes both ways. (Wenger, 1998, 56-57).

Wenger's perspective suggests that MuAC's university student community can be shaped through participatory dialogue with Enlaces participants, as these experiences impact on other students visiting the museum, and potentially even on general audiences. When participatory dialogue influences the community significantly, reflecting about these effects is a potential learning opportunity for the museum too.

Moreover, although both audiences and Enlaces participants create meanings about contemporary art, museum professionals, through exhibitions and programmes, make sense of the artwork first. Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 124) argues that curators interpret works as part of complex decision-making processes, where meaning-making results from a "product of individual and social interpretation which is also 'complex and unpredictable'". Although curators inform, research, share knowledge and create discourses about exhibitions, they cannot anticipate audiences' interpretations, experiences, and understanding, which according to Roberts (1997, 220) are no less valid than curatorial knowledge. Curators have an expertise that positions them in their role, nevertheless,

> By omitting any mention about the decisions behind the determination of an object's meaning, museums exclude visitors not only from an awareness that knowledge is something produced but also from the possibility that they themselves may participate in its production… (Roberts, 1997, 226-227)

For this reason, participatory and content dialogues are important to co-create knowledge in the museum. Not all curatorial decisions have to be communicated directly in the exhibitions. The Enlaces participants can share this information too, at least for those people who wish to learn more. Furthermore, sharing the museum knowledge cannot be attributed solely to curators, as other staff members also interpret the works according to their own expertise. In addition, for Hooper-Greenhill (1994), inviting audiences to participate in projects, such as the Enlaces programme involves dealing with certain challenges:

> It is time-consuming, and requires skills of empathy, networking, but on the whole,

most groups and individuals are open to approaches from the museum, and are happy to be involved. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, 23)

As an example, Perin (1992) demonstrated that audiences were willing to participate and share their experiences through dialogue at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (Section 4.4). These views differ from Simon though, who argues that not everyone wants to participate in dialogue or the museum's activities, which is also reflected in MuAC's audiences' percentage of participatory dialogue with Enlaces participants, discussed earlier in this subsection. However, evaluating formally the quality of experiences from audiences that take part in participatory dialogue could provide evidence of its significance and whether it becomes a learning dialogue. This could build up the case to develop dialogue further at MuAC and to find ways to improve it in practice.

Hooper-Greenhill's perspective claims that producing and evaluating projects are time-consuming tasks. In this sense, the Enlaces participants' training sessions offer the staff a chance to gain knowledge about their experiences with audiences, which can inform both participants' and staff's future practice and create networking opportunities (See Section 5.2). MuAC staff interviewed argued that Enlaces participants provide qualitative information to the museum (Male_MuAC_2 and Male_MuAC_3, 2010), as they undertake audiences' surveys. According to staff members, this data helps to define the museum's visitor profile (fieldwork interviews, 2010), and argue that their knowledge has not changed after collecting this data, which suggests a limited approach to understanding audiences' needs and interests. MuAC staff did not give evidence about how they gain access and how often they update this qualitative audience information, and do not often reflect about museum experiences.

Participatory dialogue is part of the current dynamic and nature of the Enlaces programme, where all dialoguers negotiate and co-create meanings through debate and discussions. It can overlap with content dialogue and visual internal dialogue, where both audiences and Enlaces participants have great learning potential. The participants agree that learning dialogue with

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audiences surpassed their expectations, and seemed to provoke shared learning for all dialoguers. Through this dialogue, participants complement their contemporary art understanding and communication skills. Conversely, staff members' perceptions about audiences do not seem to be influenced much by the Enlaces participants, which suggest a missed learning opportunity for staff at MuAC.

5.2. Learning Dialogue with MuAC staff

Enlaces participants play a major role acting as audience advocates, which is similar to educators. They both have the potential to communicate their ideas, information and experiences within the museum through professional dialogue; in particular, when this involves sharing their findings about audiences. For Low (1942, 36), every person in the museum plays an important role in learning, from directors and curators through to cleaners and guards. This view is still current over 70 years later, demonstrating a potential for professional learning dialogue that can affect staff individually and throughout the entire organisation.

Researchers in adult education David Boud and Heather Middleton (2003, 194) refer to individual learning at work, which occurs throughout people's lives, but this does not necessarily mean that the organisation will learn (Argyris and Schön, 1996, 6). For organisational learning theorists, Chris Argyris and Donald Schön (1996, 6) only when a member's knowledge influences the overall operation and action the organisation learns; otherwise it knows less than its members. Furthermore, the authors argue that when an organisation learns, it "acquires information (knowledge, understanding, know-how, techniques, or practices) of any kind and by whatever means", which involves a regular process of gaining, processing and storing information (Argyris and Schön, 1996, 3). These principles can be applied to museums as organisations too.

Wenger (1998, 95) argues that although in some cases the staff do not see their job as learning, "what they learn is their practice… the very process of

being engaged in, and participating in developing, an ongoing practice." Hence, museum staff could benefit by reflecting further on how practice affects their own learning and that of the museum. Learning in the organisation can be social, in the same way as with audiences. Each person interacts with other members of staff, and brings an informed practical judgement of their work. However, only influential actions will affect the overall organisational learning. Professional dialogue is a tool to interact with others. Furthermore, Margot Pearson and David Smith (1985, 69), specialists in further education, argue that experience, for example at work, on its own may not be enough to learn, and hence it is important to reflect about it critically:

> Reflection lies at the core of experience-based learning. Without it, experiences may remain as experiences and the full potential for learning by the participants may not be realized (Pearson and Smith, 1985, 83)

This idea is crucial in this research, as in order to achieve greater organisational learning about audiences, the museum could benefit by promoting further opportunities that reflect on the Enlaces participants' experiences. But because this does not seem to take place yet, the staff's learning about audiences and participants is limited. Interestingly, reflection and criticalness, which potentially affect organisational learning, have been discussed as part of audiences' learning when experiences potentially become meaningful (Sections 3.3 and 5.1).

Although MuAC shows a great interest in learning on its mission, it also presents unbalances where education is at the bottom of the organisational structure (Figure 3.2), which suggests the Enlaces participants are below, as they report to this department directly. This hierarchical issue may affect the staff's ability of working together and having balanced relationships, discussed as significant learning lessons from dialogic experiences in international museums (Section 4.4). Hierarchical issues were observed in Mexican contemporary art museum practice too, constraining the educator's

field of action[21], where educators interviewed shared the feeling of lack of value and recognition for their work.

Hierarchical problems and lack of value relate to the broader institutional dynamic, where learning is not yet recognised as having great importance amongst all staff members. In Mexican contemporary art museums generally this issue has been observed starting at top government levels in SEP and CONACULTA, reflected through the lack of funding, support, resources, and innovative policies in museum education (Section 2.2). Regardless, educators could be working seven days a week and are considered responsible for attracting and maintaining audience numbers after the exhibition opens (educator_11, 2009). These issues of lack of support and value replicate at the Enlaces programme. Although the participants are not responsible for maintaining audiences' numbers, they are the ones communicating directly with them every day, and sometimes they are the only contact point to relate to the museum and contemporary art.

Andrew Brighton (1996, 15) suggests that there is a need to balance museum management, despite that educators are seen as "the route to democratic, open, accessible, meaningful art", whereas curators are commonly blamed for being "elitist, exclusive, hidebound, uninvolved with the world as it really is". These preconceived views about the role of educators and curators are similar to those in Mexican museums, and of the Enlaces participants. However, for Brighton (1996, 15), these preconceptions claim authority and control, when what the museum needs is staff members with "complementary skills getting together in ways that are useful" (see Section 2.3). In this sense, MuAC staff could develop more reflection and evaluation within the team, considering what could be gained from the Enlaces participants' skills and experiences. Hooper-Greenhill (1994, 2) develops this further:

> Museums require clearly identified achievable goals, precise quantifiable knowledge of current projects and successes and an energetic creative approach to problem-solving, with the director backed by a supportive and well-informed governing body

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[21] Educator_9, educator_10 and educator_15 (2009) expressed that, although they do not work with other departments in the museum, the staff should work more as a team.

and a unified and committed team of trained professional staff who understand and share a common vision for the future. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, 2)

Hooper-Greenhill's view agrees with Brighton that museums need to work more as a team. However, in order to "share a common vision", staff need to communicate well. Through professional dialogue, they can support target identification, project evaluation, reflection, and recognition of issues that affect professional practice, and potentially learning. In this sense, the Enlaces programme's goals and knowledge about audiences seem relatively clear for the participants, but not quantifiably and supported enough by staff members, considering qualitative data about audiences experiences, despite that these can benefit the museum. Philip Wright (1989, 147-148) uses the example of curators, who can learn from the warding staff's experiences in relation to audiences' reactions to the artworks. Based on this view, curators, as much as other members of staff, can learn from the Enlaces participants' experiences.

Professional dialogue is a tool to promote individual learning for both staff and Enlaces participants. This type of dialogue also has the potential to become influential at the museum, allowing organisational learning to take place at MuAC. The analysis of evidence from the Enlaces participants' experiences demonstrates the following categories of dialogue with the museum's staff:

(i) Peer Dialogue

Fieldwork data demonstrates that the Enlaces programme creates a great atmosphere amongst its participants, 12 of 34 members explicitly referred to having enriching dialogue with their peers. The thesis defines peer dialogue as conversations between Enlaces participants, sharing their experiences, knowledge and practice, and promoting their own learning individually and as a group[22].

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[22] Peer dialogue can also be used to refer to a dialogue between colleagues and peers that have the same level of responsibility.

For Taylor (2006a, 9), working with peers improves the ability "to work with others including skills in negotiation, dialogue, listening, and understanding and respecting the views of others". These skills relate to peer learning dialogue. Matarasso (2008, 10) agrees and relates to the Enlaces programme through young people experiences, whose social interaction enables them to learn to express their beliefs and opinions through the arts. He argues that their views can be moulded, changed, questioned and experienced through an interaction with others, for example using peer dialogue. Falk and Dierking (1992, 110) concur that questioning and communicating opinions are forms of learning. In the case of the Enlaces programme:

> Learning from other Enlaces participants and their different backgrounds changed my view. Sometimes I was stuck in my own thing, without looking at other things around me (Male_Enlace_13, 2010)

Both Male_Enlace_1 and Male_Enlace_8 (2010) agree that using others' ideas broaden their vision and further give value both to the programme and audiences, in particular because the participants come from different interdisciplinary backgrounds (Section 4.1). Nina Simon (2010, 203) agrees and refers to people taking part in new projects, who "contribute to each other by sharing their thoughts" and act as diversified voices that can potentially be used by the institution. Furthermore, according to Male_Enlace_14 (2010) dialogue with others, including participants, "reinforces our knowledge and answers our questions". These views demonstrate that peer dialogue has significant learning potential. Boud and Middleton (2003, 198) undertook a study on multiple worksites where they found evidence to demonstrate that peer learning is highly valued by individuals in the organisation. Education researchers Michael Eraut et al. (1998, 42) agree, as in their study with twelve organisations they found that people at work claimed to gain skills and knowledge by being in contact with their peers' different perspectives; which is in agreement with Enlaces participants practice.

Previously, Taylor (2008a, 57) referred to respect and value as learning benefits, in which participants are recognised as potential contributors, not only to their peers' learning, but also to the museum (Section 4.4). Peer dialogue supports other aspects argued by Taylor (2008a, 57) previously,

such as taking control over individual decisions and being treated as equals. In this matter, the Enlaces participants decide how to undertake dialogue and their approach to audiences. Furthermore, while the participants are part of the university student community (Female_Enlace_5, 2010), there is a sense of respect and appreciation to both audiences' and their peers' opinions. Staff member Female_MuAC_2 (2010) agrees as participants become good friends, and she claims that they seemingly have good relationships that promote a lot of respect among them. This also suggests that hierarchies of knowledge are minimised within university students.

In this matter, the abolished Museums, Libraries and Archives, MLA (2007, 14) acknowledges good practice in museums that involve the community, also demonstrated through museums international experiences in Section 4.4. MLA argues that the museum can recruit staff from the community in order to know its members, "which will bring in skills to develop appropriate services for them". In this sense, by recruiting university students to communicate with their peers, MuAC shows an interest in good practice, in order to know the community. However, this thesis argues that the museum needs to invest time to take feedback, listen, respond and react to the university student community considering the Enlaces participants' opinions. Otherwise, the impact of the programme will not be as effective within this community.

Peer dialogue has been discussed relevant for training purposes at MuAC (Section 4.1). For example, Female_Enlace_1 and Male_Enlace_9 (2010) feel that because the training offered by the museum was not enough to have a dialogue with audiences, speaking to other Enlaces participants was essential to enable them to have more "explanations" and confidence to interpret the artwork and talk to audiences. Furthermore, how much are these explanations conducive to dialogue instead of just providing information in the way that guided tours do

Staff member Female_MuAC_3 (2010) argues that due to the short length of their placements, the Enlaces participants training starts from scratch every 3 months. However, from some interviews with participants disagrees as the

two-week initial intensive training (Section 4.1) normally took place every six months (fieldwork interviews, 2010): "the education department always complains that they have to train the Enlaces participants every 6 months" (Male_Enlace_5, 2010). This view demonstrates the staff members are perceived lacking interest in the dynamism of the Enlaces programme. Wenger (1998, 99) sees the arrival of new participants and changes in current membership as a natural thing, where "newcomers can be integrated into the community, engage in its practice, and then –in their own way- perpetuate it." Wenger's idea of perpetuation relates to Female_Enlace_7 (2010)'s view because participants develop teamwork spirit, communication and feedback; while they appropriate the programme. Enlaces participants' peer dialogue supports new members' integration and engagement, in particular when the staff do not provide enough confidence during the training:

> The Enlaces participants trained me through gallery visits, they told me about the artwork. After a month I could explain a few things to audiences (Female_Enlace_1, 2010).

> When I started, I didn't have the training. I couldn't talk to people. Then other Enlaces participants explained [the work] to me and I could start talking to people. I also did some reading on my own (Male_Enlace_9, 2010)

Interestingly, a few Enlaces participants agree they gain knowledge through peer dialogue. For Eraut et al. (1998, 38-39) peer contact, as well as observation and listening, are sources of information that act "by a process of osmosis" in the organisation, where learners have to be active and receptive. But they also need to be able to work out what they need to gain from the observation. Mexican professionals interviewed claimed that staff could also learn by observing and listening to others (curator_10; Male_MuAC_3, 2010). However, this relates to a more passive way of learning than using dialogue. Observing how other Enlaces participants interact with audiences can be done throughout their training, and possibly their everyday practice, which evidence peer contact with learning potential from peers.

Although this section has demonstrated that contact with peers is a potential significant learning source, according to 15% of participants (5 of 34), peer dialogue is limited at MuAC, taking place during training sessions sometimes or when the galleries are empty. Only then, participants are able to share

information, feedback and audiences' comments that leave them thinking, for example, discussing something that "sounds ridiculous" (Male_Enlace_12, 2010). Moreover, Male_Enlace_6 (2010) argues that staff do not allow participants to talk in the galleries, so he feels they have to chat clandestinely, which limits their interactions. It is clear that the museum has to establish operational rules for Enlaces participants, but limiting peer dialogue without providing further opportunities for sharing experiences actually reduces MuAC's learning potential too (as demonstrated with the "In a Pickle" meetings between Crew and staff members at BALTIC, Section 4.4).

Other Enlaces participants, such as Female_Enlace_4 (2010), claim that they are only able to share ideas when they leave the museum. Male_Enlace_1 and Female_Enlace_5 (2010) agree that participants mainly talk informally while walking to the bus or underground stop, or when they have lunch. These participants reveal a need to have more spaces for peer dialogue, while being in the museum. However, for Eraut et al. (1998, 45) informal settings, such as lunch breaks or at the bar, are also spaces to share information, that offer learning potential.

Peer dialogue seems to be an effective tool to promote the Enlaces participants' learning, whether formally through training sessions or informally through conversations when leaving the museum. Peer dialogue reinforces knowledge and broadens perspectives, creates confidence to talk about the artwork and to communicate more effectively, and promotes value and respect amongst participants. For Wenger (1998, 86) "through mutual engagement with a common goal, communities will be able to share learning", which is what happens with the Enlaces participants, who learn about audiences and peers through dialogue. However, both participants and staff members could benefit by having more opportunities to share peer learning experiences, and thinking critically about the outcomes of the programme.

(ii) Professional Dialogue and Practice

This thesis refers to professional dialogue as a verbal face-to-face exchange between staff from different areas in the museum, where all the dialoguers talk, listen, respond and react to one another's opinions in a balanced and egalitarian way. Only when this dialogue is meaningful and creates an impact on the staff's practice, it becomes a professional learning dialogue; which can potentially turn into institutional learning, when it influences the overall museum practice. Because the Enlaces participants are part of the museum staff while they take on work placements or volunteer, they have the opportunity to participate in a professional dialogue with MuAC staff. But in practice, do this turn into a professional learning dialogue for both staff members and Enlaces participants?

The research has evidence to demonstrate that professional dialogue takes place between the Enlaces participants and the education department at MuAC, but there are differing opinions in terms of the learning gained from this dialogic experience. According to 26% of the participants (9 of 34), professional dialogue mainly happens during training sessions. Another 26% feel that they can talk to the education team when they find the right opportunity, for example: when they have questions (Female_Enlace_2, 2010), when something interesting happens (Female_Enlace_13, 2010), or to give a brief synopsis of their work (Male_Enlace_10, 2010). Male_Enlace_3 and Female_Enlace_18 (2010) agree, but feel their only chance to speak to the education team is when there is time at the end of their working day. These interviewees referred to professional dialogue with individual staff members, rather than shared practice that has further effect within the museum.

Staff members show similar perspectives in relation to their dialogue with Enlaces participants. For example, Female_MuAC_2 (2010) feels that the participants can come to talk to her when they have any comments. Further, she claims that after they give a guided tour, they talk to the education team to "give us a brief about how they felt, what challenges they had and if they

can't solve them, it is important for the team to know". There is no evidence to demonstrate how or even if this information is stored and shared within the organisation. Especially when compared to BALTIC (Section 4.4), where staff collate data from Crew participants' experiences with audiences daily. Although Female_MuAC_2 seems open to listen to the Enlaces participants' experiences, there is no information to demonstrate if this is conducive to dialogue.

Taylor (2006a) refers to the professional benefits offered by learning activities with contemporary art that can also be observed with the Enlaces participants, which are:

> [a]-identify training needs…
> [b]-provide valuable peer support and potential career development,
> [c]-share skills and understand different professional perspectives,
> [d]-jointly investigate their practice, and provide practical means of developing understanding, testing ideas and improving delivery (Taylor, 2006a, 10)

These benefits can be explored further by using professional dialogue with the Enlaces participants, but this needs to be a continuous assessment due to the cyclic rotation of the participants. Male_MuAC_3 (2010) acknowledges this and claims that the staff should see the Enlaces programme as a cycle: "new participants approach audiences, have an experience, which they have to reflect on, review, and talk about, in order to realise what they are missing, and they have closure when they leave." This perspective sounds very positive, but again, fails to demonstrate if this information is used further within the organisation, or if the staff approach the Enlaces participants in a similar way.

Based on Taylor's professional learning benefits: [a] training needs, during training sessions, the education department gains knowledge and greater understanding about the Enlaces programme. However, this research has evidence that further reflection could be undertaken to learn about the participants' experiences with audiences. Some Enlaces participants (6 of 34) claim their training could be improved (fieldwork interviews, 2010).

In terms of [b] sharing skills and understanding professional perspectives, peer dialogue has demonstrated to provide learning opportunities, but these experiences could be shared more amongst staff. Enlaces participants (6 of 34) referred to improved communication skills, as a learning outcome of their practice. For example, Female_Enlace_19 (2010) claims that her experience at the museum allowed her to use different ways of communicating with people everywhere else. In this matter, Taylor (2008a, 74) refers to the ability to "debate, express views and listen", as a communication learning benefit. Furthermore, for Male_Enlace_12 (2010), the participant's role involves continuous reflection on ways of communicating, in order to be able to provide an opinion to audiences. Staff member Female_MuAC_3 (2010) agrees and feels her communication skills have improved together with the rest of the Enlaces participants. Although there is a professional dialogue between the participants and MuAC's education team, there is limited evidence about dialogue with the rest of the staff. Female_Enlace_17 and Female_Enlace_19 (2010) agree that their access to other departments in the museum was limited.

In terms of [c] providing valuable career development, Enlaces participants interviewees' opinions vary in relation to MuAC staff's contribution to their careers. Female_MuAC_3 (2010) claims that when the participants' experiences are positive, they will want to maintain a relationship with the museum. For her, the Enlaces programme offers professionalisation opportunities through meetings, training sessions, and involvement in other projects. In this sense, evidence from interviews with Enlaces participants (8 of 34) referred to acquiring a deeper knowledge of museum practice. For example, Female_Enlace_9 (2010) claims that she understands more about the positive and negative aspects of MuAC as an organisation. Furthermore, Female_Enlace_19 (2010) now perceives museums differently in terms of their operation, dynamism, and ways of having a dialogue with audiences, which are all aspects that affect her future visit to other museums. In agreement with these views, Veronica Sekules (2011, 28) suggests that understanding the institution's practice is a learning outcome and professional skill developed by young people participating in museum programmes.

Female_MuAC_2 (2010) claims that the participants are also able to create links with other departments in the museum, which relates to career development in terms of networking and learning about the work of others. However, 18% of the Enlaces participants (6 of 34) disagree and feel that contact with other professionals and departments beyond education was limited: "I feel disappointed because I would have liked to be more involved with other areas of the museum" (Male_Enlace_11, 2010). This lack of connections with other departments possibly limits professional dialogue. As an example, 12% of the participants (4 of 34) discussed a changed of perceptions related to curatorial decisions, claiming that curators alter the meaning of the artwork through their discourse (Female_Enlace_14, Male_Enlace_13, 2010) or due to space restrictions. Furthermore, Male_Enlace_1 (2010) feels that curators use their personal experience rather than in depth research as part of their discourse. On an opposing view:

> The Enlaces participants criticise the curators enormously, probably because they don't understand the museum's structure. This is a claim of exclusion in other levels, but not everything can be achieved. (Male_MuAC_3, 2010)

This professional view claims that the Enlaces participants do not have enough knowledge about the role of the curators, but the staff can provide more information about this during training sessions, or offer an additional meeting to discuss and debate this issue, so the museum can clarify any misunderstandings. Even so, the participants demonstrate insight about curatorial decisions, which involve professional learning experiences. This thesis has claimed that every interpretation is valid, despite the ones from the curators, which involve a complex decision-making process (Lynch, 2009, 15; Robins, 2005, 149; Section 2.3). There is no right answer in terms of curators changing the meaning of the artwork, as participants, audiences and other staff members can do this too, through their individual interpretations.

Wenger (1998, 76-77) refers to negative situations affecting mutual engagement, as "disagreements, tensions, and conflicts… [that] can even constitute the core characteristic of a shared practice". This was demonstrated through the Enlaces participants' negative views about

curatorial decisions, which staff members can learn from through a professional dialogue. Using this knowledge does not imply that the curator has to change his/her way of working, but means that staff can provide more insight about curatorial decisions that can affect Enlaces participants future interpretations.

Regarding Taylor's professional learning benefit of [d] jointly investigate the Enlaces participants' practice, evidence shows that this has not been fully undertaken by MuAC staff either. Male_MuAC_3 (2010) feels that there is a lot of information about the programme, but the museum does not have enough time to process it. The staff can potentially use this investigation as a starting point of in-depth knowledge and analysis of the Enlaces programme.

Jillian Barker and Jane Sillis (1996, 31) argue that "an effective education programme makes a significant contribution to the creation of links with the community and the development of artists, art form and audience". Professional dialogue can be a useful tool to understand the learning outcomes of the Enlaces programme, in particular because evaluation can be expensive and time-consuming (Section 3.3 and Appendix 2.5). However, it is possible to have a competent programme by working intuitively too:

> Evaluation is an integral and essential part of the process of designing and developing education programmes. However, with experience, you will be able to estimate what's needed more accurately and you won't need to carry out quite so much evaluation for each programme. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1996, 18)

In the case of the Enlaces programme, reflection promoted through professional dialogue can support identifying the needs to improve the dialogue with audiences, which can potentially contribute to the whole organisation. Taylor (2006a, 11) agrees, that educators and other members of staff can benefit by sharing and developing strategies, through evaluation and practice, where there is no particular methodology that has to be followed by all the museums.

In this matter, Female_MuAC_3 (2010) argues that the Enlaces participants are asked to write about their expectations and experiences at MuAC at the

beginning and end of their placements and volunteering, which helps them feel included in the museum project[23]. The research did not have access to these records or if these are summarised, analysed, or shared with the rest of the museum. Furthermore,

> Written evidence can be used to show management, funders and other stakeholders that the time and money spent on producing an exhibition was justified, and can also support the case for new projects… It is a two-way process: visitors need to feel that it is worthwhile taking the time to contribute (Calder, 2009, 35-36)

Although this refers to audiences, it can also apply to the Enlaces participants and staff. The interesting point is that Calder's view highlights the fact that contributions should be recognised, as a two-way process. Furthermore, Garrick Fincham (2003, 33-34), writes about volunteers, arguing that the museum should observe their progress, talk to them about it, and gain evidence about their experience, new skills, and views on the institution. Hence, gaining knowledge about their needs, interests and contributions. These can be explored through professional dialogue.

Although Female_MuAC_2 (2010) claims that she gives confidence to the participants so they feel comfortable to talk to her about problems during their placement, Male_Enlace_10 (2010) explains that the rigour and formality of the institution limits their dialogue[24]. This is crucial as the Enlaces participants feel there are not enough opportunities to meet and talk with curators and other staff members, which are interactions that could potentially enrich their experience greatly.

Some participants feel that their feedback influenced the education team, which demonstrates a potential professional learning dialogue (Male_Enlace_14, 2010). For example, Male_Enlace_12 (2010) feels that everyone participated and had the freedom to propose or deliver projects, although mainly he referred to workshops. Furthermore, for Female_Enlace_11 (2010), participants shared knowledge so that the "person

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[23] These written records do not involve professional dialogue.
[24] The Enlaces participants referred to a change of management in the education team (6 of 34). The impact of the change of management in the education team will not be discussed further, as it will need more research to be analysed.

that taught also learned from them" (in agreement with Freire, 1996). These participants demonstrate evidence of shared practice and feelings of value for their contributions to MuAC's education department practice. However, for Sekules (2011, 33) young people participants' contribution was not privileged (in the example of Tate), but instead they were included "as equals to help with the opening up and development of ideas". In this sense, although some Enlaces participants have demonstrated that the education department valued their contribution, in general the museum has not shown much practical evidence of this.

Patricia Torres (2001, 43) argues that dialogue with peers, or in this case with co-workers, allows rethinking education in order to improve the museum programmes offered to audiences. This view is very relevant for both peer and professional dialogue, as being reflective about the Enlaces programme experiences can affect future MuAC's learning practice in benefit of audiences. Professional dialogue at MuAC offers the Enlaces participants learning experiences in terms of professionalisation opportunities, improved communication skills and shared practice with the education team. However, the research does not have enough evidence to demonstrate how the education department, and in particular the rest of the museum take part in an egalitarian professional dialogue that promotes balanced opportunities to share practice.

(iii) Limited Dialogue: Areas of Improvement

Although it has been demonstrated that MuAC has developed a practice of dialogue with audiences through the Enlaces programme (Sections 4.2 and 5.1) and there are opportunities to communicate with the staff members, such as the education team (Subsection 5.2 (ii)), fieldwork interviews reveal that dialogue is also restricted at MuAC. Limited dialogue is demoted and restricted in terms of listening, sharing ideas and practice, working together and recognising one another –regardless of potential existing hierarchies. Limited dialogue implies unbalanced participation that can turn into a monologue, when one of the dialoguers is not able to listen, talk, and respond

to the others. This section will demonstrate that the Enlaces participants share the feeling that their role and work is insufficiently acknowledged at MuAC.

Limited dialogue potentially replicates with audiences considering MuAC staff's continuous lack of communication and assessment about their responses to the artwork and the museum. Enlaces participants feel that MuAC staff's dialogue with audiences is either indirect, through exhibitions (8 of 34 participants, 2010), or limited, having no communication (20 of 34 participants, 2010; educator_18, 2010). However, it has been demonstrated that curators communicate with audiences mainly through exhibitions (Section 2.3). Female_Enlace_5 (2010) claims the staff lack of time to engage in dialogue with audiences, but this "doesn't mean they neglect them, as they work for them in other ways"; for example creating curatorial discourses. Nevertheless, 30% of Enlaces participants (10 of 34) feel that they have rarely experienced any contact between curators or staff members and audiences (fieldwork interviews, 2010), for example:

> I have never seen curators, museographers, or the learning manager talking to audiences. (Male_Enlace_4, 2010).

For Male_MuAC_4, knowing the museum's audiences is as important as the decision of how to communicate and create dialogue with them, in agreement with Hooper-Greenhill (1992, 210). Hence, even if staff at MuAC do not spend time talking to audiences, they can have a dialogue with Enlaces participants to learn from their experiences, in order to avoid making assumptions about audiences' needs and interests[25]. Further,

> Individuals can be helped to become more capable learners, who can be both more reflective and more able to recognise and use emergent learning opportunities. (Eraut et al., 1998, 48)

This perspective from organisational learning can be applied to both MuAC staff and Enlaces participants to identify continuous "learning opportunities", especially when the contemporary art museum wants to become a dynamic space. As previously discussed, observation and listening are forms of peer

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[25] H. Hein (2000, 63), Hooper-Greenhill (1992, 210), Perin (1992, 184) and Wittlin (1970, 51) provide theoretical perspectives about audiences' assumptions at the beginning of this chapter.

dialogue (Eraut et al., 1998, 38-39). In this sense, Male_MuAC_3 (2010) argues that staff members are committed to observe audiences in the museum's galleries, which he sees as a potential opportunity to learn about the quality of visitors' experiences. This sounds positive but it does not necessarily involve an active dialogue, when it is done through distant interactions. Conversely, some Enlaces participants perceive staff's work as isolated and inflexible. Female_Enlace_4 (2010) feels that staff members "are distant, focused on their own work". This issue raises the question of whether there is an effective teamwork and dialogue at MuAC. For Male_Enlace_1 (2010) staff could benefit by being more flexible about the way they perceive audiences, because it is not the same interacting with them once a week, instead of everyday like the Enlaces participants do. Staff member Male_MuAC_3 (2010) agrees that the best way to understand audiences is by being in the museum's galleries, and learning about the Enlaces participants is "a way of knowing a certain part of the public". However,

> Without Enlaces participants the museum's contact with audiences would be nil. I have never seen a curator approaching audiences (Male_Enlace_9, 2010).

> The staff assume that audiences are the responsibility of the Enlaces participants, and therefore they do not get involved (Female_Enlace_20, 2010).

Not all staff members should know every detail about audiences' needs and interests. However, the thesis argues that the main findings from the Enlaces participants' experiences can be reflected further, shared throughout the entire museum, in order to have a positive impact on future practice and interactions with audiences. McLean (1999, 105) reinforces this point and argues that the museum staff are responsible for the quality of potential dialogues undertaken with audiences, which will need to be informed, dynamic and engaging. Male_MuAC_3 (2010) agrees that the museum cannot leave the responsibility of audiences to Enlaces participants as they only work temporarily at MuAC. Furthermore, he recognises that dialogue with audiences is important, but "it is very difficult to capitalise… it happens on a one-to-one [basis]" (Male_MuAC_3, 2010). This suggests that some dialogue between staff and audiences possibly takes place, but there is not enough data to verify if this becomes a learning dialogue or organisational learning.

The temporary nature of the Enlaces participants' work placements does not mean they cannot have certain responsibility. In this matter, Matarasso (2008, 10) refers to young people involved in the arts, who prove they are reliable while being trusted by the institution. The Enlaces participants are accountable for having dialogues and engaging audiences with the artwork and the museum, regardless of the fact that they are not responsible for visitors in the long-term like the museum is. Ultimately, the participants are unpaid and work temporarily at MuAC. Hence, they can only be accountable for audiences to a certain extent. Fincham (2003) agrees as:

> Many museums rely upon volunteers to support core members of staff. But it is important that they are not just seen as a cheap way of supplementing the paid work force. People volunteer for a range of reasons. Enthusiasm for the museum and its aims, to engage in a social activity, or to learn new skills… They act as ambassadors to that community, raising awareness of your work. (Fincham, 2003, 12)

Although most of the Enlaces participants take on work placements to comply with a university requirement and to gain a professional experience, they still give their time to MuAC instead of taking part in another activity. While being students, they probably have refreshing ideas that could potentially be interesting to use in the museum. Fincham's view about "ambassadors of the community" is noteworthy, because it highlights the importance of Enlaces participants as representatives of the university student community. If there is shared responsibility of audiences at MuAC. Shared practice with the participants could be promoted further. The analysis from interviews at MuAC revealed three key areas of limited dialogue that have room for improvement to enable professional dialogue:

1) Lack of communication

There is a limited dialogue between MuAC staff and both audiences and participants, related to insufficient communication. Some members of staff at MuAC argue that communication is core for determining the museum's strategies (Male_MuAC_1, Male_MuAC_3, 2010). But this view is very general, and does not specify how this communication influences museum

practice. Enlaces participants differ from this perspective as they feel that MuAC's communication with audiences is limited, demonstrated at the beginning of this subsection.

In agreement with Male_Enlace_4 above, Female_Enlace_19 and Male_Enlace_7 (2010) claim that there is no communication between curators and museographers, and audiences. What about the communication between the rest of the staff? Male_Enlace_10 (2010) feels that the "the higher the level, the less communication", which relates to an existing problem of hierarchies of management and knowledge possibly in the museum that limits dialogue, discussed throughout the thesis. Lack of communication between the museum staff will limit any potential further dialogue with both Enlaces participants and audiences:

> The lack of communication within all the museum areas is shown between the staff… Administrators did not have any contact with audiences; even when it is not their job purpose they could be friendly and help them (Female_Enlace_17, 2010).

Female_Enlace_17 refers to staff members' attitudes towards audiences as unkind, which differ from the Enlaces participants being welcoming and friendly to support audiences' engagement (Chapter 4). Female_Enlace_4 and Female_Enlace_9 (2010) agree that MuAC staff remain isolated and leave the responsibility of communicating with audiences to participants[26]. Although some Enlaces participants suggest that the staff's job description does not involve audiences directly, this is certainly considered within the museum's mission (MuAC, 2009; MuAC, 2010a). In this matter, Graham Black (2005, 270) argues that all staff need to develop "interpersonal and customer service skills", which can improve the quality of audiences' experiences. Previously the thesis has demonstrated that all staff members should be responsible for audiences' experiences (Sections 2.3 and 3.3). Furthermore, while the museum is a joint enterprise, based on Wenger's community of practice perspective (Wenger, 1998, 72-83), everyone is accountable for audiences indirectly.

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[26] Female_Enlace_20 (2010) agrees, as mentioned at Subsection 5.2 (iii).

In agreement with previous discussions about audiences' assumptions, Male_Enlace_4 (2010) feels that the lack of communication creates false ideas about audiences: it is "like philosophy, thinking they know what people want and need". Audience opportunities to provide feedback and talk back about the quality of their experiences directly to staff have been observed as limited in this research (fieldwork interviews, 2009-2010). Wright (1989, 138) refers to this problem, as in order to know whether it is successful in communicating with audiences, the museum should "monitor fairly continuously its visitors and their reactions to the displays". Furthermore, Ann Rayner (1998, 37) also suggests feedback is an important task for the museum, where learning is a two-way process, and the institution should be willing to create a dialogue actively with audiences.

According to Female_Enlace_4 and Female_Enlace_12 (2010), the lack of staff communication within the museum and with audiences is also observed with the Enlaces participants. Although MuAC has shown a great interest in creating dialogue in the museum, evidence does not demonstrate the staff actually reflect much on the Enlaces participants' experiences with audiences, failing to fully undertake the real benefits of sharing knowledge and reflecting on the participants' practice. Example of lack of communication are:

> In three months, half of my placement, I haven't spoke with a curator (Male_Enlace_4, 2010)

> The education department asks me to read the materials, but because everyone interprets in their own way, this can be different from what the artwork actually means. I'd like to have an expert guiding us, and to hear the opinions of other Enlaces participants and professionals. (Female_Enlace_8, 2010)

These views also show evidence that the staff can improve communication and the Enlaces programme future training, for example, involving professionals and curators more. Male_Enlace_4 (2010) agrees and feels that there are no opportunities to share ideas, either with staff or the education team, and that the participants' audience knowledge is not taken into account. Regarding this issue, Bernadette Lynch (2009, 20) claims that being invited to be, or being part of the institution is not enough to exercise a voice, nor for the museum "to listen and respond" to it, which can lead to discontent amongst

participants[27]. This is the case of the Enlaces participants, despite their voices being recognised as essential to communicate with audiences they are not acknowledged enough amongst the museum staff. For Female_Enlace_4 (2010) there is a need for more communication opportunities that enable dialogue and listening MuAC staff's and participants' opinions. Female_Enlace_14 (2010) agrees:

> The museum's intentions and actions are not accurate. There is no real feedback about what audiences think. There is no record in the museum of using this information. The Enlaces participants are in direct contact with audiences, receive information about what they do and do not like, and what they think. There is no one [in the museum] to take and assimilate this audience feedback (Female_Enlace_14, 2010).

Despite Female_MuAC_3 argued that the museum gathers written evidence about the Enlaces participants' experiences (Subsection 5.2 (ii)), Female_Enlace_14 argues that there are no records about audiences' feedback provided by the participants (fieldwork interviews, 2010). Staff members claim that lack of time is the main reason that limits communication with Enlaces participants (Female_MuAC_3; Male_MuAC_3, 2010). Nevertheless, Male_Enlace_11 (2010) feels that the staff should promote further dialogue with participants to have access to their knowledge. Promoting further communication between MuAC staff and Enlaces participants is an area of improvement that can transcend limited into professional dialogue.

2) Lack of recognition

Enlaces participants' interviewees shared a feeling of insufficient acknowledgement for their work. Participants' lack of recognition restricts dialogue and causes unbalances in their relationships with members of staff, which potentially affect learning within the institution. Limited dialogue due to a lack of recognition discourages participants' interactions and brings out disappointment of their museum practical experiences. David Boud et al. (1985) address this issue associated to organisational learning as:

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[27] Theoretical perspectives by Matarasso (2008), Simon (2010), and Witcomb (2003) referred to having a voice through dialogue.

Negative feelings… can form major barriers towards learning. They can distort perceptions, lead to false interpretations of events, and can undermine the will to persist. Positive feelings and emotions can greatly enhance the learning process; they can keep the learner on the task and can provide a stimulus for new learning. (Boud et al., 1985, 11)

Although disagreements influence learning (See Wenger, 1998, 76-77; Subsection 5.2 (ii)), these do not seem to have a positive impact on the Enlaces programme. Lack of recognition may provoke negative feelings within the Enlaces participants that affect their practice and motivation. Discouragement then could have an effect on learning, as the full potential of the participants' experiences has not yet been analysed by the museum. Male_Enlace_2 (2010) shows disappointment as a result of his experience at MuAC:

I had great expectations to discover the eminence of MuAC. Now I feel disenchanted. I do not want to make a negative critique. There are members of staff that have not done anything to me, but I feel like I am no one here in the museum. This makes me feel a lack of interest and commitment to the museum (Male_Enlace_2, 2010).

This perspective clearly demonstrates a feeling of lack of recognition that can affect learning. Male_Enlace_4 and Male_Enlace_5 (2010) also feel that participants are the least valued members of the museum, with no allocated budget[28]. The staff could benefit from learning about experiences like these, in order to modify future practice. For Wenger (1998, 90) changes happen when participants are having an experience in the institution, which can "reveal progress that had remained unnoticed… But they can also create new demands." Simon (2010, 21) agrees and argues that "staff members can change their mind, make mistakes, and evolve with participants"; especially while undertaking participatory projects such as the Enlaces programme. Hence, experiences such as changed expectations can also be monitored continuously at MuAC, potentially through professional dialogue, to learn and be able to acknowledge and adapt to renewed Enlaces participants' needs.

Male_Enlace_4 (2010) feels that participants are essential to support the operation and audiences' understanding of the museum. For him, "if the day

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[28] The lack of financial support also affects the potential creation and development of projects that participants could undertake at MuAC.

comes when all staff will sit down and be open to learn from the Enlaces participants, they will learn a lot". Although the participants claim they contribute to audiences experiences, evidence does not show a shared feeling that their work influences the museum (35%, 12 of 34 Enlaces participants, 2010). This demonstrates that MuAC staff are missing an opportunity to engage the participants fully (Fincham 2003, 18; Simon, 2010, 20), and to gain knowledge about their experiences. Simon (2010) refers to the importance of recognising groups like the Enlaces participants:

> Volunteers and members are people who express self-motivated commitment and interest to dedicate time and resources to institutions… when institutions can clearly convey how participants' actions will contribute positively to the institution and to future audiences, volunteers of all types respond enthusiastically… [there is a] need to offer participants something fundamental: personal fulfilment. (Simon, 2010, 18)

The Enlaces programme is self-motivated only to a certain extent, as the majority of its participants undertake work placements, but they are still unpaid and give their time and resources to MuAC for free. Based on Simon's view, the museum should be able to express how the Enlaces participants contribute to the institution, which MuAC does generally in terms of having dialogue and supporting audiences and understanding about contemporary art (MuAC, 2008). However, by recognising the Enlaces participants' contributions further in staff members' practice, the museum could encourage their motivation and enthusiasm greatly.

Staff member Male_MuAC_2 (2010) acknowledges the problem of lack of recognition in terms of limited knowledge about the Enlaces participants' practice within the museum, as many staff see them "as assistants to help carry and move things around", despite that this activity is not actually part of their work at MuAC. This view also reveals limited dialogue and lack of communication, because not all staff members have clarity, understand and value the role of the participants. Fincham (2003, 27) reinforces this point, as while volunteers are unpaid, they "should not be expected to do the unpleasant or difficult jobs that you [the staff] don't want to do yourself".

Gill Nicol, artist and gallery consultant, and Adrian Plant, exhibition officer (2000, 44), refer to the importance of supporting participatory projects

throughout the whole institution, as these usually "reveal an unexpected and considerable lack of knowledge of project management". This thesis demonstrates there is a managerial issue in the Enlaces programme related to the lack of efficient records of the participant experiences' outcomes, which reveals both lack of communication and recognition. Moreover, Male_Enlace_13 (2010):

> The museum's management is very elitist and nepotist. There is a problem with contemporary art when audiences think it just targets a few people. But directors, exhibition organisers, and the curatorial staff promote this way of thinking (Male_Enlace_13, 2010)

Although this view has value judgments about the museum's management, it demonstrates that staff could also benefit and inform their practice knowing about audiences, as much as Enlaces participants, instead of maintaining hierarchies that negatively impact the museum experience. Some staff members recognise the importance of the Enlaces programme in practice, but participants disagree that their work is valued. For example, Male_Enlace_5 and Female_Enlace_17 (2010) feel that they should be more respected at MuAC have further support in their personal and professional fulfilment, and show commitment to their work, recognising these will affect learning. Both the lack of recognition and communication suggest there is a limited dialogue that could result from ineffective teamwork at the museum, and are areas for improvement that could promote a professional dialogue at MuAC.

3) Lack of teamwork

Although Enlaces participants seem to work together as a team, as reflected through peer dialogue (Subsection 5.2 (i)), the research demonstrates they do not collaborate enough with the rest of the museum. For management Professors Martin Hoegl and Praveen Parboteeah (2006, 67), staff members should share decision authority that recognises "their contributions to the team discussion", despite their differences in expertise. Evidence from interviews demonstrated that it is unlikely that Enlaces participants will take part in the decision-making process, but they can certainly contribute to MuAC staff's discussions, when they are fully acknowledged as part of the museum

team. Pearson and Smith (1985) agree and use debriefing in relation to learning, as a way of providing feedback:

> Sharing power, authority and responsibility for learning, and working towards collaborative learning in debriefing is a satisfying and rewarding process… The participants, their needs and expectations are extremely important factors (Pearson and Smith, 1985, 78-79)

Pearson and Smith (1985, 71) argue debriefing, term taken from the military to report actions and develop new strategies, offers a means to stimulate reflection. This concept can also be applied to dialogue where all dialoguers potentially deliberate to develop further learning. In particular, MuAC staff could use debriefing techniques incorporating professional dialogue to understand the Enlaces participants' needs and experiences[29].

Fieldwork interviews in Mexican contemporary art museums demonstrated the feeling of lack of collaboration between curators and educators, which replicates between MuAC and the Enlaces participants. For example, educator_9 and educator_11 (2009) claim they only deal with curators and other staff members in the museum to establish and get approval for their proposed learning activities (in agreement with Roberts, 2004, 214). Consultant_3 (2009) reinforces the lack of support to education from other departments:

> The educational communicator is not the person that takes 'the full package' when we open an exhibition, nor fools that do not know about art or how to communicate, but that should be integrated from the start of project (consultant_3, 2009)

These views suggest the importance of working more together, as part of a team. Ana Rosas Mantecón and Graciela Schmilchuck (2006, 31-32) agree with the need to communicate and promote teamwork more formally between the curatorial, interpretation and communication teams in Mexican museums. These practical and academic views demonstrate there is a limited dialogue due to a lack of teamwork that potentially affects learning. Educators are not equally respected in the museum's hierarchy, but they can be included from the exhibition planning stages (educator_1, 2009), as discussed in Section 2.3.

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[29] Further research will be needed to understand debriefing as an influential factor to gain knowledge from dialogue.

Professional dialogue can help to achieve teamwork, providing balanced opportunities to share experiences and practices, and giving more value to the role of educators.

Interviewees at MuAC did not discuss much the relationship between the education team and the rest of the departments in the museum. But the Enlaces participants reveal lack of teamwork in their practice, which they also observed as a problem amongst the rest of the staff, replicating the case of Mexican contemporary art museums practice. For Male_Enlace_2 and Female_Enlace_11 (2010) the staff work rather individually, in agreement with other participants' views previously discussed. Furthermore, Male_Enlace_11 (2010) claims that all of MuAC's departments can be more integrated, including the Enlaces participants who lack of opportunities to meet the staff. In particular, Male_Enlace_2 (2010) claims "the staff could contribute more information about the artwork" that could benefit the participants' future dialogue with audiences. Furthermore, Male_Enlace_4 (2010) feels that the lack of teamwork reflects on the museum's lack of commitment:

> MuAC's director and the staff talk greatly about the Enlaces programme, but in practice participants become like tourist guides in the museum. The staff lack of taking their jobs seriously… They should fulfil their commitments, instead of having a two-faced dialogue. MuAC has great plans and good intentions, which change because of a lack of budget or they are simply not done... (Male_Enlace_4, 2010).

The insufficient continuity to the museum's commitments creates disappointment and negative feelings that affect the Enlaces participants learning, as discussed in Subsection 5.2 (ii). For example when the staff are not honest about their plans or are explicit about modifying their strategies, the participants' enthusiasm and interest can be affected. This issue also relates to a lack of communication. In this matter, Lynch (2009, 11) argues that the organisation's control is an undermining factor in the impact and value of engagement and participation. Too much control while working individually can create limited dialogue, where changing plans and commitments can be communicated more effectively. A recent study by Gloria Romanello (2013, 64) suggests that the contemporary art museum management operates inflexibly avoiding "changes inside museums, contrary to recent public-oriented management and social trends". This view seems to replicate MuAC

staff's lack of communication with audiences and Enlaces participants, which potentially is not benefited when the management is perceived as uncommitted. Female_Enlace_15 (2010) agrees and claims that museums like MuAC are concerned about directors and professionals that bring in "big names" more than anything else.

Issues of control relate to hierarchies of management and existing egos, which can affect working as a team. In this matter, Hoegl and Parboteeah (2006, 9) argue that vertical hierarchical structures influence collaboration and communication amongst the team, whereas having autonomy of decision-making, increases the possibility to share information horizontally. Hence, vertical management can affect the effectiveness of teamwork and communication. In the case of MuAC, the formality of the museum, previously discussed by the Enlaces participants, may limit the autonomy of sharing information; despite this can potentially contribute to the museum's discussions that affect the decision-making process. In this matter, Section 4.4 demonstrated that sharing control to support the promotion of dialogic participation as a main lesson from international museums that MuAC can apply to the Enlaces programme. Moreover, the education team does not appear to share information and in-depth learning about the participants' experiences amongst the MuAC staff either. For example, Female_MuAC_3 (2010) claims: "I don't go and ask: 'marketing, how was last week's flyer?'" and feels that other departments do not enquire about the Enlaces participants either, which for her reflect "a lack of internal communication". But this comment also reveal a lack of interest in the other departments' work. Despite this:

> Negotiating a joint enterprise gives rise to relations of mutual accountability among those involved… including what matters and what does not… not only processing claims but also being personable, treating information and resources as something to be shared, and being responsible to others by not making their lives more difficult. (Wenger, 1998, 81)

Based on Wenger's view, while Enlaces participants share the responsibility for audiences, they also participate in negotiating a joint enterprise with MuAC, can potentially share knowledge and inform the decision-making process, and

be considered a more significant member of the museum team. In this sense, Male_Enlace_6 (2010) speaks about a need to nurture communication between Enlaces participants and the rest of the museum staff, in which both groups can learn from each other. This potential communication improvement can affect organisational learning, as according to Argyris and Schön (1996, 26) the institution can learn together with its groups and departments. Another staff member reflects about the Enlaces participants' practice:

> How can we make time to communicate internally, to share, and to be more in contact with all the other departments? The problem is a lack of time. We want to train the Enlaces participants to enable them to start talking to audiences straight away… We give the participants a lot of responsibility, which gives some tranquillity to some staff members, but it is difficult to change the opinions of others (Male_MuAC_3, 2010)

This perspective does not propose any solutions to improve communication and working more integrated. The lack of teamwork affects sharing practices and contributions that can affect the decision-making process of the museum. In particular, the Enlaces programme has great knowledge about audiences, as well as participants that belong to the university student community (which are half of MuAC's audiences). Reflecting about the participants' daily dialogic practice can contribute to other museum's departments understanding of audiences' needs and interests.

Interviews with Enlaces participants demonstrate there is a limited dialogue in MuAC as a result of lack of communication, recognition and teamwork between staff and the participants. This suggests that the staff's work remains based on assumptions about the Enlaces participants' needs and interests, as much as audiences. The problem of lack of communication will reflect on the museum's ability to work as a team with the participants, failing to recognise their work and contributions. Professional dialogue can promote teamwork and collaborative work, as well as recognition, while offering an understanding of the different departments' practices and challenges. Furthermore, it can reinforce the museum commitment to the Enlaces participants while being honest about their targets and limitations. The issues affecting limited dialogue replicate from the educator's interactions with the rest of the staff in Mexican contemporary art museums (Section 2.3; and fieldwork research,

2009-2010).

This chapter has analysed the research's findings revealing the existence of different dialogues taking place with the Enlaces participants at MuAC. First, the dialogue with audiences observed as: (1) visual internal dialogue, a mute direct experience, which sometimes is the only way of looking at the artwork. (2) Content dialogue that shares information, knowledge and reflection about the artwork and people's experiences. Participants feel that content dialogue increases engagement and provokes interest and confidence to experience contemporary art, but it also needs more research, when people want to learn more. (3) Participatory dialogue that leads to debate, negotiation, co-creation of meanings, and inclusion of all dialoguers in a more balanced and egalitarian way. These categories of dialogue have learning potential when they provoke meaningful experiences.

Second, this research puts forward that the Enlaces participants can share the learning outcomes of their dialogue with audiences with staff members at MuAC, which can impact on museum practice. Hence, the analysis of dialogue with MuAC staff demonstrated, first, peer dialogue, as shared practice and learning that occurs informally between Enlaces participants at the museum, creating confidence, value and respect to peer work and opinions (Pringle, 2006, 40; Sekules, 2011, 28). Second, professional dialogue, as Enlaces participants gain professionalisation opportunities such as insight about the museum operation, improved communication skills (Taylor, 2006a; 2008a), and share practice occasionally with the education team. However, professional dialogue with most staff members seems to be minimal, and so, third, limited dialogue emerges. This demonstrates insufficient acknowledgment of the Enlaces participants' work, having an impact on sharing practice and knowledge, observed through the lack of: communication, recognition and teamwork. How do these dialogues affect the research thinking of professional learning dialogue both in MuAC and contemporary art museums? This impact will be analysed next.

Chapter 6

Conclusions: Towards a Professional Learning Dialogue in Mexican Contemporary Art Museums

This research analysed the role of learning through dialogue in Mexican contemporary art museums, and specifically examined the Enlaces programme at the University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC). The case study's focus was to analyse the dialogue of the Enlaces participants, and its learning potential, with audiences and staff members, based on theoretical and practical evidence. The thesis argued that audiences gain access and information about contemporary art through dialogue, due to the abstract nature and difficulty experienced in interpreting this type of art. Museum staff offer different levels of information to engage visitors with the artwork and exhibitions (director_1, 2010). However, equally these professionals can acquire insight about their wide range of audiences. Hence, the research was interested to demonstrate that knowledge about audiences' interests and motivations, gained through dialogue, is an important source of learning for the museum staff.

Besides the difficulty experienced with contemporary art, Mexican audiences are also strongly influenced by the inherent identity that has focused on the past and heritage for decades. Learning is complex, as a person can remember facts without necessarily developing quality meaningful experiences in the museum, in particular with contemporary art. The findings from this research demonstrate that the Enlaces participants have deeper learning experiences from their dialogue with audiences. However, the participants do not have enough opportunities to share their practice and knowledge with the rest of the museum staff, as discussed in Chapter 5. The majority of MuAC staff interviewed has a rather superficial knowledge about audiences due to a lack of communication with them and Enlaces participants, missing an opportunity to more effectively engage in future practice, which reveals a limited dialogue.

The analysis of the research findings demonstrated that MuAC staff, as well as Mexican contemporary art museum professionals, can benefit from using professional dialogue as a tool to share information about their audiences and current work. This dialogue can enable further shared practice, recognition of their co-workers' contributions and value to the institution, including those of the Enlaces participants, and gain feedback about specific programmes and exhibitions, which have all learning potential. Using this tool can transform limited dialogue into professional learning dialogue, especially when this becomes a meaningful experience, and can affect both staff members and participants individually, as well as the entire organisation's practice.

6.1 Returning to the Research Question and Aims

Chapter 1 introduced the main research question of the thesis: **how does dialogue impact on Mexican contemporary art museum learning of the Enlaces participants and museum staff?** The analysis of this question involved investigating three subordinate questions:

1. **Which contemporary art museum learning and dialogue theoretical approaches lend themselves best to application in the context of Mexican contemporary art museums?** The theoretical framework used to analyse learning dialogue was examined throughout the chapters, focused on six key main literatures. The first one involved a discussion aiming to define contemporary art, which is a complex and challenging art that uses any media and topic, and needs additional information due to the lack of familiarity, process or background behind the artwork (see Section 1.1)[1]. The second one referred to the choice of language, in particular when other staff members such as curators are responsible to communicate the artwork to audiences, which affects learning in museums (See Section 2.3)[2]. The third one discussed experiential learning theoretical approaches that were applicable to

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[1] Authors used to discuss contemporary art were García Canclini (2010), Schmilchuck (2005), Stallabrass (2004), Weil (2002), and Yúdice (2002).
[2] Writers referring to language and the role of learning were Knutson (2002), Hooper-Greenhill (2000), O'Neill and Wilson (2009), Owens (1998), and Roberts (2004).

the experience with contemporary art (See Chapter 3). These focused on the conception of learning in museums, the need for specialist knowledge, as well as participation, dialogue, and how the people around influence the learning experience[3]. The fourth one referred specifically to dialogue, which is a tool that provides confidence, new information, having a voice and listening, in order to be better able to participate in the learning experience (See Chapter 4)[4].

The fifth literature focused on a discussion of comparative practical examples of museums and galleries that used dialogue to promote audiences' learning and engagement. These included museums and galleries in the UK (Pringle, 2006; Taylor, 2006a, 2008a; Duff, 2012; Thomas, 2012; Merriman, 1997), Ireland (O'Donoghue, 2003), the US (Perin, 1992; Tchen, 1989), Australia (Szekeres, 2002), Canada (Ashley, 2005), and South Africa (Rassool, 2006). The lessons of learning dialogue from these experiences are the need to (a) promote more balanced relationships, (b) listen to visitors and (c) give some control to audiences, and (d) share more information about the exhibition's process and background.

Finally, because the thesis demonstrated that the museum staff have an opportunity to gain knowledge from audiences and share information about them, the sixth literature refers to organisational learning. This focused on research approaches about adult education at work, where individuals learn their practice, experiences, and by working with peers; but the organisation can only learn when individual or group staff members' practices have an impact within the entire institution (See Section 5.2)[5].

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[3] The main authors referring to these issues were Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel (1991), John Falk and Lynn Dierking (1992; 2000), Néstor García Canclini (1987; 2010), George Hein (1991; 1998), Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1992; 1994; 2000), Nina Simon (2010), and Etienne Wenger (1998).
[4] This was mainly based on Bourdieu (1991), Michel Foucault (1972; 1977), Paulo Freire (1996), Bernardette Lynch (2009), François Matarasso (2008), and Louise Ravelli (2006).
[5] The authors that referred to this issue were Eraut et al (1998), Argyris and Schön (1996), Boud and Middleton (2003), Pearson and Smith (1985), Hoegl and Parboteeah (2006), and Wenger (1998).

2. **How are learning and dialogue understood in the context of Mexican contemporary art museums?** This question's discussion moved from general to particular issues, using a critical, policy and practical framework focused on learning and dialogue, in Mexico and Mexico City art museums and education (See Chapter 2). The case study also explored the concepts of learning and dialogue in Mexican practice, with a focus on MuAC (see Chapters 3 to 5). To answer the question, first, there was a critical discussion about the factors that affect how Mexicans relate to contemporary art today, including: (a) the government control over the arts and education that imposed a national identity based on heritage and the revolution since the 1920s[6], and (b) how this established identity affected cultural policy-making and the government support to museums and the arts, in particular since the end of the 1980s[7].

Second, the focus moved to Mexico City's cultural significance and its progressive approach to culture in comparison to the rest of Mexico[8]. Third, the discussion progressed specifically to recent cultural policies that affect learning and dialogue in art museums, as well as potential opportunities to learn from anthropology and history museums that have delivered forward-thinking educational communication strategies for over 15 years[9]. This subordinate question also involved practical evidence from interviews with educators, curators and directors in Mexican contemporary art museums, which supported the discussion of learning and dialogue in day-to-day practice (fieldwork research, 2009-2010).

Following the discussion of these subordinate questions, the research defined learning as meaningful experiences that create further understanding about contemporary art. Learning involves gaining new and specialist knowledge,

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[6] Benítez Dueñas (1999), Eder (2002), García Canclini (2010), Goulet (1983), Labastida (2006), Reyes Palma (1987), and Sánchez (2001).
[7] Based on Barrios (2006), Debroise (1997), Maribe (2003), Nivón (2000; 2006), and Yúdice (2002).
[8] Discussed by García Canclini (2004), Mantecón and Nivón (2004), Secretaría de Cultura de la Ciudad de México (2004).
[9] CONACULTA (2001; 2008; 2010c), Jumex (2011), INBA (2007; 2010; 2013), Martín Medrano (2008; 2009), Nivón (2000; 2006), SEP (2005; 2010b), Schmilchuck (1994; 2004; 2005), and Vallejo (2002a; 2002b; 2003).

generally provided by the museum, other people, and the artwork; which influence the person's previous knowledge and experience. Learning stimulates connections, interaction, participation and engagement, and provokes further reflection, questioning, and communication with the artwork[10]. Mexican professionals added that learning in contemporary art museums involves tools that complement the access to the artwork, such as learning programmes and activities. Learning at MuAC adds tools that support familiarising with contemporary art, and aims to broaden audiences' interactions with it.

On the other hand, dialogue is a face-to-face conversation between at least two people, where all the participants talk, listen, respond and react to the other dialoguers' views and contributions. Dialogue can provide balanced opportunities to share ideas and opinions, and provoke further reflection about contemporary art[11]. Only when the experience with dialogue is meaningful, it will turn into a learning dialogue. Mexican professionals highlighted the ability to listen. Dialogue at MuAC recognises a dynamism, aims to provoke confidence, questions and criticalness, and make people realise there are no right or wrong answers with contemporary art. Furthermore, the analysis of the Mexican context, demonstrated there were specific issues that influence the practice of learning dialogue in Mexico:

a) The existence of hierarchies. These were discussed, first, in terms of knowledge where (a) audiences, who are generally seen as being unknowledgeable about contemporary art, can be supported by education activities, such as the Enlaces programme, that provide specialist knowledge, at least for those who may need it. (b) Museum professionals, who referred to hierarchies of knowledge, where educators are perceived as being less knowledgeable than curators (academic_2; curator_9, 2009).

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[10] Falk and Dierking (1992; 2000), G. Hein (1991; 1998), H. Hein (2000), Hooper-Greenhill (1992; 1994; 2000), Simon (2010), Wenger (1998).
[11] The theories behind each one of these characteristics are: listening (Eraut et al., 1998; Falk and Dierking, 1992; 2000; McLean, 1999), having a voice (H. Hein, 2000; Lynch, 2009; Matarasso, 2008; Witcomb, 2003), confidence (G. Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Pringle, 2006; Taylor, 2006a), multiple interpretations and balanced participation (Freire, 1996; Manrique, 1993; Simon, 2010), and feedback (Ravelli, 2006; Weil, 2002a).

However, it was demonstrated that there are more opportunities of training for educators, and their backgrounds are often in art history and visual arts, which are more directly related to contemporary art (Section 2.4). Second, there were also operational hierarchies observed in the layers of institutional bureaucracy, structure and budget allocation within museums (Chapter 2 and Section 3.2). Educators and curators are not at the same level in practice, which evidenced lack of recognition, value and collaboration for the educator's work.

b) The legacy of government control over arts and education. This issue has left a rooted connection to the indigenism and revolutionary heritage, which promoted a public art history based on muralism and pride of the past (Section 2.1). This legacy has created distance with contemporary art, including a gap of understanding that affects Mexican audiences, who do not know how to look at contemporary art (director_1, 2010; educator_1, 2009; SEP, 2007a; Zavala, 2011). It also has had to adapt to current globalisation and technological pressures, despite that contemporary art has been detached or critical to this legacy. Furthermore, in recent decades, the Mexican government has shown limited interest and support to cultural policy, demonstrating a lack of consistency, accountability, and participation in the arts. There is a need for strategic reflection and long-term planning to support the current art production and audiences' participation.

c) Lack of documentation and evaluation. Although museums and cultural organisations have shown a recent interest to gather quantitative data about visitor numbers and profiles, there have been limited efforts to analyse the quality of audiences' experiences (See Section 2.3 and Appendix 2.5). In particular, Mexican art museums have a short memory in terms of poor administrative record keeping. Insufficient documentation is also evidenced through the lack of targets and guidelines that are specific to each museum, education departments, and the learning mission. The government six-year term rulings that result in an ongoing

rotation of staff accentuate this issue. Limited records of practice will also affect new members' continuity with previous programmes (Chapter 2).

3) **How does dialogue impact on Mexican contemporary art museum learning in practice?** This sub question supported the main research question and considers Mexican contemporary art museum professionals perspectives, with a focus on the case study evaluation of learning dialogue. Dialogue at MuAC relates to theoretical approaches of experiential learning previously discussed, but it adds having confidence and a voice, validating others' opinions, and promoting the co-creation of meanings considering all the dialoguers[12]. Evidence from data analysis demonstrated the existence of a dialogue between the Enlaces participants either with audiences or MuAC staff (Chapter 5). First, talking to audiences impacts upon the Enlaces participants' learning, and reveals the following categories of dialogue:

(a) **Visual internal dialogue**, which refers to a direct individual experience with the artwork implying observation. This is an exception because it is the only form of dialogue that is not verbal. Although visual internal dialogue is sufficient for some people to have a direct experience, this may not be enough for others. However, without the artwork, the museum's existence would not make sense, which demonstrates the significance of visual internal dialogue.

(b) **Content dialogue**, provides opportunities to share information and experiences about contemporary art's specialist knowledge, including concepts, the process, and references about the artwork (Section 1.1)[13]. Content dialogue broadens people's interests, letting them feel more able and confident to experience the artwork, and stimulating understanding for those who may need it.

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[12] Authors that support these ideas are Eraut et al. (1998), Hooper-Greenhill (2000), Matarasso (2008), Pringle (2006), Ravelli (2006), Simon (2010), Taylor (2006a), and Wenger (1998).
[13] According to Belting (2007), Dallow (2005), García Canclini (2010), and Stallabrass (2004).

(c) Participatory dialogue, which involves dialoguers taking part actively, promoting debate, and finding connections with the artwork and other people in an egalitarian way. Participatory dialogue acknowledges there is value in others' opinions and contributions, and that meaning is co-created by all the dialoguers[14]. Although for Ravelli (1996, 145) participation is rarely equal in museums, a balanced participatory dialogue allows greater possibilities of sharing opinions and learning from other people.

The data analysis demonstrated that these three categories of dialogue with audiences can overlap or take place independently, and in no particular order. The examination of the interaction between these dialogues is summarised in the following model:

Figure 6.1
Audiences' Learning Dialogue Model
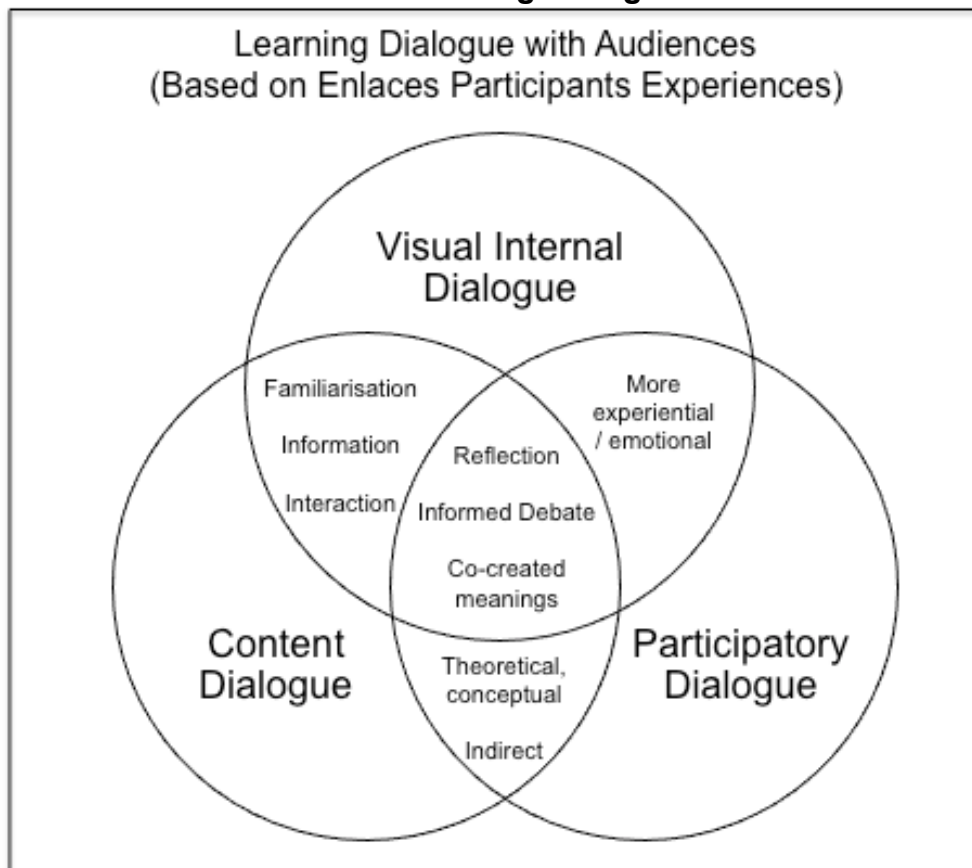
Source: Analysis from fieldwork findings (2010) and theoretical perspectives.

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[14] Based on views by Freire (1996), Matarasso (2008), McGonagle (2004), Simon (2010), and Wenger (1998).

Visual internal dialogue is the most common unintervened experience that takes place in museums. Evidence demonstrated that when this type of dialogue overlaps with content dialogue only, the experience involves the sharing of specialist knowledge about the artwork, supporting audiences' familiarisation and recognition of contemporary art media, topics and concepts. At the same time, this crossover enables more significant ways of interacting, for example looking again and making further connections with the artwork. However, the overlap of content and visual internal dialogue can turn into a gallery tour or a monologue when dialogue is unbalanced or lacks participation.

Visual internal dialogue relates to a process of interaction either individually (intrapersonal) or with the artwork, whereas participatory dialogue involves social or group relationships (interpersonal). The overlap of these two types of dialogue only provokes an experiential and emotional connection point (Figure 6.1), which may not indicate existing or specialist knowledge about contemporary art. This is rarely the case when audiences interact with the Enlaces participants who are normally well trained about the specialist knowledge required to access contemporary art, with some exceptions of participants that feel their training was insufficient (See Section 4.2).

Participatory and content dialogues can also take place without a visual internal dialogue, away from the artwork, for example when the Enlaces participants welcome audiences outside of the exhibition space and give an introduction prior looking at the artwork. The interaction of these two categories of dialogue reveals an indirect experience with contemporary art, informed through specialist knowledge. Due to the absence of the artwork itself, this overlap provokes more conceptual and theoretical debate, which involves sharing cerebrally constructed notions between the dialoguers. The crossover between participatory and content dialogues can also take place in other museum's activities that relate indirectly to the artwork, such as talks or presentation. These examples may involve different levels of participatory dialogue.

There is a need to gather further practical evidence about audiences and their experiences to understand their learning in greater depth, as this was out of the research's scope. However, it has been demonstrated that the role of audiences in museums is increasingly relevant, despite this has been barely studied in Mexico[15]. The knowledge about audiences was discussed as important as the knowledge of making exhibitions (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Because audiences continuously change and evolve, museums can benefit from spending time evaluating their interests and the quality of their experiences. Otherwise the staff will be working on assumptions rather than on what audiences really need (H. Hein, 2000; Perin, 1992; Male_Enlace_4, 2010). Moreover, the thesis concluded that the concurrent crossover of the three categories of dialogue allows a deeper level of learning dialogue and engagement with contemporary art (See Image 6.1), potentially impacting on both Enlaces participants and audiences, which can provoke the following:

a) **Reflection**: Looking at the artwork with more information and listening to other people's ideas can stimulate further and deeper thought about contemporary art. In particular, when the Enlaces participants, as representatives of the museum, provoke questions and comments that enable critical thinking[16]. But this is not exclusive of participants, as audiences can also be the ones to initiate and continue this reflective dialogic process.

b) **Informed debate**: Having specialist knowledge about and looking at contemporary art, can empower dialoguers to feel more confident and engage in a deeper discussion about the artwork and their experiences. This also allows dialoguers to broaden their interests, participate further,

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[15] García Canclini (1987), H. Hein (2000), Hooper-Greenhill (1992; 1994; 2000) referred to the issue of lack of evaluation (See also Appendix 2.5).

[16] Theoretical aspects about questioning, reflection and being critical are discussed by Falk and Dierking (1992), Freire (1996), G. Hein (1998), Hooper-Greenhill (2000), Roberts (1997), Simon (2010); and practically by CONACULTA (2001), INBA (2009b), MLA (2011), Pringle (2006), consultant_2 (2009), director_1 (2010), and director_5 (2010).

and develop a greater ability to negotiate meanings, accepting everyone's dialogic perspectives are valid and worthwhile[17].

c) **Co-created meanings**: Dialogue allows sharing ideas and opinions about the artwork's content, visual characteristics, emotional and previous experiences, and knowledge. The interaction and debate with others influence the creation of meanings, as the Enlaces participants and audiences rethink and reconnect their thoughts while they consider one another's views as contributions, which mutually impact on their learning[18].

The Enlaces participants consistently argued that audiences should look at the artwork first (fieldwork findings, 2010). However, it is possible to have a visual internal dialogue during or after the content and participatory dialogues. These three main categories observed at the Audiences' Learning Dialogue Model (Figure 6.1) can be replicated for other Mexican contemporary art museums, as they also involve a visual internal dialogue, and they have already developed content that can be shared through further participatory activities. Most of these museums already offer talks, seminars, workshops, presentations, or guided tours, which may involve different levels of dialogue and participation. Moreover, when a member of staff or guide only provides information and does not listen or respond to audiences' opinions, the museums can look into offering further participatory dialogue experiences.

This Audiences' Learning Dialogue Model has similarities with Falk and Dierking (1992)'s Interactive Experience Model, which involves individual, social, and physical contexts in the museum experience. Falk and Dierking's model is a result of research about science museums and refers more generally to a broader range of museum experiences, whereas the Audiences' Learning Dialogue Model discusses dialogue and its learning potential, based on participatory experiences with contemporary art. Both models refer to three

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[17] Hooper-Greenhill (2000), Matarasso (2008), Taylor (2006a), and director_1 (2010) refer to confidence as part of learning and dialogue. H. Hein (2000), and McLean (1999) discuss the issue of multiple interpretations.
[18] Reinforced by Freire (1996), G. Hein (1998), Lynch (2009), Ravelli (2006), Simon (2010), and Wenger (1998).

spheres of interaction. The visual internal dialogue relates to the individual context, the participatory dialogue links to the social context, and the content dialogue is partly observed in the physical context together with visual internal dialogue. For Falk and Dierking (1992, 3-7), the museum's interactive experience is a result of their three proposed contexts, whereas in this research there can be dialogic interactions between one or two categories of dialogue only, but learning dialogue will be most effective when the three proposed categories crossover. Hence, the Audiences' Learning Dialogue Model contributes new knowledge to the literatures in terms of contemporary art participatory learning experiences in the museum.

The Audiences' Learning Dialogue Model categories are not exclusive to contemporary art. This model can be replicated in other museums both in Mexico and other countries, but further research will be needed to evaluate its effectiveness and the learning benefits of visual internal, content and participatory dialogues in practice.

The second part of data analysis related to the research question evaluating the dialogue between Enlaces participants and MuAC staff (Section 5.2), revealing the following three categories of potential learning dialogue within the museum:

(i) Peer dialogue demonstrates to be an interesting source of learning amongst the Enlaces participants[19], supporting their learning individually and as a group. The outcomes from peer learning dialogue can also be shared further within MuAC, enabling staff members to learn about the Enlaces participants' experiences too. This is particularly pertinent, as the participants belong to the university student community, which represents half of MuAC's visitors[20].

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[19] Some theories supporting peer dialogue are by Boud and Middleton (2003), Eraut et al. (1998), Taylor (2006a), and Simon (2010).
[20] According to Departamento de Enlace Educativo (2009), Arte en la Red (2010), and Notimex (2012).

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(ii) Professional dialogue takes place between staff members from different departments in the museum, including the Enlaces participants. Professional dialogue impacts on the participants' learning, as they gain professionalisation and career development opportunities from their experience at MuAC[21]. The impact of professional dialogue on MuAC staff, mainly with the education department, was evidenced through their involvement in training sessions, revealing limited interactions with the Enlaces participants, and missing an opportunity to learn about a significant audience segment.

A need for professional dialogue was deduced from interviews with members of Mexican contemporary art museums too (fieldwork research 2009-2010). This dialogue can have an impact on the staff's learning and practice by working in collaboration, recognising one another's roles, and sharing information in a balanced way. A department that informs others its decisions does not necessarily engage in professional dialogue, as this action limits learning and does not offer balanced opportunities to respond or share opinions. The Enlaces participants' professional dialogue with staff at MuAC replicates the role of educators in contemporary art museums, which are usually the staff working more directly with and potentially knowing about audiences[22]. No matter the existing hierarchies, the museum staff should be able to work as a team, both serving their audiences and maintaining academic rigour in their exhibitions (Black, 2005, 5; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 137). Professional dialogue facilitates the sharing of practice and information about audiences and other work-related issues. O'Neill and Wilson (2009) argued that curatorial discourses are the outcome of a dialogue between curators, artists, and other stakeholders. Why not involve educators further in these discourses through professional dialogue? Further research is required in order to answer this question.

(iii) Limited dialogue refers to restrictions to dialogue, unbalanced participation, lack of opportunities to listen, talk, respond, or actively share ideas and practices amongst museum professionals. The research findings

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[21] Pringle (2006), Taylor (2006a), and Wenger (1998) support learning outcomes in this sense.
[22] As it has been discussed by Hooper-Greenhill (2000), Knutson (2002), and Ravelli (2006).

revealed the Enlaces participants had limited dialogue with MuAC staff, which replicates the insufficient dialogue between staff and audiences. Limited dialogue at MuAC demonstrated the lack of three main areas: communication, recognition and teamwork[23].

The lack of these areas is also observed in Mexican contemporary art museum practice. The unbalanced interaction between educators and curators[24], whose relationships operate similarly to the Enlaces participants and MuAC staff, demonstrated insufficient recognition for the value, role and work of the educator or the Enlaces participants respectively. Overcoming the issues of communication, recognition and teamwork enables the museum to move from limited to professional dialogue. The analysis of the interaction between these areas promotes of shared practice is summarised in a Professional Learning Dialogue Model, illustrated in Figure 6.2 as follows:

Figure 6.2
Professional Learning Dialogue Model

Source: Analysis from fieldwork findings (2010) and theoretical perspectives.

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[23] Authors such as Fincham (2003) discuss these areas to a certain extent, in terms of working with volunteers; and Lynch (2009), Nicol and Plant (2000), and Wenger (1998) in terms of organisational learning.
[24] H. Hein (2000), Roberts (2004), Wright (1989), educator_1 (2009), consultant_2 (2009), and consultant_3 (2009).

The lack of at least one of the three main areas results in limited dialogue amongst participants and MuAC staff. For example, when there is lack of communication and recognition, staff members may create assumptions about the role of the Enlaces participants, instead of recognising that they can bring feedback about audiences and are a potential source of learning for the museum practice (H. Hein, 2000). A lack of recognition and teamwork can create negative feelings and barriers for participants and staff members to work effectively as a team, depleting enthusiasm and interest of the Enlaces participants in the museum (Boud et al., 1985; Wenger, 1998). A lack of teamwork and communication reduces collaboration opportunities, encouraging staff to work individually and in isolation instead (G. Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Simon, 2010). This also impacts on mutual accountability, as both participants and staff members have a certain level of responsibility in relation to audiences, and can work together to offer them more stimulating opportunities (Wenger, 1998), rather than leaving this to the Enlaces participants.

Professional dialogue can activate interaction to share experiences and practices, and to potentially provoke learning for all staff members. The research findings evidence that the optimal professional dialogue takes place when communication, recognition and teamwork overlap, revealing four additional key areas that can incentivise this dialogue:

a) **Openness**: Professional dialogue promotes opportunities to share opinions and practices, and is more effective when staff members recognise and are open to learn from others' experiences, which may even broaden and change their perspectives. The existence of hierarchies does not imply that dialogue will be unbalanced, as staff members at all levels can be open to learn from others. Openness possibly has a positive effect and informs individual practice and museum teamwork[25].

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[25] Foucault (1972; 1977), Henning (2006), Roberts (2004), educator_20, director_1, curator_2 (2010).

b) **Knowledge**: The museum invests resources training the Enlaces participants, but the staff do not maximise and understand the full potential of the outcomes of their experiences, roles, and dialogue with audiences. Furthermore, the Enlaces participants look for career development opportunities during their placements and can also gain more knowledge about museum practice by interacting with staff. During the research they generally were not able to access other departments at MuAC in practice (Subsection 5.2 (ii)). Professional learning dialogue can impact on the staff's future practice, and promote more meaningful interactions with both Enlaces participants and audiences[26].

c) **Value and respect:** The Enlaces participants' role has not been fully recognised throughout the museum (Section 5.2). However, their contributions can create positive change and affect views on audiences in the organisation. Furthermore, the Enlaces participants can propose innovative and original ideas in order to enable audiences' participation. The staff throughout the museum can show respect to the participants' and other colleagues' roles, practices, opinions, and contributions[27], in particular because different areas of expertise can complement and influence the entire museum's vision and work.

d) **Commitment:** The staff and Enlaces participants, while being in a public organisation, have a responsibility to promote both understanding of contemporary artwork and increasingly to create audience experiences of quality, which have learning potential. The museum concurrently is accountable for maintaining the funding for exhibitions and programmes[28], keeping the artwork quality standard, and meeting its overall targets and objectives. Being honest about the museum's commitments, capabilities and any changes to these, creates more integration amongst the team.

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[26] Fincham (2003), Pearson and Smith (1985), and Simon (2010)
[27] Lynch (2009), Matarasso (2008), Pringle (2006), Sekules (2011) and Taylor (2006a).
[28] Based on Hooper-Greenhill (1994), Nicol and Plant (2000) and Simon (2010).

The Professional Learning Dialogue Model can promote further influence of the Enlaces participants' experiences potentially provoking more critical insight and reshaping MuAC's practice, of both staff members and the organisation, and at the same time giving value and proudness to the work of the participants. This model can be applied in other Mexican contemporary art museums, especially due to their similarities with limited dialogue, discussed earlier in this chapter (See Subsection 5.2 (iii)). But further research will be needed to evaluate this model's application to other museums.

The Professional and Audiences' Learning Dialogue Models (Figures 6.1 and 6.2) have the Enlaces participants as their common link. But do these models interact in any way? The analysis of this interaction is shown in the following model:

Figure 6.3
Interactive Model of Learning Dialogue
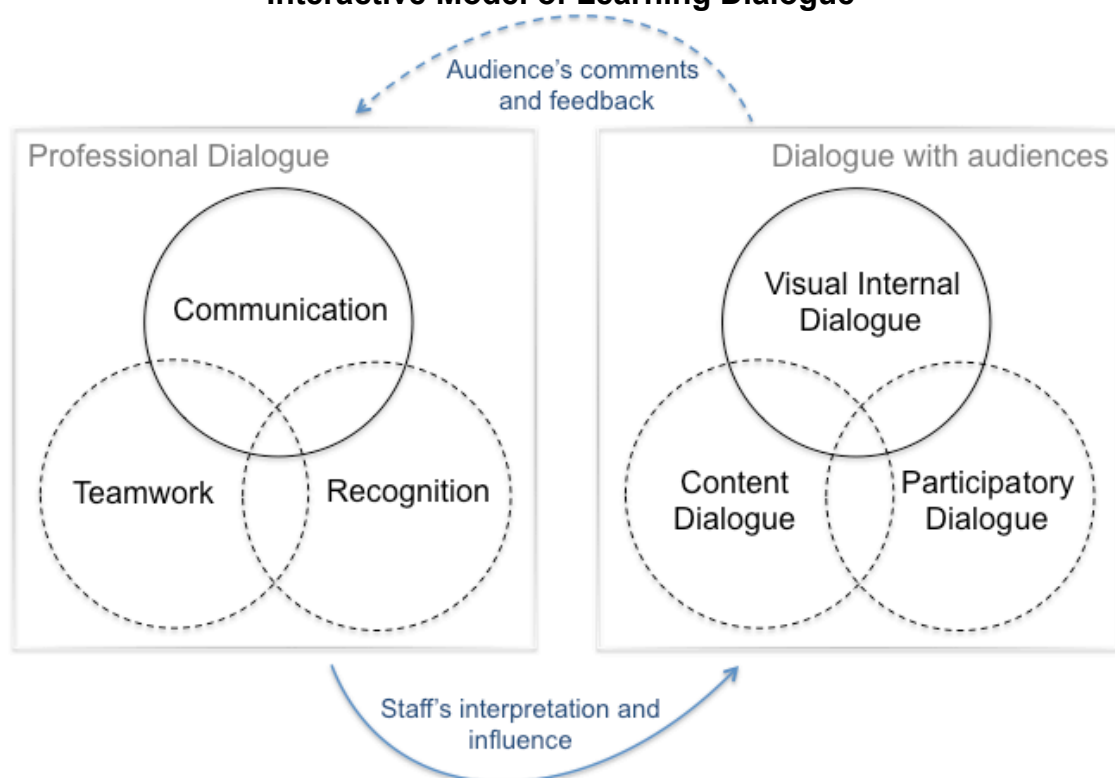
Source: Analysis from fieldwork findings (2010) and theoretical perspectives.

Figure 6.3 illustrates the organisational (left) and contemporary art (right) processes of dialogue in the museum. The circles and arrows with solid lines refer to existing actions that already take place, whereas the dotted ones are

limited and inactive but have the potential to be triggered. Visual internal dialogue is the direct experience with the artwork, while communication takes place within the museum's departments at different levels, and in the case of MuAC also during training sessions with the Enlaces participants. However, communication is also offered to audiences through exhibitions, programmes and works in display, represented by the bottom arrow in the diagram, which involve curatorial processes, additional information and activities that may impact on audiences' and Enlaces participants' understanding of contemporary art. Meanwhile, the top arrow relates to the audiences' communication and feedback processes in terms of the outcomes from their experiences, but while being dotted these are potentially limited.

The existence of the Enlaces programme at MuAC allows the participants to activate content and participatory dialogues that may otherwise remain inactive or limited (see Section 5.1), and lose their learning potential. More importantly, this Interactive Model of Learning Dialogue demonstrates that even when learning dialogue between audiences and Enlaces participants takes place, the findings from these experiences may not be fedback to the museum. This issue limits MuAC's potential to learn about audiences, which may restrict targeting their needs and interests more efficiently in the future, and instead will remain working on assumptions about them. MuAC staff already have the potential to use the Enlaces participants' knowledge to learn about audiences, which can be exploited further by activating recognition and teamwork of the participants. A professional learning dialogue can positively impact on the Enlaces participants, as well as on opening up the audiences' communication and feedback processes. In an optimal scenario both professional and learning dialogues will feed one another cyclically activating both learning individually, as staff or audience, and in the organisation.

Further research is needed to understand the Interactive Model of Learning Dialogue's application to other contemporary art museums and galleries. But the model can potentially work in Mexico considering the similarities between educators and the Enlaces participants. For example, educators can enable content and participatory dialogues with audiences, and be further recognised

and valued as a more integrated team member within the museum, which may provoke the optimal situation for learning dialogue. However, the effectiveness of the model without participatory learning activities will need further analysis.

The thesis has not discussed specific communication, recognition and teamwork strategies that enable professional learning dialogue, so further research will be needed to investigate these potential options. Furthermore, the three models from Figures 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 can be possibly applied to understand shared practice and individual's staff learning in museums beyond contemporary art, but more evidence will be needed to explore their effectiveness.

Participatory learning dialogue activities, such as the Enlaces programme, may work in one museum, but may fail to do so in another, as there are different factors that can impact on the effectiveness of participation and learning, such as the participants' selection, their training, attitude and communication techniques with audiences. Furthermore, the thesis suggests that dialogue offers one option to stimulate learning in contemporary art. For some audiences visual internal dialogue may be enough to be engaged with the artwork, but others may prefer just to listen passively to a guide or learn more actively about the production of the art through a creative process. The research aims during this investigation were established in Chapter 1, and discussed throughout the thesis as follows:

Original aim	**Discussion**
1) To gain in-depth knowledge about the role of education in Mexican contemporary art museums.	Chapter 2 discussed issues, critical texts, policy documents and practical evidence from fieldwork research with focus on the role of learning and education in Mexico and Mexican contemporary art museums. Chapter 3 analysed learning in the specific case of MuAC

2) To investigate the Enlaces participants' role as intermediary between audiences and MuAC staff and the learning outcomes from their experiences.

Chapters 4 to 6 analysed the role of the Enlaces participants' interactions between audiences and staff members. Section 5.1 and Figure 6.1 analysed the participants' dialogue with audiences, and their learning outcomes from these experiences. Section 5.2 and Figure 6.2 evaluated the participants' dialogue with MuAC staff and their professionalisation opportunities.

3) To analyse the interaction of MuAC staff with the Enlaces participants and the learning gained from these experiences.

Subsections 5.2 (ii), 5.2 (iii) and Chapter 6 discussed MuAC staff communication and relationships with the Enlaces participants. The research had limited access to interview professionals at MuAC, due to the lack of support from the museum.

4) To understand the concept of learning and dialogue in Mexican contemporary art museum practice.

Chapters 2 to 6 discussed the features and implications of learning, dialogue and learning dialogue that are most applicable in Mexican contemporary art museums, based on theoretical, critical, practical approaches, and data from fieldwork research.

6.2 Problems, Limitations and Direction for Future Research

The research main aim was set to investigate dialogue as a tool to communicate with audiences in Mexican contemporary art museums focusing on what staff can learn from this experience, including the Enlaces participants in the case of MuAC. This aim was revaluated as the research was originally exploring the concept of "two-way dialogue", which gives all dialoguers the same weight of participation. The conceptual issue that prompted this term was that Mexican contemporary art museum professionals interviewed commonly used the term dialogue to refer to activities and programmes that did not necessarily involve balanced opportunities to share

ideas or were not even verbal (fieldwork interviews, 2009-2010). A decision was taken to include "two-way dialogue" on this research's definition of dialogue, which implies there are at least two participants able to talk, listen and respond to one another in an egalitarian way (See Chapter 1). Reflection about the thesis findings revealed issues directly related to the research that can be investigated further, such as:

- The audiences' learning experiences and learning dialogue.
- The museum staff understanding and learning outcomes about audiences.
- Professional dialogue within the museum, using specific interview questions inquiring about the relationships and dialogue amongst staff, which will provide more insight about their learning and shared practice.
- The learning benefits from dialogue after a longitudinal evaluation for both Enlaces participants and museum staff.
- Comparative studies of professional and audiences learning dialogue in other museums and galleries.
- Evaluations of application of the Professional, Audiences and Interactive Models of Learning Dialogue in other museums and galleries (Figures 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3).
- A comparative evaluation of learning outcomes from audiences that interact with Enlaces participants and those who do not, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of using dialogue.
- Learning dialogue in cases where museums do not promote participation.

Furthermore, the outcomes of the research raise more questions to be investigated in the future:

- Could professional dialogue be a coined term for institutions to promote shared practice and staff's learning?
- Are there specific communication, teamwork and recognition strategies that museums can follow to promote professional dialogue effectively in practice?

- Is professional dialogue actually beneficial for museums to become more audience-centred organisations and focus on their audiences needs? Or are there other tools that can achieve this?

- Could the dialogue that already takes place with guides, warding staff or guards be analysed in a similar way to the Enlaces participants one?

- Can participatory dialogue programmes attract more people to the museum, considering that only 13% of Mexican students have a university degree?

- Are the proposed models in Figures 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 useful to provoke professional learning dialogue and learning dialogue with audiences in the museum?

- Does dialogue end or is it a cyclical, continuous and changing communication process in the museum?

- Are learning dialogue with audiences and professional dialogue part of a democratic process of participation?

Dialogue between staff members and audiences is not always possible because the staff focus on their own particular areas of work, which are normally overloaded. However, in the case of MuAC, it could be useful to have one person responsible to summarise the main findings from the Enlaces participants, and from the learning dialogue undertaken with audiences. This can potentially be shared amongst staff to the benefit of future practice, allowing the museum to become more inclusive. The research has also demonstrated that there is a need to create spaces for critical reflection about the participants' experiences encouraging further feedback from staff.

The thesis reveals there is a lack of strategic managerial thinking in terms of using the Enlaces participants' contributions further. But this issue is not exclusive of MuAC, as researcher Karen Knutson (2002, 5) argues decision-making, aims and views from a managerial perspective have been barely analysed in museums. Studies in this field can be undertaken to propose areas of management improvement for museums. The research is unique and contributes to the literature, as there are no studies about how participation

and professional dialogue in Mexican contemporary art museums impact on practice. Further, the different types of dialogue emerged from the data analysis are an original contribution to the knowledge of museum learning.

Although this thesis only gained evidence from the experiences of Enlaces participants, educators, curators, directors, and some members of MuAC staff involved with the Enlaces programme, interviews with other museum professionals such as communicators, guards or designers could also impact and inform the analysis and findings of future research. Furthermore, this investigation briefly looked at examples of good practice. Hence, benchmark and comparison cases could be analysed indepth in future research.

The Enlaces programme seems to be an example of good practice in terms of learning dialogue with audiences. Especially when it is compared to other Mexican contemporary art museums that do not offer regular dialogue opportunities to provoke audiences' learning. The Enlaces programme has certain limitations, as only audiences that interact with participants will benefit from it. Nevertheless, the Enlaces programme does not evidence good practice in terms of professional dialogue and interactions between its participants and MuAC staff, revealing there are significant opportunities for its development, learning and sharing practice within the museum.

Other limitations and issues that can be considered and investigated in future research are:

1. An updated evaluation to demonstrate any changes in the current operation of the programme, as the fieldwork research was undertaken between 2009 and 2010.
2. Understanding the artwork in depth and the role of the artist in education, which can relate to learning dialogue in different ways. For example, Foundation/Collection Jumex, private organisation, works with and provides training for artist educators (Arteven, 2012b).
3. The anonymity of Mexican contemporary art museums' professionals limits the possibility of making comparisons between the museums in this study.

The museum's operation can be affected by factors such as size, focus, learning activities, and practice.

4. Educators were the main professionals discussing issues of limited dialogue within museums. Further investigation focusing on other Mexican professionals can provide deeper knowledge about learning, using specific questions inquiring about the role and relationships with educators.

5. The challenge of balancing the voices of interviewees, as some were used more than others when their responses provided greater insight for the research analysis, for example, consultant_2 or director_1 (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002, 211; See Appendix 1.13).

6. Issues of arts democracy and empowerment have not been discussed here, but literature around these topics could support understanding the outcomes of dialogue and balanced participation.

The thesis deals with open-ended questions that allow undertaking future research about professional learning dialogue, in particular because dialogue and learning are complex concepts that involve intricate relationships between staff members and participants. Further research can focus on specific evaluation features for learning dialogue. The three learning dialogue models (Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3) propose optimal situations of practice, but the question remains whether these models can be applied to other museums, galleries and art organisations, leaving room for future research.

The concept of dialogue and its impact on learning can be challenged, questioned, and redefined within Mexican contemporary art museums' practice. In particular, when considering the weight of the dialoguers' participation, changes of audiences' needs and motivations, critical thinking and reflection about the museum's interests and practice, and the artists and artworks interactions with audiences. There is a need for Mexican contemporary art museums to rethink and reflect more regularly to renew the concept of dialogue and its implications for learning practice.

Appendix 1.1

Interviewees Code Summary
Fieldwork Research, 2009-2010

The following table summarises the codes used to identify the interviewees during the research. These codes were set up to maintain the anonymity of the participant:

Position/Role	Total of Interviewees	Code	Stage
Academics	3	academic_x	1
Museum Educators	20	educator_x	1,2,3
Learning Consultants	3	consultant_x	1
Exhibition Programming Officers	2	exhibitions_x	2
Government Servants from CONACULTA, INBA, INAH, and SEP	6	government_x	1
Museum Curators	11	curator_x	2
Museum Directors	9	director_x	2
Staff at MuAC	3	Female_MuAC_x	2
	3	Male_MuAC_x	2
Enlaces Participants	20	Female_Enlace_x	2
	14	Male_Enlace_x	2
TOTAL	94		

The table indicates the role or position of interviewees, the code used during the research, the total number of interviewees in that position and the stages in which they were interviewed. The *x* reference varies to identify the different people being interviewed. For example in the row "academics", three people were interviewed during stage 1 of the fieldwork, who will be identified as academic_1, academic_2, or academic_3 respectively.

These codes were chosen in order to maintain the job position of the interviewees, with a variation at MuAC as these codes also consider the gender of the participants on the interviews.

Appendix 1.2

Questionnaire to Education Departments
Fieldwork Stage 1, July-August 2009

1. Name of respondent and title

Your organisation

2. Details
   Name:
   Address:
   Telephone number:
   E mail:

3. Do you have a designated person responsible for education or a team? Give name and title of most senior person responsible
4. How many staff members are there in your organisation?

Education Programme and Policy

5. Does your organisation have an education programme?
6. Is your education policy and programme separate or integrated with other activities of the museum and exhibitions?
7. Does your museum have a written education policy or mission statement? Who devised it? Is it reviewed? How frequently? By whom?

Your staff involved

8. What proportion of time does the person responsible for education spend on these programmes?
9. Are your education programmes carried out by other members of staff and freelancers? Please give examples (% of participation).
10. By means of a diagram indicate the place of education within the staff structure
11. Does the person with the main responsibility for education have an input at senior management level? In other departments?
12. Is there anyone on the board with education knowledge?

Activities with your education programme

13. Ages of main participant groups targeted by your education programme
14. Are these participants different from audiences targeted in the exhibitions programme?
15. Which type of education activities does the museum deliver and approximately how many each year? (for example: gallery talks, gallery tours, lectures/talks, classes/courses, workshops, residencies, summer schools, conferences, teachers training, resource materials, performances, exhibitions, others: specify)

16. Do these activities involve dialogue? Is this dialogue effective in two ways, i.e. the staff also learn from the museum's audiences?
17. Do you monitor or evaluate activities of the education programme? Do these activities have an impact on other departments within the museum?
18. Which methods do you use and how frequently? (for example: internal debriefing sessions/feedback from artists, debriefing sessions with coordinators, debriefing sessions with participants, visits/observation report by officers or by external persons, questionnaires or surveys, others specify)

About your finances

19. What was the total budget for the last financial year for the museum?
20. What was the income for the education programme?
21. What was the expenditure for the education programme?
22. How much additional income did the education programme receive?
23. Which commercial sponsors and other organisations provided extra income?

Appendix 1.3

**Interview with Professionals involved in Museum Learning
Fieldwork Stage 1, July-August 2009**

Museum Name:
Focus of the Museum:
Name of Interviewee and Position:
Date:

About the museum

1. What is the museum's structure? Where is education located within this structure?
2. How is the museum financed?
3. Is there a cultural policy manual ruling the museum's activities? Is this updated?
4. Does the museum have a collection?
5. Who are the museum's current audiences? Does the museum have plans to develop new audiences?

About the Education Department

6. Does the department have goals, objectives, manuals, guidelines?
7. How many people work in the department?
8. What type of activities are organised by the department and for which audiences?
9. How does the museum evaluate these activities? What techniques do you use for this?
10. Do you work with other departments within the museum? Do you participate in the exhibitions planning?
11. Do you work with artists and third party professionals?
12. Do you deliver outreach activities?
13. Does the museum have links with schools? With the community?
14. Do you do consultation with any of these groups?
15. Does the department follow up and maintain the relationship with these groups?
16. What are the education needs in the museum?

Appendix 1.4

Interview with Directors and Curators
Fieldwork Stage 2, January – March 2010

Name:
Title:
Telephone number:
Email:

1. How would you define education/learning in the museum? Do you think learning is a product offered in the museum? Is 'understanding the artwork' part of this learning?
2. In your opinion, do audiences' understand/interpret what you are trying to communicate through the artwork and exhibitions in the museum? Do you feel the activities and materials offered in the museum help to promote this understanding? Please give examples.
3. Do you feel your audiences have a prior understanding and knowledge about the artwork displayed? Do you think this is important or necessary?
4. What impacts beyond learning have you observed on audiences experiencing contemporary arts? In your opinion, are these impacts measurable? How do you evaluate them?
5. In your opinion, is the use of dialogue part of the learning process? What does the dialogue look like? Is it verbal, corporeal, through texts?
6. Do you think learning in contemporary art can be promoted as a result of two-way dialogue between the museum and the public? Do you think the museum learns from this dialogue? Do you feel this dialogue influences your own practice?
7. Can you think of any other tools that could encourage learning in contemporary art?
8. Is there anything you would like to see in contemporary art museums' education programmes in Mexico?

Thank you for your participation. The findings from this interview will only be used for academic research.

Appendix 1.5

Questionnaire to Enlaces Participants
Fieldwork Stage 2, January – March 2010

This research is about learning and communication in contemporary art museums, with the aim to promote art, culture and education in Mexico. It is interested in learning from your experience as a link between the audience and the museum, and from the conversations you have with both groups. The aim is to understand people's experience of approaching contemporary art.

Thank you for your collaboration in this research. Your participation and experience are essential to give life to this project.

Participants are free to withdraw from this research at any time and to withdraw their information. All individual responses are anonymous and for research purposes only. Your name will not be revealed unless you give your permission.

About you

Name:
Age:
Gender:

Your contact details (I will need this to contact you in the future)
Telephone number:
Email:
Skype account:

Which University are you studying at?
What course are you doing (degree and subject)?
Do you work? If yes, what is your role and organisation?
How frequently do you access the Internet every week?

Your participation in the Enlaces Programme

1. Are you a volunteer or work placement?
2. What date did you start? Which shifts are you doing every week?
3. What interests you about this programme?
4. Have you been to this or other museums before taking part on the programme? How frequently do you visit this or other museums?
5. In your opinion, is it important for the museum to talk to audiences in order to help them understand contemporary artworks?
6. How does this institution communicate with you?

Thank you. I will be in touch with you soon.

Patricia (patricia.bueno-delgado.1@city.ac.uk)

Appendix 1.6

Interview with Enlaces Participants
Fieldwork Stage 2, January – March 2010

Your current practice as a participant

1. What do you think is the purpose of the programme?
2. How well informed do you feel about the programme?
3. What do you expect to gain from this experience?
4. What is your current input in the programme? Is there anything different you would like to do?
5. In your opinion, what is the best way to engage audiences with contemporary art?

About learning in contemporary arts
6. In your opinion, why is it important to understand contemporary art?
7. Is this part of a learning process? Does this relate to your experience?
8. Do you think contemporary art can have an impact on the future? What kind of impact? Does this relate to learning in any way?
9. Do you feel that participating in this programme has changed your understanding about museums and contemporary art?

About dialogue
10. In your opinion, is having conversations with audiences useful to approach and understand contemporary art? Who has done more talking?
11. Do you feel that the museum is having a conversation with audiences? Why?
12. Do you share your experiences and ideas with the rest of the museum staff? How?

Do you have any other comments?

Thank you. You will be contacted soon for the next phase of this research.

Appendix 1.7

Interview with Staff at the University Museum of Contemporary Art
Fieldwork Stage 2, January – March 2010

Name:
Title:
Telephone number:
Email:

About your own practice

1. How would you define education/learning in the museum? Do you think learning is a product offered in the museum? Is 'understanding the artwork' part of this learning?

2. In your opinion, do audiences' understand/interpret what you are trying to communicate through the artwork and exhibitions in the museum? Do you feel the activities and materials offered in the museum help to promote this understanding? Please give examples.

3. Do you feel that your audiences have a prior understanding and knowledge about the artwork displayed? Do you think this is important or necessary?

4. What impacts beyond learning have you observed on audiences experiencing contemporary arts? In your opinion, are these impacts measurable? How do you evaluate them?

5. In your opinion, is the use of dialogue part of the learning process? What does the dialogue look like? Is it verbal, corporeal, through texts?

6. Do you think learning in contemporary art can be promoted as a result of two-way dialogue between the museum and the public? Do you think the museum learns from this dialogue? Do you feel this dialogue influences your own practice?

7. Can you think of any other tools that could encourage learning in contemporary art?

8. Is there anything you would like to see in contemporary art museums' education programmes in Mexico?

About the Enlaces Programme

a) Do you think the programme is effective in promoting learning?
b) Have you ever attended the participants' visits or supported any of their activities?
c) In your opinion, what works in the programme?
d) What does not work in this programme?

e) What have you learned from this programme? Have you incorporated this learning in your own practice? Please give clear examples.

f) Do you think the findings from this programme are shared in your department? In the rest of the museum?

g) Do you know your audience better through this programme?

h) Do you know the participants? Do you deal directly with them?

Appendix 1.8

Interview with Contemporary Art Museum Educators
Fieldwork Stage 3, September-November 2010

1. How would you define learning in your museum?

2. How would you define dialogue?

3. What does dialogue look like?

4. How is this learning dialogue shared with the rest of the museum staff?

Appendix 1.9

List of Professionals Interviewed
Position, Organisation, and Stages. Fieldwork Research 2009-2010

Position	Organisation	Stages
Coordinator	Mexican Association of Museum Professionals (AMPROM)	1
Programming Coordinator	Spain's Cultural Centre in Mexico (CCE)	2
Curator	University Museum of Chopo	2
Education Officer	University Museum of Chopo	2
Cultural Statistics	National Council for Culture and Arts (CONACULTA)	1
Arts Education Reform	National Council for Culture and Arts (CONACULTA)CONACULTA	1
Coordinator MA Museology	National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography (ENCRyM)	1
Learning Consultant	Freelance	1
Chief of Diffusion and Education	Ex Teresa Current Art	1
Director	Ex Teresa Current Art	2
Director	Museum of Blaisten Collection	1
Curator	Foundation/Collection Jumex	2
Chief of Communication and Education Programmes	Foundation/Collection Jumex	1, 3
Museology Coordinator	National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH)	1
Education Coordinator	National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH)	1
Chief of Education Services	Alameda Art Laboratory (LAA)	1, 3
Former Chief of Education Services	Alameda Art Laboratory (LAA)	1
Director	Alameda Art Laboratory (LAA)	2
Curator	Alameda Art Laboratory (LAA)	2
Director	Carrillo Gil Art Museum (MACG)	2
Curator	Carrillo Gil Art Museum (MACG)	2
Coordinator Open Studio	Carrillo Gil Art Museum (MACG)	3
Curator Open Studio	Carrillo Gil Art Museum (MACG)	3
Chief of Education Services	University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC)	1, 2, 3
Enlaces Programme Coordinator	University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC)	1, 2
Chief Curator	University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC)	2
Chief Curator Academic Programmes	University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC)	2
Museography Coordinator	University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC)	2
University Liaison and Outreach	University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC)	2
Chief of Education Services	Modern Art Museum (MAM)	1
Chief of Volunteers	Modern Art Museum (MAM)	1
Curator	Modern Art Museum (MAM)	2
Curator	Modern Art Museum (MAM)	2
Deputy Director	Modern Art Museum (MAM)	2
Exhibitions Coordinator	Modern Art Museum (MAM)	2
Chief of Education Services	Estanquillo Museum	1
Chief of Audiences Services	Museum of Mexico City (MCM)	1, 2
Director	Museum of Mexico City (MCM)	2
Curator	Museum of Mexico City (MCM)	2
Chief of Education Services	National Museum of San Carlos (MNSC)	1, 3
Former Director	National Museum of San Carlos (MNSC)	1

Learning Consultant	Freelance	1
Chief of Education Services*	Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum (MTAC)	1, 3
Workshop Coordinator	Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum (MTAC)	2
Director	Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum (MTAC)	2
Curator	Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum (MTAC)	2
Learning Consultant	Freelance	1
Chief of Education Services*	Siqueiros Public Art Gallery (SAPS)	1, 3
Curator	Siqueiros Public Art Gallery (SAPS)	2
Chief of Education Services	Former College of San Ildefonso (ACSI)	1, 3
Adult Programmes Coordinator	Former College of San Ildefonso (ACSI)	1
Director	Former College of San Ildefonso (ACSI)	2
Curator	Former College of San Ildefonso (ACSI)	2
Link Schools and Museums	Ministry of Education (SEP)	1
Visual Arts Consultant	Secondary Education Reform, SEP	1
Performing Arts Consultant	Secondary Education Reform, SEP	1
Director	Experimental Museum El Eco	2
Curator	University Museum of Sciences and Arts Roma	2
Director	Kurimanzutto Contemporary Art Gallery	2
Freelancer	Creator of Mexican Youth Promotion Programme, CONACULTA	2
Education Department Deputy Director	Franz Mayer Museum	2
Education Officer	Interactive Museum of Economy	2
Academic / curator	Universidad Iberoamericana / Freelance	1
Academic / curator	The National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) / Freelance	1

* Refers to two different interviewees, as the person in the position changed between 2009 and 2010.

Appendix 1.10

Quotes from Mexican Contemporary Art Museums' Books of Comments

These comments come from 7 books of comments from Mexican contemporary art museums, from exhibitions between 2006 and 2010. The comments are listed according to proposed categories and sub categories during content analysis[29].

Museum:

Importance
- I've followed the life of the museum since my childhood. I like to witness its own reflection, … value and enjoy it (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2008)
- Spaces like this truly offer a break from the asphyxiating contemporaneity. Contemporary art will always be an open question, but the existence of spaces that formulate it is more important (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)
- Incredible artwork … but the space also contributes to make this a unique experience (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Le Parc Lumiere*, 2006)

Display
- Excellent material. It is a shame about the artworks' installation. It is easy to tell that the budget is a pittance, as everything with culture in Mexico (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *DRAW*, 2010)
- The material is good but the presentation not so much (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *DRAW*, 2010)
- $22 pesos (approximately £1) for this! (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)

Staff positive
- The staff are excellent, congratulations for the kindness. Here they are not as dry as in other museums (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2008)
- Wonderful exhibition. It took us from admiring the beauty of the paintings to laughter and reflection. It is great to be able to enjoy a family Sunday here… All the staff here are very kind and treated us with kindness. Thank you (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2010)
- Congratulations to the team. Thank you Mr. Benito for sharing your experiences and knowledge (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Le Parc Lumiere*, 2006)
- I congratulate everyone, especially the guards: very attentive, educated and sensitive (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Le Parc Lumiere*, 2006)
- There are not enough words to thank all the people that make the magic of art possible to happen. Thank you to all the staff (Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, 2010)

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[29] The references from each quote provide information from the name of the museum, the exhibition (when known), and the date.

- I think curators should learn from the people that are always in contact with visitors, to develop a more knowledgeable view from both sides, and stop always seeing with one limited perspective only ... The viewer activates the artwork (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2009)
- I suggest that you do not tell security staff off in front of the audience, because it gives a bad image of the museum. You should value their work, as it is not easy to stand for more than 8 hours (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- You, cultural authorities, could do even more with what you have. Be more eager, show more vocation (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Dataspace*, 2006)

Staff negative

- The director, the museum and the city should be ashamed that its security employees treat young people as criminals when they are not even doing anything. It is bad enough that there is no respect between Mexico City's residents. I do not need to experience this in a museum (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)
- What I truly found terrible was the treatment from the people here, the women that 'protect'. What kind of people do they think we are? They treated us like dogs, yelled at us, and I do not think they are worthy of my presence... (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2010)
- They observe us a lot. Not all citizens are disrespectful. I feel watched (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2010)
- Is enjoyment of the artwork allowed? Because when I was doing it I thought of what the guard told me regarding the time I sat on a chair, that I: "can't remain sitting for so long". What is so long? (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *DRAW*, 2010)
- Who manages this museum? Hitler? Everything is forbidden and the staff treat people as criminals. I hope [the museum] makes an effort to show a more kind face to its visitors. As it is, no one is going to visit museums (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *SANAA*, 2010)
- The security staff abuse their position and harass the visitor: they intimidate and do not allow people to appreciate the exhibition. If you do not want visitors, make the exhibition private (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- In Anthony Gormley's exhibition, a security member of staff is aggressive while giving instructions for visitors to move on. It is like being in the underground. An exhibition should not have to be walked quickly (Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, *Anthony Gormley*, 2010)
- The guards seem like prison guards (Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, 2010)
- Security staff members in the museum are strict and honestly annoying. I understand how mobile calls and excessive noise are unpleasant. But a hug! A kiss! Miss X… made it clear that respect implies total silence, and a moralist expression from her, independently of her rude attitude, highlighting that one cannot kiss in the galleries. My question is why security guard's radios are not turned off or the staff keep quiet when

instead they are laughing out loud? They perturb the order and my gaze equally (Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, 2010)

Art

Surprise
- Some things are very weird, without knowing if they are pulling our leg or being art. Others are very interesting. But what you do is a valuable search (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2008)
- I am impressed that something 'so simple' can be art (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)
- I liked it, it is different when you see so much work together in one place, made by 'normal' people who are not 'geniuses' (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *DRAW*, 2010)
- To the artist:... I do not leave the museum disappointed. On the contrary, I am very pleased to be another spectator (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Le Parc Lumiere*, 2006)
- Strange but surprising... (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)
- Anthony Gormley's exhibition takes you to an almost empty universe. Only you and the artwork. In some galleries this is the most surprising aspect (Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, *Anthony Gormley*, 2010)
- Today, I recovered the capacity to surprise myself. Betsabée Romero's exhibition is unique and has great strength, which is quickly transmitted through her artwork (Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, *Betsabée Romero*, 2010)
- In Denmark they have a good sense of humour (Museo Nacional de San Carlos, 2008)

Positive
- I love the exhibition. It shows how art is everywhere and reachable for everyone. It only needs a little creative spark (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)
- Excellent! It is one of the things that keeps me going in this primitive and bureaucratic country. The art is the best, from the most minimalist to the psychedelic and transitive (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2010)
- This collection of drawings is impressive because it allows looking at many mental two-dimensional perspectives. It is a perfect contemporary drawing collage... I had goose bumps thanks to a drawing by my favourite contemporary artist Natalia Fabia (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *DRAW*, 2010)
- I come from Tijuana and, you know, there is no exhibition of this type there. I liked it very much because there is no censorship (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *DRAW*, 2010)
- Not even a child could paint black better (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- I think it is a nice exhibition, as you can see something less tedious and out of the ordinary (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Le Parc Lumiere*, 2006)

- It is a very good exhibition, but if you put a determined sound or a ghost in the entrance, the place would create a further impact to the public (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Dataspace*, 2006)
- Beauty is something exceptional. To create this exhibition is like being close to god (Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, *Anthony Gormley*, 2010)

Negative Space
- It is incredible that having so many talented artists looking for exhibition spaces for their artwork in Mexico, this space is constantly so wasted. The last 3 times I visited this museum have been truly disappointing… what do you do with our taxes? Looking at this makes the few people that visit museums in this country to have less interest to do it (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2010)
- This type of art only provokes to create false believes and lack of values!!! Use this beautiful space better (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)
- ... I think there is talent in Mexico, but it is hidden (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2010)
- Depressing, pathetic, poor. Takes away the will of visiting museums (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)
- What a horrific museum. Surely I will not come back in a hundred years (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Defecto Común*, 2010)

Negative Discourse
- I did not like it much. Although I think some ideas are very good, the way of presenting them did not get my attention much (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2010)
- I did not like the new 'art' at all. Furthermore, it depressed me (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2010)
- It is not art. At the most, it is a type of expression (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2010)
- Boring. Sorry but I did not find the art. Pretty amateur (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Bella y Terca*, 2010)
- I hate modern art with its 'impressing ignorants' discourse, where the rubbish becomes art... (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)
- This is a burgoise art show imposed to us by Yankee imperialism, to silence our Latin-American social reality (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)
- This modern art is very strange (Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, 2009)
- My stomach even hurt by coming and looking at sad and senseless things. It takes the classic out from the museum (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)
- Each time you show uglier things. Do not lose anymore time and look with imagination (Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, 2009)
- No one dares to point out the deception and misused time, money and effort. Very difficult to determine which one is the ugliest (Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, 2010)

- All the galleries look like a major funeral home. You only forgot to place coffins and giant candles to complete a very macabre installation (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- Is this really art? It does not invite me to reflect anything nor to appreciate aesthetically. I only see banality and vanity. The artwork does not tell me anything about the artist, its character. They are pieces without a soul, with industrial and monumental egocentric finishing (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)
- I do not share the opinion of these 'so-called' artists. They are crazy and express their craziness in their artwork (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)
- Society and therefore humanity have died. What is the difference between a walk and to visit this museum? That in the walk I will find more things worthy of being called art… Even though at the end the exhibition transmits a clear but horrific message: mankind has been abolished (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)
- It is a shame the support to young people's desperation and frustration represented in art. Art is to make the spirit more sublime, not to feel depressed and alone (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Defecto Común*, 2010)
- Artists continue promoting violence and psychological trauma. It is not enough with the news, but in this museum they stress this through the everyday (Museo Universitario del Chopo, Defecto Común, 2010)

Individual learning/understanding

Negative – more explanation/information
- I liked the exhibition very much, although I am a bit stupid and I got lost, but it was my fault (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2008)
- During the visit, I tried to understand the artwork, but I found it very difficult. Maybe modern art is not for me (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2010)
- Very complex text (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Bella y Terca*, 2010)
- More explanation (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Bella y Terca*, 2010)
- Too abstract and conceptual exhibition. I need an explanation to understand it. Staff's attention is excellent, you can tell their interest for you to come back (Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, 2010)
- I have not truly liked it at all, because there is no one to explain it to me, or to tell me what this is trying to say (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)
- Probably I am too old to understand this type of exhibition (60 years). Hopefully young people will find it attractive and interesting (Museo Universitario del Chopo, Defecto Común, 2010)
- The museum has strange things that I consider funny. It mostly does not teach anything, as we see these in everyday life (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)

<u>Positive – education</u>

- I liked everything. But particularly to have the opportunity to learn things that perhaps we did not know. I would like to repeat it (Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 2010)
- Thank you for the introduction to art, but what about art education? Workshops, talks, conferences! (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Bella y Terca*, 2010)

<u>Positive - Discourse</u>

- They have interesting points of view or ideas. Some are difficult to understand in the paintings, although lots of colours and textures, focus, contexts and more (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Bella y Terca*, 2010)
- The interesting thing about the exhibition is the explanation or attempt to define what plastic art is, which looks to represent and evolve through time. The artists' range allows looking at those elements that compose the significance of art. I liked it! (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Bella y Terca*, 2010)
- Now my brain has to assimilate so much creativity. Congratulations! (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)
- My friend and I loved the exhibition. It is full of creativity. It gives us ideas of how we can see the world differently with such simple things (Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, 2010)
- It is a slightly interesting exhibition that helps as a mental stimulus and skill for each individual (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2010)
- As black as human's consciousness (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- … to be an audience we also need disposition and openness. We do not have to like everything (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- Black is a state without light, a moment to escape light and think for a second: what would happen if we did not show our internal light? Is there no happiness without light? What a lie, as black hides your happiness and attracts other people that cause happiness in me (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- At the beginning I only saw frustration and courage, but as I moved on with the ultra black I understood [the artist's] perspective and its use of black. I wish there would have been more paintings. How can a colour such as black be so beautiful (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- It is an artwork that I will have to study (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- This is the first time that I feel light is alive (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Le Parc Lumiere*, 2006)
- Honestly, food for my eyes! What a great banquet… (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Le Parc Lumiere*, 2006)
- It made me think of my grandmother, the milk I never liked when I was a baby but that now tastes good in a coffee without sugar. It was

necessary that Museo Universitario del Chopo came back to our lives (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)

- It is an interesting show of modern aesthetic proposals. Some can get closer to our concerns, but all of them accomplish the mission to provoke. Unfortunately the 'football people' think there is more art on TV than in the work of these people committed to their vocation and exercising their freedom (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)
- In this exhibition, each step is a reminder and inedible confrontation. Thanks for the memory, denunciation, and enjoyment in front of the otherness and violence (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)
- I liked that it made us reflect about what we are doing with violence in the entire world (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)
- "What you see depends on where you stand." (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Defecto Común*, 2010)

Dialogue
- Everything is very stimulating when you have a companion like [the artist]. It has been excellent. He should repeat his talk throughout the day (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)
- The exhibition is very well curated and installed. Of course there are things that I do not understand. But uncertainty generates dialogue between artists and their public (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)
- The reflection and critique made by contemporary artists that invite its public [to think] about different polemic themes. I do not know if it is useful when the critique remains an idea that does not materialise. I do not know, I am just a simple citizen and do not have much to say, haha. Only that I was made to write a comment. Either way, excellent works from artists as well as curators (Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, 2010)

Experience
- I laughed a lot. It is something very different to what I think art is (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)
- I could spend hours in places like this. It is good they exist and take you out away from your everyday stress (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2010)
- I never visited this museum… Now I realised it has a lot of me… (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2010)
- Regarding the space, this exhibition leaves me thinking about everyone's perceptions (Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, 2009)
- An excellent space to share experiences between human being and its surroundings (Museo de Arte Moderno, *Hecho en Casa*, 2009)
- It is not about discovering or perceiving. I just think that Pierre [the artist] played with my perception (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- I think this is a good way to confuse the mind! Congrats! (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Le Parc Lumiere*, 2006)

- After so much waste of paint and space, and the boring texturised and lineal pulchritude, to the gaze of a badly lit courtyard and corridors; a deep vital breath becomes indispensable. (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- I liked it, I did not waste my time (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- God, I long to touch the paintings (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- I think of it as a dream that I now wish to externalise. I explained it to myself as life is a dream, and I would not like to wake up. It is a unique artwork (Museo de la Ciudad de México, *Pierre Soulages*, 2010)
- I really liked it, especially the one on the ceiling. I loved to lie down and get lost in it. It was great (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Le Parc Lumiere*, 2006)
- What can be accomplished with talent is amazing. You made me feel that I shared my existence with an invisible and wonderful world. Thanks (Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, *Le Parc Lumiere*, 2006)
- You should have seen my mum's face (Museo Universitario del Chopo, *Afecto Diverso*, 2010)

Appendix 1.11

List of Exhibitions Visited during Research in Mexico City
(2008-2012)

Museum	Exhibition	Year
Museo de Arte Moderno [Modern Art Museum]		
	*México 68	Una identidad olímpica* [Mexico 68	An Olympic Identity]	2008
	Presuntos culpables [Alleged Guilty]	2009
	*Yishai Jusidman	Pintura en obra* [Yishai Jusidman	Painting Work]	2009
	*Alice Rahon	Una surrealista en México* [Alice Rahon	A surrealist in Mexico]	2009
	La Colección: Las Rutas de la Abstracción [The Collection: Routes of Abstraction]	2009
	Hecho en Casa [Made at Home]	2010
	*Fernando Gamboa	La Utopía Moderna* [Fernando Gamboa	The Modern Utopia]	2010
	*Bella y Terca	Nueve Argumentos sobre la Pintura* [Beautiful and Stubborn	Nine Arguments about Painting]	2010
	Biblioteca de la Tierra. Mariana Dellekamp [Earth Library. Mariana Dellekamp]	2010
	La Colección: Obras Selectas del Museo de Arte Moderno [The Collection. Selected Works from the Modern Art Museum]	2011
	La Colección: Diferencia y Continuidad en el Arte Moderno Mexicano [The Collection. Difference and Continuity in Mexican Modern Art]	2011
	Tiempo de sospecha. Un Ejercicio sobre Comunicación Mediática, Sistemas de Conocimiento e Información [Time of suspicion. An Exercise about Media Communication, Knowledge and Information Systems]	2011
Museo de la Ciudad de México [Museum of Mexico City]		
	Materias Blandas [Soft Matter]	2009
	Arte Correo y Páginas Mexicanas [Post Art and Mexican Pages]	2010
	Vuelo fuera de Tiempo [Flight out of Time]	2010
Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros [Siqueiros Public Art Gallery]		
	Pipilotti Rist: Structures of appearance	2010
	Los de Arriba y los de Abajo [The ones on Top, the ones Below]	2010
Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil [Carrillo Gil Art Museum]		
	Annabel Livermore. La Jornada del Muerto vista por los Ojos de la Esposa del Ranchero [Annabel Livermore. The	2008

	Journey of the Death Person seen through the Eyes of the Rancher's Wife]	
	El fin del fin de la Historia y la Hidra Venenosa [The end of the end of History and Poison Ivy]	2008
	León Ferrari Obras 1976-2008 [Leon Ferrari Works 1976-2008]	2008
	Arte ≠ Vida. Acciones por artistas de las Américas, 1960–2000 [Art ≠ Life. Actions by Artists from the Americas 1960–2000]	2009
	Bernardo Fernández Gabinete gráfico: Mexicanos en el Espacio [Bernardo Fernández Graphic Office: Mexicans in Space]	2010
	De la Tierra a la Luna [From the Earth to the Moon]	2010
	Ventanilla única. Yoshua Okón [Unique Window. Yoshua Okón]	2010
	Programa Bancomer-MACG Arte Actual [Bancomer-MACG Programme Current Art]	2010
	Light Years. Cristina Lucas	2010
	Hasta la Fecha. Eduardo Gil [Up to Date. Eduardo Gil]	2010
Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo [Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum]		
	XIV Bienal de Pintura Rufino Tamayo [XIV Rufino Tamayo Painting Biennial]	2008
	Franz West. Elefante blanco [Franz West. White Elephant]	2009
	Pedro Cabrita Reis. La línea del volcán [Pedro Cabrita Reis. The Line of the Volcano]	2009
	Inconquistable. Visiones críticas de Corea del Sur [Unconquerable. Critical Visions about South Korea]	2010
	La Marquesa salió a las Cinco... Jorge Méndez Blake [The Marchioness left at Five... Jorge Méndez Blake]	2010
Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso [Former College of San Ildefonso]		
	Vik Muniz: Reflex Viajes por Latinoamérica [Vik Muniz: Reflex Travels around Latin America]	2008
	Julio Galán. Pensando en ti [Julio Galán. Thinking of You]	2008
	Antony Gormley	2010
	Betsabée Romero. Lágrimas Negras [Betsabee Romero. Black Tears]	2010
	Ron Mueck	2012
Ex Teresa Arte Actual [Ex Teresa Current Art]		
	Inoculación de Antonio O'Connell [Inoculation by Antonio O'Connell]	2008
Laboratorio de Arte Alameda [Alameda Art Laboratory]		
	Fuegogratis. Jordi Colomer [Free-Fire. Jordi Colomer]	2009

	Así es, ahora es ahora. Luis Felipe Ortega [That is it. Now is Now. Luis Felipe Ortega]	2010
	(In) Posición Dinámica [Dynamic (Im) Position]	2010
	Machina Medium Apparatus	2011

Fundación/Colección Jumex [Foundation/Collection Jumex]		
	An Unruly History of the Readymade	2009
	El Gabinete Blanco [The White Cabinet]	2010
	Les Enfants Terribles [The Tremendous Children]	2010

Centro Cultural de España en México [Spain's Cultural Centre in Mexico]		
	Medialab	2008
	Laberinto de Miradas. Programa de Reconocimiento de los Derechos Culturales y la Diversidad Cultural [Labyrinth of Looks. Programme of Cultural Rights and Cultural Diversity]	2008
	Lo fugitivo permanece. Fotografías de la Colección de Carlos Monsiváis [The Fugitive Remains. Collection of Photography from Carlos Monsiváis]	2008
	Segunda Muestra de Arte Iberoamericano. Arte Visual Iberoamericano [Second Exhibition of Latin American Art. Latin American Visual Art]	2010
	Proyecto Habitar [Inhabit Project]	2010

Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo [University Museum of Contemporary Art]		
	Cildo Meireles	2009
	Jazzercise	2010
	Periferia de tus ojos. [The Surroundings of your Eyes]	2010
	Una fábrica, una máquina, un cuerpo... [A Factory, A Machine, A Body…]	2010
	Somewhere / Nowhere Algún lugar / Ningún lugar	2010
	Superficies del Deseo [Surfaces of Desire]	2010
	Extranjerías [Immigration Matters]	2012

Museo Universitario de Ciencias y Artes Roma [University Museum of Sciences and Arts Roma]		
	Proyectos para Desconstrucción [Projects for Deconstruction]	2008
	Vine, vi y vencí. Renato Ornelas, Rodrigo Quiñones [I came, I looked and I defeated. Renato Ornelas, Rodrigo Quiñones]	2010

	Modus Vivendi	2010
Centro de la Imagen [Centre of the Image]		
	Contratextos [Countertexts]	2008
	Parientes de Ocasión [Ocasional Relatives]	2008
Museo Experimental El Eco [Experimental Museum El Eco]		
	Un Animal Muere porque otro tiene Hambre [An Animal Dies because Another One is Hungry]	2008
	Golden Pearl. Pilar Echezarreta	2010

Appendix 1.12

Categories established from Interviews' Content Analysis and Coding

This appendix lists the categories and sub categories determined from the content analysis of interviews during all stages and the number of responses from each category at initial review, followed by the categories reviewed after further analysis and writing up.

Categories from Interviews with Professionals involved in Museums Learning

Question	First Set of Categories and Sub Categories	Number of responses	Categories Reviewed
Education in Mexican Museums			
	Public responsibility	2	Learning dialogue
	Transition to contemporary art	2	Chapter 5
	Use international experiences	1	Not used
About the museum			
1. What is the museum's structure? Where is education located within this structure?			
	About the museum	12	Chapter 5
	Organisational structure/Role of education	10	
2. How is the museum financed?			
	Funding and Sponsors	8	Chapter 5
3. Is there a cultural policy manual ruling the museum's activities? Is this updated?			
	From the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA)	6	
	None	5	Chapter 5
	Museum's mission and values only	1	
	Constitutionally	1	Not used
4. Does the museum have a collection?			
	Collections	6	Chapter 5
5. Who are the museum's current audiences? Does the museum have plans to develop new audiences?			
	Young adults	5	
	Specialist	3	Perceptions
	Students	2	
	General public	3	
	Plans to develop new audiences	5	Not used
About the Education Department			
6. Does the department have goals, objectives, manuals, guidelines?			
	The Education Department	3	
	None	1	Chapter 5
	INBA	1	
	The Museum	2	
7. How many people work in the department?			
	Staff members	10	Chapter 5
8. What type of activities are organised by the department and for which audiences?			
	Their programmes	15	Chapter 6
9. How does the museum evaluate these activities? What techniques do you use for this?			
	None	1	

	Limited	5	Appendix
	From INBA	3	
	Informal talks with audiences	3	
	Quantitative	3	
10. Do you work with other departments within the museum? Do you participate in the exhibitions planning?			
	Yes	6	Professional
	Limited	3	
	No	2	Limited
	Relationship with curators	3	
11. Do you work with artists and third party professionals?			
	Yes	6	Not used
	With the community	2	
	With other museums	3	
12. Do you deliver outreach activities?			
	Yes	9	Not used
	No	1	
13. Does the museum have links with schools? With the community?			
	Through the Ministry of Education	6	Chapter 5
	With schools/universities	3	Not used
	No	1	
	With other museums	2	
14. Do you do consultation with any of these groups?			
	Yes	4	Dialogue
	No / rarely	2	
15. Does the department follow up and maintain the relationship with these groups?			
	Through the book of comments	1	Not used
	With some audiences	5	
16. What are the education needs in the museum?			
	Institutionally	3	Limited
	Budget	6	
	Work with teachers	1	Not used
	Active participation	2	Participatory
	Space-related	1	Not used
	Follow up on projects	1	Limited:
	Problem is with basic education	2	Recognition/
	More support / work together	3	Teamwork
	With curators	2	
	With guards	2	Not used
	Training	8	Academia

Categories from Interviews with Directors and Curators

Question	First Set of Categories and Sub Categories	Number of responses	Categories Reviewed
1. How would you define education/learning in the museum? Do you think learning is a product offered in the museum? Is 'understanding the artwork' part of this learning?			
	Experiential	11	Learning
	Related to activities	9	Activities
	Institutional response	10	Learning
	General view on education	3	

2. In your opinion, do audiences' understand/interpret what you are trying to communicate through the artwork and exhibitions in the museum? Do you feel the activities and materials offered in the museum help to promote this understanding? Please give examples.				
	Depends		15	Perceptions
	It is not clear / not necessarily		5	
	Do audiences have to understand?		6	
	Additional materials support understanding		17	Activities
		Various	12	
		Offer levels of information	5	

3. Do you feel your audiences have a prior understanding and knowledge about the artwork displayed? Do you think this is important or necessary?				
	Yes		5	Learning
	Not always		8	
	No, but the experience is not passive		5	Dialogue / Participatory

4. What impacts beyond learning have you observed on audiences experiencing contemporary arts? In your opinion, are these impacts measurable? How do you evaluate them?				
	Awareness		3	Perceptions
	Surprise		4	
	More interest		3	
	Observation		5	Visual
	Critique or reaction against		4	Contemporary Art
	Negative towards the institution		1	Not used
	Evaluation			Evaluation
		In depth	3	
		Basic	5	
		Limited	5	Limited

5. In your opinion, is the use of dialogue part of the learning process? What does the dialogue look like? Is it verbal, corporeal, through texts?				
	Through the museum's activities		11	Activities
	During guided tours		5	Dialogue / visual
	Two-way ideas		7	Learning dialogue

6. Do you think learning in contemporary art can be promoted as a result of two-way dialogue between the museum and the public? Do you think the museum learns from this dialogue? Do you feel this dialogue influences your own practice?				
	Learning in practice		5	Professional
	Learning in the museum		8	Needs
	No changes in the exhibition programme		6	Limited
	In relation to INBA		1	

7. Can you think of any other tools that could encourage learning in contemporary art?				
	Related to the visit		4	Not used
	Mediators		2	Dialogue
	Working with artists		6	Not used
	New media		4	
	Being interdisciplinary		4	Contemporary art
	More links with academia		6	Academia
	Institutionally		5	Limited / professional

8. Is there anything you would like to see in contemporary art museums' education programmes in Mexico?			
	In their offer	4	Needs
	Training		Academia
	Artistic	2	
	Research	2	
	Links with schools	2	Not used
	Institutional	8	Evaluation

Categories from Interviews with Enlaces Participants

Question	First Set of Categories and Sub Categories	Number of responses	Categories Reviewed
Your current practice as a participant			
1. What do you think is the purpose of the programme?			
	Institutional	2	Enlaces
	Mediation / link between	2	programme
	Audience and contemporary art	5	
	Audiences and the museum	4	
	Links	3	
	Approach to contemporary art	2	Contemporary
	To any audiences	5	art dialogue
	Understanding the new	7	
	Information	3	
	Dialogue	5	
	Education	4	Learning
	Reflection	5	
	Openness	1	
2. How well informed do you feel about the programme?			
	Complete training sessions	8	Professional
	Access to professionals	4	dialogue /
	Improved by talking to audiences	7	Learning
	Good but…	4	benefits
	Additional individual research	4	
	Not enough		Limited
	Poorly informed	5	dialogue
	Trained by peers every day	2	Peer dialogue
	Previous knowledge		Learning
	Enough	3	
	Not enough	3	Limited
3. What do you expect to gain from this experience?			
	None	1	Not used
	Learn about contemporary art	10	Contemporary art dialogue
	Professionally		Professional
	Related to their degree / current job	8	dialogue
	Related to the museum practice	3	
	Learn about MuAC	9	
	Communication with audiences	6	Learning
	Attitudes	6	benefits

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4. What is your current input in the programme? Is there anything different you would like to do?				
	None		4	Limited
	Learning from audiences		6	Learning dialogue
		Not related to their degree	2	
	Professionally			
		Negative related to their degree	3	Limited
		Negative about MuAC	3	
		Positive	4	Professional
	Institutionally			
		Negative about MuAC	6	Limited
		Negative about education team	3	
		Positive about education team	7	Professional
	Contribution			
		Does not know	1	Limited
		To other students	2	Dialogue
		To audiences		
			Have someone to talk to	7	
			Support approach to contemporary art	12	Contemporary art dialogue
			During workshops	2	
			Attitudes	2	
		To the museum	7	Professional
	Things they will do differently			
		Nothing	5	
		Institutionally	3	Professional
		Two-way dialogue	4	Dialogue
		Exhibition display	2	Professional
		Their training	6	
		About the education department		
			Working hours	7	Enlaces programme
			Enlaces participants identification	2	Recognition
			Involvement in other learning activities	5	
			Approach to audiences	2	Participatory
			More spaces for dialogue with participants	1	Peer dialogue
		Learning activities for MuAC's audiences	2	Activities
5. In your opinion, what is the best way to engage audiences with contemporary art?				
	Contemporary artwork quality		3	Contemporary art
	Artwork and audiences		5	Visual
	Attitude towards audiences		9	Dialogue
	Visualise		3	Visual
	Dialogue		16	Dialogue
	Experiential		7	Contemporary art
About learning in contemporary arts				
6. In your opinion, why is it important to understand contemporary art?				
	Is it understanding?		4	Learning
	Contemporary artwork			Contemporary

		Topics	12	art dialogue
		Breaks with the traditional	6	
	Information		5	
	Reflection		9	Learning
	Individual		4	
	Social		2	

7. Is this part of a learning process? Does this relate to your experience?

	Does not know		2	
	Visualise		2	Visual
	Needs information		10	Contemporary art dialogue
	Changed perceptions		8	Learning dialogue
	Individuals		7	
	Groups		2	

8. Do you think contemporary art can have an impact on the future? What kind of impact? Does this relate to learning in any way?

	Not directly		1	Contemporary art learning dialogue
	Experimental		1	
	Individual		9	
	Learn from others		4	
	Nowadays		4	
	Emotional		5	
	Be critical		2	
	Previous knowledge		6	
	Changed perceptions		3	
	In the long-term			
		Contemporary art	10	Contemporary art learning dialogue
		Knowledge	4	
		Meaning / connections	10	
		Experience	10	
		Attitudes	9	

9. Do you feel that participating in this programme has changed your understanding about museums and contemporary art?

	About the architecture		5	Not used
	About audiences		7	Learning dialogue
	Contemporary art learning		12	Learning benefits
	About MuAC			Professional dialogue
		Operation positive	10	
		Exhibition negative	6	
		Exhibition positive	3	
		Break with two-way dialogue	4	Limited
	Attitudes		7	Dialogue

About dialogue

10. In your opinion, is having conversations with audiences useful to approach and understand contemporary art? Who has done more talking?

	Balanced		6	Participatory
	Their approach to audiences		8	Learning dialogue
	Participation			Participatory dialogue
		Depends	19	
		Timid	3	

	Audiences want to know more	2	Contemporary art dialogue
	Listen	1	
Provide information		2	
Audiences' understanding		5	
Attitudes		8	
Surprise		5	

11. Do you feel that the museum is having a conversation with audiences? Why?

Indirectly		8	Limited dialogue: communication and teamwork
Lack / no contact		21	
Lack of interest		3	
Only security guards			
	Positive	4	
	Negative	5	
Front of house		2	
Communication is complicated		1	

12. Do you share your experiences and ideas with the rest of the museum staff? How?

Insufficient communication		13	Lack of communication
Security guards		10	Not used
Informal talks between Enlaces participants		18	Peer dialogue
With education team			Limited / Lack of communication
	When there is an opportunity	9	
	During training sessions	9	
	After guided tours	3	
	Not really	2	
Their contribution to decision making			Limited / Lack of recognition
	Discouraging	1	
	None	7	
	Not much	6	
	Great interest	4	Professional dialogue
	Yes	5	
Activities suggested			Not used
	Workshops	14	
	Other learning activities	7	
	Openness and accessibility	5	
	Dialogue	2	
	Institutional	11	
	More diffusion	11	
	Outreach	11	
	New media	5	

Categories from Interviews with Staff at the University Museum of Contemporary Art

Question	First Set of Categories and Sub Categories	Number of responses	Categories Reviewed
About your own practice			
1. How would you define education/learning in the museum? Do you think learning is a product offered in the museum? Is 'understanding the artwork' part of this learning?			
	Provoke	4	Learning

	2. In your opinion, do audiences' understand/interpret what you are trying to communicate through the artwork and exhibitions in the museum? Do you feel the activities and materials offered in the museum help to promote this understanding? Please give examples.			
	Learning		2	Learning
	Experience		3	
	Dialogue		2	
	Attitudes		1	
	Evaluation		2	
	Additional Materials		1	

	3. Do you feel your audiences have a prior understanding and knowledge about the artwork displayed? Do you think this is important or necessary?			
	Dialogue		1	Learning
	Attitudes		1	Dialogue

	4. What impacts beyond learning have you observed on audiences experiencing contemporary arts? In your opinion, are these impacts measurable? How do you evaluate them?		
	Experience	1	Contemporary Art
	Attitudes	1	Evaluation

	5. In your opinion, is the use of dialogue part of the learning process? What does the dialogue look like? Is it verbal, corporeal, through texts?		
	Dialogue	3	Contemporary
	Experience	2	Art

	6. Do you think learning in contemporary art can be promoted as a result of two-way dialogue between the museum and the public? Do you think the museum learns from this dialogue? Do you feel this dialogue influences your own practice?		
	Institutional	2	Professional
	Personal	1	Contemporary Art
	Professional	3	Professional / Learning

	7. Can you think of any other tools that could encourage learning in contemporary art?		
	Lacking	1	Not used
	Socially	1	
	From formal education	1	
	Human Contact	1	

About your own practice
a) Do you think the programme is effective in promoting learning?

	Learning	1	Limited
	Experience	3	Contemporary
	Dialogue	2	Art

b) Have you ever attended the participants' visits or supported any of their activities?

	Vague	5	Limited
	Specific	2	Professional

c) In your opinion, what works in the programme?

	Dialogue	1	Peer Learning
	Attitudes	3	Dialogue
	Experience	2	Professional / Contemporary Art

d) What does not work in this programme?

	Experience	1	Professional
	Dialogue	3	Learning

	Attitudes	3	Dialogue

e) What have you learned from this programme? Have you incorporated this learning in your own practice? Please give clear examples.

	Dialogue	5	Dialogue
	Experience	2	Professional
	Contemporary art	1	Learning
	Attitudes	1	Dialogue

f) Do you think the findings from this programme are shared in your department? In the rest of the museum?

	Institutional	3	Lack of communication
	Dialogue	1	Lack of recognition
	Limited	2	Lack of teamwork

g) Do you know your audience better through this programme?

	Professional	2	Limited
	Evaluation	1	

h) Do you know the participants? Do you deal directly with them?

	Dialogue	3	Professional /
	Experience	2	Limited

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Appendix 1.13

Transcript Samples from Interviews

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Interview with Professionals involved in Museum Learning
Fieldwork Stage 1, July-August 2009[30]

Interviewee: Academic_2
Date: 22nd July 2009

Contemporary art was an elite subculture that did not have to respond or satisfy the audience's demands. Now its finances and operations are inextricably linked to attract the masses. On the one hand this is positive, as the production of contemporary art is not under discussion anymore. However it now has to negotiate with factors that were not previously considered. On the other hand, this alters the dynamic of contemporary art production, questioning the criteria of public responsibility in terms of client and satisfaction: accountability, measurement of outcomes, and warranty of effect. Hence, there are funding opportunities depending on pedagogic / social effects.

Museums assume the duty to progress, mediate, and bridge the gap of incomprehension and tension between audiences and the artwork. Projects are decided upon by considering the potential to attract audiences. There is an increase of power, where opinions of audiences are listened to. The museum has different responsibilities: promotion, outreach, development (economic), and politics. There is pressure to include education that changed considering the critical demand of elitism regarding contemporary art practice with reflection about counter-production of a different powered class, to be a mechanism of interlocution of interests with institutions more interested about their stability rather than transforming culture.

There is a problem with thinking that art is understandable. Specialists do not understand art. It is not our duty to understand. I interact, debate, move consequences forward, negotiate, and question epistemology. Hence a demand for understanding is a demand for control, which subordinates heterogeneity and challenges the museum. This is a great problem with contemporary art that only perpetuates. Instead of thinking we can understand an artwork, there are certain artworks that comprehend us, that can cause something to occur within us. For example, prior to developing mainstream appeal no one could imagine techno music could be used as a political tool.

About the museum

1. What is the museum's structure? Where is education located within this structure?

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[30] Because these interviewees were not working in a museum during the time of the interview, some of the questions did not apply to them. Hence, these responses were left blank.

I do not think there is any debate about museum education in Mexico. People given responsibility for managing this area usually do not know about art. They adjust to produce an understanding, educative discourse and enjoyment at the same time. There has not been much reflection about the guided tour. For example, if you have Dean on a visit, he could be doing 5 things at the same time. No one needs to be trained to understand soap operas. The operational structure to reach and produce audiences has to be activated by the museum. The classroom model is in crisis. The difficulty with art is that art and artist are interacting. Programmes start from a false promise of understanding.

Contemporary art activates something. People want to resolve what is not resolved with an audio guide, for example, and maybe the reason is audiences fear the effects of contemporary art, although sometimes they can find a connection. No one is going to teach you how to look at an artwork; you can see it with people. For a promising pedagogic experience, the tour guide needs to know more but sometimes less than the rest of the participants, this is a significant issue.

17.   How is the museum financed?
18.   Is there a cultural policy manual ruling the museum's activities? Is this updated?
19.   Does the museum have a collection?
20.   Who are the museum's current audiences? Does the museum have plans to develop new audiences?

About the Education Department

6. Does the department have goals, objectives, manuals, guidelines?
7. How many people work in the department?
8. What type of activities are organised by the department and for which audiences?

For example, conference programmes are having an autonomous role lately and produce fixed audiences. There is another less visible tool: sponsorship structures that have an impact on education. Sponsors demand a service, and curators take them to fairs or artists' studios. By acting as touristic guides, they are actually educating them. This engagement allows museums to move on with their agendas: training the more powerful support groups but in your own perspective as the curator. This is not an explicit education programme, but it serves to educate the elite. I think we should modify the discourse to understanding a new range of education tools, control the understanding discourse, and the problem of institutional weakness and conviction that audiences do not want an interaction with this; which limits interlocution and undermines the artwork.

9. How does the museum evaluate these activities? What techniques do you use for this?

10. Do you work with other departments within the museum? Do you participate in the exhibitions planning?
11.   Do you work with artists and third party professionals?
12.   Do you deliver outreach activities?
13.   Does the museum have links with schools? With the community?
14.   Do you do consultation with any of these groups?
15.   Does the department follow up and maintain the relationship with these groups?
16.   What are the education needs in the museum?

Continuing education is a problem with museum staff. Recently museum staff are starting to attend conferences to update their knowledge. Another problem is the education of curators: you cannot make them but you can educate them.

Interview with Professionals involved in Museum Learning
Fieldwork Stage 1, July-August 2009

Interviewee: Consultant_2
Date: 4th August 2009

About the museum

1.What is the museum's structure? Where is education located within this structure?

In the University Museum of Sciences and Art (MUCA), we used constructivist theories applied to museology. I believe the museum is a non-lineal communication medium where the cultural context constructs meanings and senses for both audiences and collaborators. Readings in Mexico are different than in other places even with the same objects. We believe in the museum as a place for dialogue, conversation, a place to be; which creates different ambiances to coexist, reflect, understand themselves, relate and talk to other audiences; beyond being a place to learn and see the artwork. This made us go beyond offering workshops, the common educator's activity.

2. How is the museum financed?
3. Is there a cultural policy manual ruling the museum's activities? Is this updated?
4. Does the museum have a collection?
5. Who are the museum's current audiences? Does the museum have plans to develop new audiences?

The Ministry of Education (SEP) organises 50% of visits from children and teenagers in schools. Museums practically do not have an offer for teenagers; their activities are mainly for children and adults. There are a few people actually working for audiences.

About the Education Department

6.Does the department have goals, objectives, manuals, guidelines?

The artwork acts as a personal detonator; individual understanding was essential in MuAC's planning. I did not want to teach you about the artist or artistic production, but make you reflect on your own everyday experience, and where these hyper-textual relationships of art take you. Otherwise you did not belong to the museum's heritage or revalue this as yours. In learning through art, the artist is the center of the process, for us the artist was one more participant. I believe the artwork has other readings that overcome the artist, and suddenly the artist's reading becomes one more.

7.How many people work in the department?
8.What type of activities are organised by the department and for which audiences?

For example, in MUCA we worked with radio UNAM station, during the exhibition *Morir de Amor* [To Die of Love]. I invited people to talk about the exhibition, and then anyone listening could come to respond and discuss it with us, which was very successful. Curators preferred to have the radio speakers outside the museum, irrespective that the radio booth was inside.

In the exhibition for children *Rutas para Mirar* [Routes of Looking], we created 4 routes for different age groups, each one with 10 artworks. This made you look at the artwork and ask questions, plus making choices to create a path looking for different artworks in the galleries. It was the only exhibition where we had labels made for children, but the parents liked it more than the children. The exhibition aimed to create dialogues, and we saw audiences sitting and chatting. It was focused on conversation.

All Mexican contemporary art curators are opposed to any education processes, as they think anything between the artwork and audiences acts as an interruption. It did not matter if audiences understood or read. We have worked with these curators for 4 years since MUCA, and now they are in MuAC. We used Feuerstein mediated learning theory. Every human interaction from any member of staff with any audience member needed to have an intention, clarity, and reciprocity. We trained mediators and showed them to listen and ask questions before responding. Curators think audiences read anything presented with the artwork, even if you are a 50-year-old lady or a child, which is absurd… Mediators helped us learn to listen to audiences and to give each person what he/she needs to hear, instead of acting like teachers. For me, this moved us away from the guided tour, which is discursive and hierarchical, to help construct other types of dialogues.

9. How does the museum evaluate these activities? What techniques do you use for this?

There are a few people undertaking evaluations in Mexico. I work more ethnographically, I observe audiences and then I ask them questions. Evaluations in Mexico have bad results and people do not like to hear these. We used *Making Learning Visible* from Harvard, and Reggioemilia theories. Learning changes are happening all the time, we do not know what the last part that made a significant change was when we do not know the first part, which is different to evaluate. We do not evaluate learning as we are not a school, but we evaluate from the weight of the experience: memorability, relationship building, social processes, and which one of these stays in the long-term. What do we want to evaluate? If audiences managed to connect with the artwork, they relate and construct something intellectually. Evaluations in Mexico have bad results and people do not like to hear these.

When audiences respond it is nice, like going shopping. There is no dialogue. Museums need to let you sit and relax.

10. Do you work with other departments within the museum? Do you participate in the exhibitions planning?

Art usually shows the final product but not the artists' process, I am trying to work more on this now. You see an artwork that has more thought. In contemporary art there are many experiences behind it that are not on exhibition. We are experimenting. The dream of working with contemporary art curators is difficult, but it is possible to have agreements. How can a contemporary art exhibition that targets audiences sometimes is more successful than those targeting contemporary art exclusively?

In MUCA, university students' audiences were asking us for more information, and the curator said if they do not know about art they should not visit. There is a reaction against facilitating the artwork and coming down from the intellectual level. My rule was to work with the curator if they decide to take their head out of the clouds. Then we work together towards the artwork and the audience. Some museums have worked together but more at the educators level, not at director levels.

11. Do you work with artists and third party professionals?
12. Do you deliver outreach activities?
13. Does the museum have links with schools? With the community?
14. Do you do consultation with any of these groups?
15. Does the department follow up and maintain the relationship with these groups?
16. What are the education needs in the museum?

We lack legislation for the work the museum does for the audience. There are museum directors that give the educator's position to their best friend's accountant's niece, who become like McDonalds' hosts inflating balloons and painting happy faces for children. I believe many directors think this way. In Brazil there is legislation, for example, the museums have to show their outcomes. In Mexico, this is about how many visitors but not the quality of the experience.

In the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA), the role of the educator does not even exist. We lack a contemporary organisational scheme, as it is dictatorial, lacking respect, it is vertical and does not help us to benefit the audience. Directors do not study to be directors, they do not know about museology and there is no reflection from their perspective, then museums' become galleries and do not respond to ICOM's mission and aims.

I also think it is useful to have exhibitions that help us see visual culture from more everyday perspectives, such as the Pixar exhibition at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo MARCO, and ABCDF at the Museum of the Palace of Fine Arts, which create different experiences for audiences. They show us different perspectives and bring more audiences to museums for the first time. I do not want to create distance from the traditional exhibition. In order to make the museum more open, offer more options, and have more spaces for audiences, we need to be more balanced. If we spend 20 million pesos on an exhibition, let's also do something for audiences' interaction. We need to take some distance from the close-minded academia, and have professionals in the museum who advocate for audiences.

The Carlos Amorales exhibition at MUCA displayed 26 glass cases with cut paper and one video. On the way out, I asked audiences what they took from the exhibition, and 62% answered that it is wonderful this contemporary artist brings back the folklore of cutting paper, which was not the idea of the exhibition. I think curators feel there is one reading, which is the one they provide, and too much flexibility becomes complicated. There is a break in the communication of the exhibition between understanding the image and thinking people will read anything curators write on the walls. Sometimes curatorial discourse and exhibitions are created to target groups of experts, as audiences take different things that make sense differently.

I think there is a communication problem. In MuAC, the staff felt I wanted to re-curate the artwork, but this is not what I am interested in. I do not know if my work is to interpret it either, it is awkward. I would like audiences to interpret the artwork, and see the curator do his/her job correctly looking for hyper-textual lines of communication for audiences, bridges that depend on the curator and not me.

My work as an educator is not the artwork but the audience, and the one related to the artwork has to do with the curator. I do not agree when the curator interprets the artwork, creates an exhibition, finishes his/her discourse, interprets the catalogue, and then tells me: 'here is the artwork, now do whatever you want', and expects I will only do a guided tour or a workshop. I believe we have to work as a team where the curator works more towards the artwork's communication and I have to work towards the audience. Otherwise the artwork becomes the centre of the museum's action and audiences become like ghosts. This is what I see in contemporary art: people visit, but what happens to them is not important.

We created GREA, a group for education and the arts, inviting professionals to sit and discuss education theories. We wanted to make a colloquium but we did not do it. The background was the 'Group of Ten' that created the National Programme of Interpretation in Museums' conference, which I organised until last year. We brought academics like George Hein to talk about what is currently happening.

We lack of academic work about education. Only some directors recognise this as a vanguard programme and respect it. CECA Mexico has not done anything in years, since the international conference in 2003. They do not promote further reflection, but only talk about what other specialists already do. There is a need for an update and professionalisation in term of processes. To be an educator is complicated: the pedagogical background does not work as we do not work in schools, and its methodologies and guided visits are not for the museum. Professionals coming from other backgrounds are too empirical, but not academic enough. As an educator, you need to be like an alchemist: to know as much about lots of things, but as little about things too. We lack the academic skills at the moment.

Interview with Directors and Curators
Fieldwork Stage 2, January – March 2010

Interviewee: Curator_5
Date: 15th February 2010

1. How would you define education/learning in the museum? Do you think learning is a product offered in the museum? Is 'understanding the artwork' part of this learning?

In Mexico, there are no cultural policies so immediate response policies are undertaken to survive every day, which do not allow planning for the long term. Then the museum focuses on delivering exhibitions first, and the budgets for education become very limited.
Education is very important as art practices with technological art are mostly unknown by audiences, they can be confused with a science museum or can become something complex or inaccessible to audiences. Education tries to work with curation during the process of creating projects, to understand the main points of discussion from the artworks, and then it starts thinking about theoretical and practical programmes.
We try to use the resources designated from INBA's bad management to organise workshops. For example, children's education is considered in some museums more than others. These audiences come with no predisposition and are very open to experience this type of art. We also offer training workshops with a very high level and commitment, for those that do not have a postgraduate recognition. We bring in Latin American academics to teach new media theory.
Staff members at all levels transform themselves in the museum when they act as tour guides.

2. In your opinion, do audiences' understand/interpret what you are trying to communicate through the artwork and exhibitions in the museum? Do you feel the activities and materials offered in the museum help to promote this understanding? Please give examples.

Depends on the artwork. There are exhibitions that lend themselves more to offer direct references for audiences to approach the artwork, and others that feel very distant to the everyday but make people more curious. Exhibitions can open up concepts or emotions. We want to go beyond creating a feeling of spectacularity to questioning more deeply.
The artworks have many records. The education department has to offer tools, not to understand, but to help audiences to approach the artwork more affectively and directly, less abstractly as contemporary art seems to establish a barrier difficult to cross. Also we should not underestimate audiences, as they are more intelligent than we expect. It is like when you teach a class, the moment of tension is during dialogue when students question you and make you realise things you have not previously seen, that is the relationship I'd like to provoke in audiences' understanding. For example, try to avoid explaining during tour guides, let audiences observe first, and then have a dialogue listening to what they say, and then exchanging experiences that the artworks provoke.
We have a great offer of different workshops in relation to technology.

3. Do you feel your audiences have a prior understanding and knowledge about the artwork displayed? Do you think this is important or necessary?

Do we need to know literature to read Borges? It is a difficult question, not really. If someone wants to they can research more. It does not mean that a child cannot approach the artwork either.

4. What impacts beyond learning have you observed on audiences experiencing contemporary arts? In your opinion, are these impacts measurable? How do you evaluate them?

Audiences are very diverse. For example from visiting students who relate to MTV, to those interested in sound art or specialist audiences. Depends on the type of audiences. I like non-specialist audiences that have a skill to be surprised, such as secondary school students and their teachers. They may know the National Museum of Art or do not have a prior museum experience. There is a process to demystify, such as letting teenagers run in the space if they feel like it.

The Marketing Department has records of audiences' comments and questionnaires. Lately we have filmed audiences during exhibitions and posted them on the website. These videos are very interesting because they show comments from "I loved it, it changed my life" to "I did not like it". We also did a virtual visit online and used Web 2.0 to attend to audiences. It is not about consumption, but offering different access channels. The more educative access channels, the more diverse our audiences can be.

5. In your opinion, is the use of dialogue part of the learning process? What does the dialogue look like? Is it verbal, corporeal, through texts?

[The interviewee talked about this issue in the previous questions so this question was not used in this interview]

6. Do you think learning in contemporary art can be promoted as a result of two-way dialogue between the museum and the public? Do you think the museum learns from this dialogue? Do you feel this dialogue influences your own practice?

I think we do not attend to this much. It would be good to organise sessions with all the team to talk about this issue. There is a dialogue between the person giving the workshop and its attendees, but not with the rest of the museum team, probably because of a lack of time. How much can you undertake this when you are a team of 6 staff members that have to manage a whole museum?

7. Can you think of any other tools that could encourage learning in contemporary art?

In Mexico, academia is very distant from museums. We need to create a research culture in the country, which could develop ways of collaborative working. For example, Spain's Cultural Centre in Mexico (CCE) works constantly on producing high level seminars, probably because their budgets are good.

8. Is there anything you would like to see in contemporary art museums' education programmes in Mexico?
To designate an appropriate budget for research, so museums can go beyond exhibiting only.

Interview with Directors and Curators
Fieldwork Stage 2, January – March 2010

Interviewee: Director_1
Date: 12th February 2010

1. How would you define education/learning in the museum? Do you think learning is a product offered in the museum? Is 'understanding the artwork' part of this learning?

There are two things. One, the exhibitions and the museum as a different experience. I expect contemporary art will create a dialogue with everyday / contemporary life. The relationship between an individual and an artwork is very close even if it the person is African. Two, programmes that look to activate an artworks' discussion. Contemporary art is not always direct / easy, there are prejudices and confusion, audiences need more information and to feel more comfortable to discuss the things that are in front of them.

2. In your opinion, do audiences' understand/interpret what you are trying to communicate through the artwork and exhibitions in the museum? Do you feel the activities and materials offered in the museum help to promote this understanding? Please give examples.

There is great discrepancy in the conception of arts and contemporary art for the majority of audiences everywhere in the world, more in Mexico probably. In many ways art is a type of very specific research, with a story behind according to the context. There is a gap between this research, and museums have the obligation to help the audiences' approach to contemporary art. Sometimes the artworks are made for audiences related to arts, which increase this gap. Hence, it is important to give this information in an accessible way.

In Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum (MTAC), they have different levels of information with different languages in the exhibition panel, leaflets, and catalogue.

3. Do you feel your audiences have a prior understanding and knowledge about the artwork displayed? Do you think this is important or necessary?

It depends on what audiences want, for example: if they want to understand well, they will need more information. I always wanted to present the artworks and exhibitions assuming people did not know anything about them; simple and direct. It is important to have different levels of information and to have resources in case audiences want more, but it is not the obligation of the museum. If audiences want to know more they'll have to work more.

4. What impacts beyond learning have you observed on audiences experiencing contemporary arts? In your opinion, are these impacts measurable? How do you evaluate them?

The books of comments show very strong reactions, such as: 'is this art?' or 'what is this?' Mexico has a particular context: a public art history well connected with the nation, tradition of painting, sculpture and monumental art. There is a tradition of what art is for Mexico and a lot of people visit the museum with this idea. Others are more open-minded but also associate with galleries, or are collectors or students. The contemporary art community is not very critical, but the general public that expect to see traditional art reacts very strongly against it. Contemporary art is usually related to education and high class, then some people are afraid to talk about their impressions as they do not want to look ignorant, out of the arts scene, or uncool.

In MTAC, undertaking evaluation was difficult as the financial resources were low, especially without the support from the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) to do this. In 8 and a half years, they only delivered 2 studies. The major museums still think of their Education Departments as an area that offers something for children. In MTAC curation and education tried to integrate. In the Experimental Museum El Eco, which is a small museum with small audiences, there are talks with artists. There are other examples from

museums' abroad that directors are looking at, approaches to learning are changing in Mexico.

Having bimonthly exhibitions makes it difficult to create education programmes every 2 months. If the museum has a permanent collection, it can focus on activities related to it and have longer term results.

5. In your opinion, is the use of dialogue part of the learning process? What does the dialogue look like? Is it verbal, corporeal, through texts?

Dialogue proposes a way to share and raise points of view. It offers a free space to express opinions and questions openly, without more information. Real dialogue is not complex but delicate, while being in an institution and talking about new information, where there are hierarchies between the person that knows and the one that does not. With dialogue you can share information, provoke reaction or something in the people involved. One of the ideas of contemporary art is to create a dialogue. How does the artwork create and affect the context of contemporary art?

6. Do you think learning in contemporary art can be promoted as a result of two-way dialogue between the museum and the public? Do you think the museum learns from this dialogue? Do you feel this dialogue influences your own practice?

I am always thinking of links between Mexico and the international context, such as which topics are interesting to be presented and how to create discussions in contemporary life.

A public institution has a mission to serve its audiences, and sometimes it wants to create discussions. It may think about audiences and what they want. However, INBA has a very general and abstract idea of audiences. There is no individual mission, evaluation, goals, and criteria from each museum showing why the space should be funded, which INBA evaluates to decide on further financial support to the museums. This is very frustrating. If MTAC increased its audiences, practically there were no incentives in terms of an increase of resources or funding. I do not believe on having more audiences but on the quality of their experiences. I never saw any criteria that justify why these museums exist. There was no intelligent committed plan by the government.

7. Can you think of any other tools that could encourage learning in contemporary art?

When working with living artists, it is very interesting to listen to them through a talk or a video. This is important to contextualise the artwork. It is useful to discuss dense or complex topics related to the everyday life of Mexicans in a simple and direct way, which can also provoke people's interest. It is very easy for curators to get trapped in their own ideas of contemporary art, but this is a way of working.

Some museums that do interesting projects are the Van Haven Museum in Holland, which is doing projects considering how the museum can provoke audiences and their context, and rethinking its role in terms of its audiences; also the Walker Arts Centre.

8. Is there anything you would like to see in contemporary art museums' education programmes in Mexico?

More integration of curation and education. It is very complicated as they will need to rethink their structures very differently. It is very new. Some museums in Mexico still operate with traditional structures. Existing traditional hierarchies are difficult to break. The idea of museums as places of the production of knowledge and culture are far from Mexico, as museums are seen only as spaces for exhibition, but the interest is growing. Professionalism in the art scene is difficult: educators lack sophisticated training to be integrated in curation, and finding someone with curation training that wants to work in education; but this is changing. In Mexico, there are no resources or strategies specific for museums' education either.

Interview with Enlaces Participants
Fieldwork Stage 2, January – March 2010

Interviewee: Female_MuAC_11
Date: 17th February 2010

Your current practice as a participant

1. What do you think is the purpose of the programme?

Contemporary art seems like a complex art expression that integrates things not seen before in artistic creation. Enlaces participants provided information, their individual research and training, so audiences could have an idea about contemporary artwork creation. Why? How? Who are the people behind it? We had different tasks since museum's opening: acting as Enlaces participants, guards, and guides for visitors.

2. How well informed do you feel about the programme?

Every Enlaces participant was committed at different levels. We need to do individual research about artists and the artwork, beyond our training and talks with artists. There was always something else to know, besides the research and theory behind contemporary art.

3. What do you expect to gain from this experience?

Our training was inspiring, Enlaces participants were not only in front of the artwork, but we changed the concept of the museum from being tedious to open and friendly, without the usual prohibitions like: do not pass or touch. We opened more possibilities, made audiences get used to be in museums. We provided a great stimulating offer. We needed to feel confident and knowledgeable when talking to people, and in our approach to contemporary art, inside and outside of the museum. We achieved productivity and teamwork. Our manager encouraged discipline and great commitment. The training sessions were better under the previous management. Enlaces participants were trained, inspired, able to talk to artists from diverse private and public institutions. With the current management training is more disparate, less frequent and unattractive.

4. What is your current input in the programme? Is there anything different you would like to do?

I helped to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon of contemporary art. MuAC had the intention to be a special museum: friendly, showing an undeceiving art, refuting any preconceptions. I thought the museum staff had sufficient and necessary elements, but now feel disappointed that the museum turned into a 'white elephant' where the exhibition content is now inert. There could be more diverse weekend activities, such as: film, theatre, dance, and music. The museum is too big, and these activities could bring it alive. We always had people that demanded something else.

5. In your opinion, what is the best way to engage audiences with contemporary art?

The artwork carried major weight. It was innovative, an abnormal arts expression according to people. MuAC offered contemporary art as something attractive that was fashionable to the youth.
Enlaces participants created a dialogue that did not occur in other places. Telling audiences other people's experiences and what the artworks' were about provoked their interest within the galleries; audiences asked more questions, it became more dynamic.

About learning in contemporary arts

6. In your opinion, why is it important to understand contemporary art?

Understand is a dangerous word, as it can take different directions. When someone asks an Enlaces participant to explain the artwork, he/she expects it to be broken down for him/her. Each person interprets in a different way. The artwork triggers different things. Knowing the context also changes perceptions or audiences' education.

7. Is this part of a learning process? Does this relate to your experience?

Learning and personal reflection are related, for example, learning ways of creating, what materials were used and why. Enlaces participants worked as theoretical support for learning and sharing information directly. Enlaces participants and the education team wanted the audience to desire to repeat the experience beyond MuAC after this programme. Learning is related in many ways to experience, for example through taste, ideology, and aesthetic training.

8. Do you think contemporary art can have an impact on the future? What kind of impact? Does this relate to learning in any way?

Probably, contemporary art is more striking than renaissance art, as it is interdisciplinary. It depends on the person and age group.

9. Do you feel that participating in this programme has changed your understanding about museums and contemporary art?

I thought there were two groups: the ones who know and do not know about contemporary art, but I realised there is a range of audiences with different experiences. Someone that seems reluctant can become open-minded because of an interest. Enlaces participants discovered the audiences' ideology, the way they were educated, their virtues and prejudices. These broadened my view of contemporary art, as I had many questions to answer from my degree.

About dialogue

10. In your opinion, is having conversations with audiences useful to approach and understand contemporary art? Who has done more talking?

Enlaces participants were a companion, as well as having someone knowledgeable [to talk to]. Many people had different opinions about many things, and we listened. We were an echo as audiences took this [conversation] somewhere else. A well-balanced dialogue could start with a question that could lead to surprises. We always questioned, and as the invitation to participate was there, the majority of people participated.

11. Do you feel that the museum is having a conversation with audiences? Why?

The education team was close to audiences, but not the other departments. These were not open, hermetic, and in their Ivory Tower, such as curators, museographers, and directors. Guards were friendly and open, we spoke to them about the artwork and they provided information to audiences when we were busy. They did not act as repressive authorities like in other museums where guards are all over audiences, instead they invited audiences to continue the Enlaces participants' reflection. There was learning between the guards and us.

12. Do you share your experiences and ideas with the rest of the museum staff? How?

Yes we shared things like: "this person said X, and did not like it".
With artists, we talked about what happened with the artwork: how audiences reacted to it. When our training sessions were open, the staff from the museum that was interested attended.
We were willing to learn and someone taught us. The Enlaces participants shared their knowledge, and the person that taught also learned from us. We were continuously trained to enrich our knowledge and avoid monotonous conversations with audiences. For example, Miguel Ventura's work *Cantos Cívicos* [Civic Chants] demanded to have multidisciplinary knowledge such as installation art, the Second World War, Mexican history, etc. I asked a group of teenagers who the Nazis were, just one girl replied but when they left they were talking to each other having a discussion.
The role of other areas within the museum needs to be rethought, as the museum is decaying. They need to find ways of reaching audiences, as now they are weak. MuAC invests in publicity and media, but its major investment should be directly with audiences. The staff expected to have mainly university students, but audiences came from other places. The museum could have more close relationships with education institutions, especially art schools.

Staff member at the University Museum of Contemporary Art
Fieldwork Stage 2, January – March 2010

Interviewee: Male_MuAC_2
Date: 8th February 2010

About your own practice

1. How would you define education/learning in the museum? Do you think learning is a product offered in the museum? Is 'understanding the artwork' part of this learning?

In an art museum, if art stimulates sensitive knowledge that involves judgment and intuition, then it can promote learning not delivered by other areas of formal education. Contemporary art's education creates a critical interference with everyday time, space, and senses. It provokes people's reflection on their own reality.

2. In your opinion, do audiences' understand/interpret what you are trying to communicate through the artwork and exhibitions in the museum? Do you feel the activities and materials offered in the museum help to promote this understanding? Please give examples.

When audiences go to an 18th century art museum, there is a possibility to understand. What audiences question in front of the artwork is their position and ways of identification with it. The construction of understanding assumed by the curator or art critic is possibly not achieved, but there is an

understanding, even when it is negative. For example, when audiences say 'this is not an artwork', they start to define what an artwork is, which becomes a way of understanding it.

We have done quantitative surveys and are planning to have an interactive kiosk. Enlaces participants help to provide more qualitative information about audiences. MuAC has an idea that the majority are students, not necessarily from the south of the city where the museum is located, who visit because a friend told them.

Last month's report says 58% of audiences are between 18 and 29 years old, 69% are students, and 48% study at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). We have some comparative bimestrial quantitative data, but we have not analysed this in depth by year.

3. Do you feel that your audiences have a prior understanding and knowledge about the artwork displayed? Do you think this is important or necessary?

Not necessarily. More than constructing knowledge, audiences reduce their prejudices against contemporary art and have a more open attitude. Audiences do not necessarily relate to contemporary art languages. Having a critical and open-minded attitude are more necessary than previous knowledge

4. What impacts beyond learning have you observed on audiences experiencing contemporary arts? In your opinion, are these impacts measurable? How do you evaluate them?

The museum is part of UNAM. People identify contemporary art as a marginal alternative culture, or for the aristocratic high class. A great amount of audiences are university students, which do not necessarily belong to the high classes, but at least have been enthusiastic.

5. In your opinion, is the use of dialogue part of the learning process? What does the dialogue look like? Is it verbal, corporeal, through texts?

Not necessarily. Dialogue works when its interlocutors' perspectives meet, maintaining expectations in the dialogue's construction. Not all audiences feel comfortable. Dialogue is pushed at MuAC, in comparison to other contemporary art museums. We have a major area of education. We do not necessarily know how to answer to questions that are unknown to us. Hence Enlaces participants' importance to listen to questions from audiences. These questions are related to domestic issues or everyday life values, the interesting thing is the answers we can give without sounding patronising.

With younger age audience, it works to offered performing arts' tour guides; we have not worked on these much.

6. Do you think learning in contemporary art can be promoted as a result of two-way dialogue between the museum and the public? Do you think the museum learns from this dialogue? Do you feel this dialogue influences your own practice?

Yes. Contemporary art proposes an open system that is possibly not happening in other disciplines; it is a type of rubbish dump, where things that do not fit anywhere else are thrown. Contemporary art provokes questions about being, science, reality and attitude with your own self. It helps to construct a meaning to reality, and to find other ways of relating with reality. Contemporary art is created in terms of confrontation, reaction to public and to mass culture. Some celebrities also enter into the art market dynamics, such as Bjork and Barney. We are suspicious about what is considered as socially positive. The museum through its activities has enriched me. Exhibition openings can construct a feeling of community, different to the one from places to study art; they make art social and change the perception of a creative environment.

7. Can you think of any other tools that could encourage learning in contemporary art?

At school level there has been a division, just now there is an idea on interdisciplinary. The school limits creativity. Culture is part of the entertainment section in media, such as in the newspaper where it is published together with the Sudoku. Audiences are considered as consumers, and there are no spaces to provoke reflection, critique, and sensitivity. It would be good to awaken creative and critical skills starting with schools.

8. Is there anything you would like to see in contemporary art museums' education programmes in Mexico?

[The interviewee did not respond to this question]

About the Enlaces Programme

a) Do you think the programme is effective in promoting learning?

Yes. Enlaces participants need to have more knowledge about MuAC's content to create further dialogue with audiences, but they also have to work with audiences to know what they ask and investigate more. Six months are not enough to have an experience.

b) Have you ever attended the participants' visits or supported any of their activities?

Yes.

c) In your opinion, what works in the programme?

University students can complete their work placements. Beyond art coming from other disciplines, its application could be open to more disciplines too.

d) What does not work in this programme?

Enlaces participants only participate for 6 months in the programme. We are looking for a paid internship system but there is no funding. MuAC can engage them in other ways, for example constructing their own community meanings. There are no spaces for exhibitions offered to visual arts' students because the artists selected pass through a thorough selection process.

e) What have you learned from this programme? Have you incorporated this learning in your own practice? Please give clear examples.

Yes, I use it in my own teaching.

f) Do you think the findings from this programme are shared in your department? In the rest of the museum?

The programme is one of the most relevant activities for the education department. The curator has supported it since the beginning. In the museum, the notion of the programme is seen differently: the Enlaces participants are seen as assistants to help carry and move things around. There is a lack of knowledge about the effect of Enlaces participants and the education department in the Plastic Arts General Director's Office, including looking at the education reports. The MuAC's director has these reports and decides where these are sent.

g) Do you know your audience better through this programme?

I speak with Enlaces participants regularly.

h) Do you know the participants? Do you deal directly with them?

Yes.

Interview with Contemporary Art Museum Educators
Fieldwork Stage 3, September-November 2010

Interviewee: Educator_9
Date: 9th November 2010

1. How would you define learning in your museum?

Learning is the process of construction of knowledge around art, integrating the exhibitions content as a trigger and the publics' knowledge and experiences. In this sense, it is projected as an immediate purpose of audiences' art education, and secondarily, of developing a community close to the museum. Likewise, the educative process aspires to blur the concept of the museum-glass case to arise more in a collaborative platform between artists and audiences, with the aim of creating consciousness of culture and belonging concepts, and hence a process of social empowerment around these.

2. How would you define dialogue?

Dialogue is a mutual knowledge process between persons or groups, where we can agree or diverge about different issues that interest us.

3. What does dialogue look like?

Dialogue is present in tours, which are not guided but involve conversations with the public. At the same time, these provide information elements that activate the audience reflexive process. Another indirect form of dialogue … is through our activities' programme of conversations with artists, projects' presentations, conferences, discussion panels, courses, workshops, film seasons; where perspectives of the art world and its peripheries from other fields of knowledge come into play.

4. How is this learning dialogue shared with the rest of the museum staff?

Through samplings and specific evaluation processes. Without a director it is difficult to share this information with the rest of the team, as in some cases there are observations that require modifying certain types of practices within the institution. Nevertheless, it is a process that we'll share, to start to work on crossovers, and do necessary adjustments between each area of the museum.

Appendix 1.14

Spanish to English Translations
From fieldwork Research, 2009-2010

This table was created as a dictionary, in order to deal with words or expressions that were not able to be translated directly from Spanish to English. They are sorted into alphabetical order by the second column: the word in Spanish.

Translation to English	Spanish Word
'To impress ignorant persons'	'Apantallabrutos'
Bring together	Acercamiento
Approach	Acercamiento / acercar
Unsettle	Agredir
Appropriate	Apropiar
Still life	Bodegón
Shoddy	Chafa
Guard	Custodio
Blur	Desdibujar
Disseminate	Difundir
From scratch	En ceros
Meeting	Encuentro
Foolishness	Estupidez
At length	Explayar
Exploit	Exprimir
Promotion	Fomento
Head of Government	Jefe de Gobierno
Recreational	Lúdico
Crazy idea	Ocurrencia
Lousy	Porquería
Activities Plan	Programa de actividades
Promoter	Promotor, propulsor
Bring about	Propiciar
Tours	Recorridos
Shock	Tambalear
Pull your leg	Tomar el pelo
Use common sense	Usar criterio
Guided visits / guided tours	Visitas guiadas
Glass Case	Vitrina

Appendix 2.1

Cities with Most Museums in the World 2009

City		Total of museums	Page
1	Berlin, Germany	250	277-281
2	London, UK	243	737-741
3	Paris, France	185	239-242
4	New York, USA	174	854-857
5	Tokyo, Japan	140	482-484
6	Buenos Aires, Argentina	133	5-7
7	Mexico City, Mexico	125	508-509
8	Rome, Italy	107	451-453
9	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	95	82-83
10	Madrid, Spain	88	
11	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	81	518-520
12	Toronto, Canada	75	124-125
13	Beijing, China	68	131-132
	Total in the world (202 countries)	55,100	xiii

Notes: These amounts include museums of all kinds. In terms of arts, it refers to fine arts museums and public galleries.
Source: Saur (2009)

Appendix 2.2

Funding in Contemporary Art Museums

The 2012 public expenditure allowance assigned to the main government offices responsible for the museums is illustrated in the following table. There is no specify of the budget allocated to museums, as neither the government nor the museums publish documents or data with that level of budgetary detail. However, the following table provides an overview of budget and financial relevance of the main public museum institutional sponsors.

Federal Government Budget Expenditure 2012

Institution	Budget in pesos	Budget in sterling*
Total for Public Education	$ 251.8 billion	£ 12,076.6 million
UNAM	$ 27.7 billion	£ 1,327.3 million
CONACULTA	$ 8.0 billion	£ 386.0 million
INAH	$ 3.4 billion	£ 162.6 million
INBA	$ 3.1 billion	£ 141.8 million

* Exchange rates based on 17th April 2012 (XE, 2012). Source: SHCP (2012)

The top row of the table demonstrates the total amount spent on public education in Mexico, which includes the budget for public schools and universities, other education related activities, and cultural and arts institutions. UNAM's budget is higher than those of INBA, INAH and CONACULTA, because it is distributed among the university's schools, academic departments, research centres, administration staff, sport and other facilities, including cultural organisations and museums. From the above table, it can be seen that INBA receives only 1.2% of the total public education budget (slightly less than INAH), which is distributed between administration, different offices and the 16 art museums, which it manages.

The Federal Government does not publish the budget expenditure assigned to each museum, or its education department, regardless of the fact that this information should be accessible as it is belongs to public funds. Nevertheless, The above table provides a general idea of institutional financial relevance,

where UNAM receives the highest budget, followed by CONACULTA, INAH and INBA. In terms of INBA, for director_1 (2010), it is frustrating that the institution does not provide financial incentives, nor does it establish criteria to designate the museum's funding, which could involve visitor numbers or the quality of experience.

Jumex, an example of a private museum, does not publish its overall expenditure. However, Samuel Morales (2010), Chief of Communication and Education Programmes states that its education department's expenditure in 2009 was $2.9 million pesos[31]. This budget is considerably higher than those of the other museums, who claim they do not have education funds[32]. MCM was the other museum that provided information about its budget in 2009, which had $3.5 million pesos allocated to it, an amount slightly higher than Jumex's expenditure just on education; it also had $285,000 pesos for its education department (Carrión, 2010)[33]. Furthermore, for educator_19 (2010) there is no comparison, as the education budgets are 10% to 15% of the amount for curation[34].

During fieldwork interviews in 2009, five educators declared that their departments did not have a specific budget allocated, and felt that they seemed to be the last ones to receive financial support from the museum. Interviewees explained that the budget for education is either discretionary to the director (educator_1, 2009) or assigned as part of another department's budget (educator_13, 2009). Nevertheless, although educators complain about their lack of budget, contemporary art museums allocate an amount to pay for their salaries. Curator_5 (2010) states that education budgets are inadequate as:

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[31] This amount is around £138,034, based on 18th April 2012 exchange rates (XE, 2012).

[32] This data comes from a questionnaire given to education departments (Appendix 1.2, page 287). From 6 responses, only Jumex and MCM provided information about their budget expenditure, whereas the rest of the museums either did not reply, deleted the question, or said that this was confidential (Appendix 2.2, page 340).

[33] A mix of government bodies finances MCM. The 2009 budget is around £166,330 for the museum and £13,544 for education, based on 18th April 2012 exchange rates (XE, 2012).

[34] This research does not have evidence to support this statement.

> In Mexico, immediate responsive policies are taken to survive everyday practice that does not allow planning in the long-term. The museum focuses on delivering exhibitions first, and the budget for education becomes very limited (curator_5, 2010)

Curator_5's view recognises the problem of the 6-year government period, which limits the museum's field of action and restricts its expenditure to exhibition making, which affects the learning programming and delivery. However, public contemporary art museums use additional sources of funding. First, sponsorship by their Board of Trustees, Friends of the Museum, or other private organisations, increase the museum's resources for developing exhibitions, programmes and activities. Second, there is the kind support of INBA, which consists of lending vans for transportation or photocopying materials (educator_13, 2009). However, for educator_13, there is no flexibility to use these resources, as they have to be booked 6 months in advance, which is not worth the wait, for example for printing one page. The information and evidence about contemporary art museums' budget expenditure, and their education departments, is very limited

Finances of Education Departments
(Based on Responses to Questionnaire from Appendix 1.2)

Museum	Museum's Annual Budget	Income Education	Expense Education	Additional income	Additional Sponsors
ACSI	Confidential	$375,922.25 pesos	Confidential	Confidential	Chrysler
Jumex	NA	Nil	$2,900,000 pesos	NA	Nil
LAA	NA	The workshops income covers other activities	NA	NA	Price shoes, Electrovisiones
MCM	$3,500,000 pesos	Nil, education events are free	$285,000 pesos	Enterprises sponsorships, donations from schools	NA
MNSC	NA	NA	NA	NA	Kellogg's, BIC, Jumex
SAPS	NA	NA	Nil	Nil	Nil

Source: Questionnaire to Education Departments, 2009.

Appendix 2.3

History of Mexico City Art Museums

This appendix summarises the history of art museums in Mexico City. It provides an overview to understand contemporary art museums and Mexican art collections. Some relevant anthropology museums are mentioned to contextualise the existence of art museums. The references used in this appendix are mainly from two sources: *History of Museums from The Ministry of Public Education* by Guadalupe de la Torre and Dolores Enciso (1980) and Francisco Reyes Palma's chapter in the book *The Publics as a Proposal. Four Sociology Studies in Art Museums* (1987). These references are at least 20 years old, but there were no other updated resources available about Mexican museums' history.

The history of Mexican museums can be traced back to 230 years ago. According to De la Torre and Enciso (1980, 173), a Mexican researcher at the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH)[35], the roots of Mexican museums can be traced back to the 18th century, when the government of Spain established the San Carlos Royal Academy of the New Spain in 1771, followed by the San Carlos Gallery in 1781. This gallery exhibited mainly paintings, and later on sculptures (Reyes Palma, 1987, 17), and was the first museum space on the American continent (De la Torre and Enciso, 1980, 173). The San Carlos Academy operates today as the National School of Plastic Arts (ENAP), in the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), which offers a postgraduate course in arts and design (UNAM, 2010). The San Carlos Gallery has closed its doors, but its collections were distributed among different art museums, as will be demonstrated below.

The first official museum in Mexico, opened in 1825, was the National Museum (De la Torre and Enciso, 1980, 174). For Francisco Reyes Palma (1987, 17), Mexican art critic and historian, this museum was public, rather than being truly national, linked to scientific research, and aimed to provoke the educated audiences' curiosity, which seems to limit diversity. In 1909, the National Museum divided its collections, which became the National Museum of Archaeology, History and Ethnography; and the National Museum of Natural History (De la Torre and Enciso, 1980, 174).

Around the 1920s, Mexico focused its efforts on organising exhibitions related to political events of the time, such as the Mexican Revolution, and fostering international relationships. Art was a legitimising popular element, critical to the end of the dictatorship at the time[36] (Reyes Palma, 1987, 20). Mural painting, one of the most important artistic movements in Mexican history, was increasingly commissioned in public buildings, and is still on view today all around the country[37]. According to Reyes Palma (1987, 21) mural painting supported the dissemination of public policies, and aimed to create a new

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[35] Mondragón (2009).
[36] The dictator Porfirio Díaz ruled Mexico for 35 years, from 1876 to 1911 (Minster, 2011).
[37] The Palace of Fine Arts, UNAM, and the Former College of San Ildefonso (ACSI) are museums and institutions that have murals on display in Mexico City.

audience capable of directing the visual experience, previously related to a religious imagery, towards a new secular iconography that reinforced a civic ideology. Interestingly, arts and mural painting were focused on being popular in order to reach diverse audiences.

During the 1930s, the Ministry of Education (SEP) thoroughly promoted mural painting. Artists were commissioned to reproduce scenes of everyday life, as well as other relevant social issues (Reyes Palma, 1987, 23). The first art museum, the National Gallery of Plastic Arts, opened in 1934, within the premises of the Palace of Fine Arts. This palace was an institution of "national culture, social service and public welfare, which would promote and disseminate art, in an open way" (De la Torre and Enciso, 1980, 207). This museum commissioned renowned artists to create mural paintings between 1934 and 1963, including Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, Roberto Montenegro, José González Camarena and Manuel Rodríguez Lozano (Museos de México, 2011). This art museum also hosted part of the San Carlos Academy and Gallery collections.

The National Gallery at the Palace of Fine Arts was operating 13 years prior to the creation of the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA), which was only established in 1947. According to Reyes Palma (1987, 29-31), INBA emerged to become a cultural government body linked to economic development and aiming to gain a national reputation, whereas the National Gallery aimed to act as a dynamic museum displaying the wealth of visual arts in Mexico. Nevertheless, Reyes Palma (1987, 31) argues that during this time the Mexican audience still remained passive and alien to the proliferation of exhibitions and cultural experiences on offer.

During the 1940s, the National Museum of Archaeology, History and Ethnography; and the National Museum of Natural History (both established in 1909) became two museums: the National Museum of Anthropology (MNA), which still exists today (De la Torre and Enciso, 1980, 174), and the National Museum of History, opened in 1944 at the Castle of Chapultepec (Reyes Palma, 1987, 24).

Museums expected an ideal audience and aimed to reach 'high level' spectators in the 1950s (Reyes Palma, 1987, 31). This is evidence of the origin of an unbalanced relationship with audiences, which still remains in some museums today. Academic Néstor García Canclini et al. (1991, 14) argues that, during this period, the focus on cultural policy aimed to promote greater communication of Mexican culture internationally, which increased access for the urban population from secondary and university education to the arts (García Canclini et al., 1991, 15). Further, the museums' locations were concentrated in the centre of Mexico City from the Chapultepec Park to Zocalo, which extended to the south of the city from the 1970s around City University in UNAM (García Canclini et al., 1991, 16).

According to De la Torre and Enciso in 1964, the MNA shared part of its collections to create two more museums that still operate today under INAH's administration: the National Museum of Viceroyalty, located in Tepotzotlán,

outside of Mexico City in the State of Mexico; and the National Museum of Cultures, housed in the building of the Former National Museum (SIC, 2011).

In terms of arts, three new museums opened in Mexico City in the 1960s, which inherited the collections of the San Carlos Gallery (De la Torre and Enciso, 1980, 209). These were the National Museum of San Carlos (MNSC), the Viceregal Picture Gallery (today Alameda Art Laboratory, LAA), and the Museum of Modern Art (MAM). Further, the National Gallery of Plastic Arts changed its name to Museum of the Palace of Fine Arts. Later on in 1974, the Carrillo Gil Art Museum opened with the donation of the Carrillo Gil family's modern art collection (De la Torre and Enciso, 1980, 234). All these art museums are managed by INBA today.

According to Reyes Palma (1987, 34), MAM was the contemporary art museum of the time during the 1960s, as it exhibited Mexican twentieth century art and avant-garde artists. Today it still offers temporary contemporary art exhibitions. Nevertheless, Reyes Palma (1987, 34) argues that MAM lacked appropriate educational support when it was established, despite the fact that it needed explanatory texts and a design structure to facilitate audiences' visits. MAM only established its education services department 20 years after its opening, between 1982 and 1984 (Reyes Palma, 1987, 39). Reyes Palma's view suggests that, from an early stage, contemporary art museums like MAM could have provided more information and support to their audiences, which are important for the learning experience (Chapters 2 and 3).

Beyond INBA and INAH's museum infrastructure, UNAM opened the University Museum of Sciences and Art (MUCA) in 1960, with a focus on science rather than arts during its early days. MUCA closed its doors with the opening of MuAC in 2008. UNAM has also played an important role in the dissemination of Mexican arts over the past 50 years:

> Since the end of the fifties … The UNAM has actively participated in the promotion of contemporary Mexican art, as it expanded into spaces such as the University Museum of Sciences and Art (MUCA), the University Museum of Chopo, and more recently the MUCA Roma and the Experimental Museum El Eco, both recovered by the University in 2005 (De la Fuente, 2008, 13)

By 1964, after only 55 years, there were 40 museums in Mexico City, but in that year all public energies shifted to the new spectacular building of the MNA, designed with large spaces that allowed free access for groups (García Canclini, 1987, 58; Reyes Palma, 1987, 33-34). This is the most visited museum in Mexico, with 1.8 million visitors in 2011 (INAH, 2012)[38]. The creation of MNA encompassed a new pedagogic approach that avoided interference with the aesthetic appreciation of objects, but aimed to ensure scientific knowledge of the indigenous social reality of the country (Reyes Palma, 1987, 34). This anthropology museum is the first one to have a

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[38] MNA has been visited 3 times more than the Palace of Fine Arts Museum between 2001 and 2006. MNA received 9 million visitors, whereas the Palace had 3.1 million during this period (CONACULTA, 2008, 15-16).

learning approach, with a great focus in academia. It does not seem to involve dialogue as it did not promote interference with the objects.

Two decades later, the National Museum of Art (MUNAL) opened in 1982[39], offering a creative education programme with text materials for different age groups, which avoided an authoritarian tone. As an example, MUNAL transformed prohibited activities such as touch, smoke or photography into funny cartoons with messages that provoked audiences' further reflection about heritage protection (Reyes Palma, 1987, 45).

Some private initiatives at the time, focused on major artists' inheritances, ended up as museums: for instance, the Frida Kahlo Museum in Coyoacán (1958); and Diego Rivera's Anahuacalli Museum that preserves its archaeology collection (1954). Both museums are sponsored by a trusteeship of the Bank of Mexico since 1955 (Reyes Palma, 1987, 41-44). Tamayo Museum opened in 1981 (today Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum (MTAC)), and it houses the international art collection donated by artist Rufino Tamayo. MTAC shifted its management from private to INBA.

Some private companies, such as the National Bank of Mexico (Banamex), created a cultural area to promote art and popular culture in 1971: Banamex Cultural Promotion, which owns the Iturbide Palace building and other venues used to display exhibitions. The Cultural Centre of Contemporary Art opened between 1986 and 1998, sponsored by Televisa Cultural Foundation and private investors. This centre organised art exhibitions from the 20th century, and organised 172 exhibitions during its existence (Esquivel, 2012). The following table[40] summarises the history of Mexican museums.

Summary of Mexico City Museums History

Date	Museum / Institution	Today's Name	Current Management
1771	San Carlos Royal Academy of the New Spain	San Carlos Academy (National School of Plastic Arts, ENAP)	UNAM
1781	San Carlos Gallery	Collections went to the Museum of the Palace of Fine Arts, MNSC, MAM	INBA
1825	National Museum	National Museum of Cultures	INAH
1909	National Museum of Archaeology, History and Ethnography	National Museum of Anthropology	
	National Museum of Natural History	National Museum of History	
1910	National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)		
1934	National Gallery of Plastic Arts	Museum of the Palace of Fine Arts	INBA
1939	National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH)		
1940	National Museum of Anthropology (MNA)	Shared part of its collections with the National Museum of Viceroyalty; and the National Museum of Cultures	INAH
1944	National Museum of History		
1947	National Institute of the Fine Arts (INBA)		

[39] This museum has not been considered during this research's fieldwork, as it does not exhibit much contemporary art.
[40] Source: De la Torre and Enciso (1980), museums' websites, Museos de México (no date), Reyes Palma (1987), SIC CONACULTA (2011a), Esquivel (2012).

1952	Education Services at the National Museum of Anthropology		MNA / INAH
1954	Anahuacalli Museum		Bank of Mexico Trusteeship
1958	Frida Kahlo Museum		
1960	University Museum of Science and Art (MUCA)	Closed and collections went to MuAC in 2008	UNAM
1964	New building for National Museum of Anthropology		INAH
	National Museum of Viceroyalty		
	Viceregal Picture Gallery	In 2000 became the Alameda Art Laboratory (LAA). Its art collections are part of MUNAL today	INBA
	Museum of Modern Art (MAM)		
	University Museum of Sciences and Arts (MUCA)	Closed in 2008	UNAM
	Museum of Mexico City (MCM)		Government of Mexico City
1965	National Museum of Cultures		INAH
1968	National Museum of San Carlos (MNSC)		INBA
1971	Banamex Cultural Promotion		National Bank of Mexico
1974	Carrillo Gil Art Museum (MACG)		INBA
	Siqueiros Public Art Gallery (SAPS)		
	First arts education services department at MNSC		
1975	University Museum of Chopo		UNAM
1981	Tamayo Museum	Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum (MTAC)	INBA
1982-84	MAM Education Department		
1986	Cultural Centre of Contemporary Art	Closed in 1998	Televisa Cultural Foundation
1987	National Museum of Art (MUNAL)		INBA
1988	National Council for Culture and Arts (CONACULTA)		
1992	Former College of San Ildefonso		UNAM, Government of Mexico City, CONACULTA
1993	Ex Teresa Current Art		INBA
1999	University Museum of Science and Arts Roma (MUCA Roma)		UNAM
2001	Foundation/Collection Jumex		Private
2002	Spain's Cultural Centre in Mexico (CCE)		Government of Spain
2005	Experimental Museum El Eco		UNAM
2008	University Museum of Contemporary Art (MuAC)		

Appendix 2.4

Contemporary Art Museums in Mexico City Today
(Sorted by Year of Opening)

Name	Abbreviation	Year Opened	Funded by	Type of Collection**
Museo de Arte Moderno [Modern Art Museum]	MAM	1964	INBA and Friends of the Museum	Mexican Modern Art
Museo de la Ciudad de México [Museum of Mexico City]	MCM	1964	Government of Mexico City and Friends of the Museum	Prehispanic to 20th Century Art and Mural Painting*
Museo Nacional de San Carlos [San Carlos National Museum]	MNSC	1968	INBA and Board of Trustees	XIV to XX Centuries European Art
Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros [Siqueiros Public Art Gallery]	SAPS	1974	INBA	Murals and Siqueiros Personal Archive
Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil [Carrillo Gil Art Museum]	MACG	1974	INBA and Friends of the Museum	Mexican Modern Art
Museo Universitario del Chopo [University Museum of Chopo]	Chopo	1975	UNAM – Coordination Office of Cultural Promotion and Friends of the Museum	Contemporary Art Resources
Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo [Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum]	MTAC	1981	INBA and Friends of the Museum	Modern and Contemporary Art
Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso [Former College of San Ildefonso]	ACSI	1992	UNAM, Government of Mexico City, CONACULTA and Board of Trustees	Mexican Mural Painting*
Ex Teresa Arte Actual [Ex Teresa Current Art]	Ex Teresa	1993	INBA	Contemporary Art Resources*
Laboratorio de Arte Alameda [Alameda Art Laboratory]	LAA	2000	INBA	Contemporary Art Resources*
Fundación/Colección Jumex [Foundation/Collection Jumex]	Jumex	2001	Private	International Contemporary Art
Centro Cultural de España en México [Spain's Cultural Centre in Mexico]	CCE	2002	Government of Spain	Contemporary Art Resources
MUCA Roma [University Museum of Science and Arts Roma]	MUCA Roma	2005	UNAM - DiGAV	Contemporary Art Resources
Museo Experimental El Eco [Experimental Museum El Eco]	El Eco	2005	UNAM - DiGAV	Architecture and Modern Art
Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo [University Museum of Contemporary Art]	MuAC	2008	UNAM - DiGAV	Prehispanic, Modern and Contemporary Art

*Indicates that the architecture is part of the collection, as a heritage site.
**All the museums listed here organise temporary contemporary art exhibitions
Source: Interviews with Educators (2009) and museums' websites (2010-2012)[41].

[41] This table does not include the National Art Museum (MUNAL) and the Palace of Fine Arts Museum, as both exhibit art produced in Mexico between the 16th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, and temporary exhibitions of international artists, but rarely display contemporary art (www.munal.com.mx/ and www.palacio.bellasartes.gob.mx). Spain's Cultural Centre in Mexico was included because it promotes links, programmes and exhibitions related to Mexican, Spanish and Latin American contemporary artists.

Appendix 2.5.

Evaluation Tools Used by Contemporary Art Museums to Learn about Audiences

Evaluation is a helpful tool to learn from audiences in the museum, but how is this undertaken in Mexico? There are limited evaluation tools that involve dialogue with audiences, as will be demonstrated below. This appendix discusses what formal strategies staff use to learn about their visitors' experiences, beyond professionals' perceptions.

Mexican art museums' evaluations[1] are mainly quantitative and rarely involve dialogue. They usually gather information about audience numbers[2] and their socio-demographic profiles, which does not bring knowledge about the audiences' experiences or what they have learned. Nowadays, there are only a few museum evaluation studies published that provide quantitative data and statistics (CONACULTA, 2003; 2009; 2010a; 2011). Findings from interviews with professionals in Mexican contemporary art museums also show that evaluations are mainly quantitative[3]. Museum educators argue that evaluation results are useful to inform their Friends of the Museum, donors and other institutions, about the work undertaken in their departments (educator_3, educator_15, 2009).

Néstor García Canclini et al. (1991, 9) refers to a lack of systematic research about how audiences perceive and appropriate the Mexican cultural offer – including museums. Director_5 (2010) agrees with this 20 year-old perspective, and argues that Mexican contemporary art museums' evaluations are barely undertaken and up-to-date (fieldwork interviews, 2009-2010)[4]. However, Hooper-Greenhill (1996) argues that evaluation is important to assess the museum's work:

> Setting objectives is a complex process of assessing needs, matching resources to needs and building on past experience. Evaluation helps to build a picture of how successful projects are in meeting their objectives –and how appropriate the objectives are (Hooper-Greenhill, 1996, 8).

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[1] According to Néstor García Canclini (1987, 61), the first Latin-American research about museum audiences was done in 1952, at the former National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City; whereas the first research about art audiences was done in 1961 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. García Canclini (1987, 61) argues that since then there has been a void, and not more than 10 studies about museum audiences have been produced in the whole of Latin America. The only research about art audiences in Mexico (prior 1987) was done in 1977, which concluded that without knowledge about audiences it is difficult to create inclusive cultural policies.

[2] In terms of government museums, CONACULTA (2010a, 32) argues that the number of visitors to the INBA's 419 national and international exhibitions in Mexico during 2010 was 2,515,513; whereas UNAM's art museums registered 342,573 visitors to its exhibitions during the same period (De la Torre, 2010). These numbers refer to all art exhibitions including contemporary ones. More reliable current information has not been published yet.

[3] This argument was made by 5 out of 20 educators interviewed (educator_3, educator_4, educator_9, educator_11, educator_12, 2009) and director_5 (2010).

[4] Educator_14 (2009) argued that their latest evaluation was undertaken in 2005. Consultant_2 (2009) agrees as there are only a few professionals doing evaluation in Mexico.

This view also applies to assessing audiences' learning experiences, and gaining knowledge about visitors needs. Evaluating learning programmes, activities and dialogue with greater focus on the museum experience will support evaluation of objectives and further reflection about future projects in the museum. Hence both staff and the museum have the option to learn about audiences in this way. Garrick Fincham (2003, 3) agrees that through evaluation institutions can share good practice. But what does "good practice" look like in Mexico? The answer to this question needs further research and it is beyond the thesis' limitations. But, sharing evaluation outcomes can have an impact on staff's future practice, in the same way as sharing findings and reflecting on dialogues with audiences (Chapter 7).

Practical experiences discussed in fieldwork interviews demonstrate that there is some qualitative evaluation taking place in Mexican contemporary art museums through comments books, observation, and verbal dialogue; which support gaining knowledge about audiences' experiences[5]. In terms of books of comments as a form of evaluation, Fincham (2003, 14) argues that these are informal tools to gain data from audiences. In Mexico, curator_ 10 (2010) argues that these books make audiences feel free to write their opinions, and provide information about their interests to the museum staff. How is this data gathered by the museums?

In some cases, museums share the information gained from the books of comments between the staff (educator_6, 2010); these are used to create statistics, and when possible staff respond to them (curator_2, 2010). Furthermore, some professionals argue that they plan their exhibitions based on audiences' needs and opinions, gathered from these books (curator_3, director_6, 2010). But how accurate are audiences' opinions taken from these books, when not every visitor writes in them? Are these professionals' views perceptions rather than practical facts about audiences' experiences? Are these written audiences' opinions considered in exhibition making? This thesis does not have enough evidence to respond to these questions.

Although museums can evaluate practice and learn about audiences' views through books of comments, these are less direct than dialogue, provide static unresponsive statements, and require time from staff to react, read and express further responses. Dialogue allows a fast, unrestricted and direct opportunity to share ideas, offering more balanced face-to-face participation.

Books of comments offer qualitative information but may not be representative of all audiences, as only some visitors feel motivated or encouraged to write about their experience. Reflection and findings about audiences' learning experiences, opinions, needs and interests from books of comments can be evidenced through written reports, in order to be shared amongst the museum staff. In this sense, educator_6 (2009) argues that excessive written information can be difficult to analyse and requires time to be processed. For

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[5] Professionals who mentioned that they review their museum's book of comments to learn about audiences were educator_9, educator_11, educator_12 (2009), director_1, director_6, director_ 8, curator_6, curator_2, curator_3, curator_10 (2010).

this educator, audiences prefer to talk to staff directly to give their opinions, which indicates that dialogue takes place; however it does not give examples of how this takes place or how often.

Some professionals interviewed referred to verbal evaluation, such as: educator_10 (2009), who prefers to question audiences to gain knowledge about their museum experience; and educator_15 (2010), who agrees, and feels that written evaluation does not give much information about audiences. Questioning does not necessarily imply balanced opportunities to talk, listen, respond and react to each other's opinions and ideas. Can the information from these experiences be preserved and used in the future if there are no written records about it? There is no evidence to indicate how verbal information is evaluated and preserved for future practice in Mexican contemporary art museums. Observation offers another way to evaluate and learn about audiences' experiences (consultant_2, 2009; curator_8, 2010):

> I work more ethnographically, I observe audiences and then I ask them questions… we evaluate from the weight of the experience: memorability, relationship building, social processes, and which one of these stays in the long-term. Evaluations in Mexico have bad results and people do not like to hear these (consultant_2, 2009).

As previously discussed, questioning audiences may not be dialogue, especially when there are no balanced opportunities to express ideas. Consultant_2 focuses on significant experiences and social interaction with audiences, which have been discussed as part of learning in this thesis (Chapter 3). In this sense, Hooper-Greenhill (1994, 27) argues that established relationships with audiences show how the institution creates value in society. Observation is generally not intrusive, and does not involve a verbal dialogue. Interestingly, consultant_2 talks about "bad results" found through evaluations, which limit the institution's work. This view constitutes a judgment value with no further evidence to support it, only in the sense that quantitative evaluation provides limited and hardly up-to-date data about audiences' experiences.

This issue replicates the broader institutional hierarchy issue, together with the overall lack of documentation in museums (Section 5.4). Furthermore, any findings from dialogue and evaluation that do not influence practice will not become learning for staff and the museum. Mexican museums, as well as other institutions, will benefit from acknowledging that even when outcomes from evaluation are not positive, there is something to be learned which can change and improve future practice. For example, educator_9 (2010) refers to observation outcomes that may require modifying certain types of practices within the institution, which are not always easy to achieve in other departments that do not work enough as a team, or which show an interest in learning as an organisation. Furthermore, George Hein (1998) demonstrates that evaluation is essential to avoid making assumptions about audiences:

> It is a good rule of thumb to assume that you know less about your visitors than you think you do. It is certainly better to be confirmed in your belief from visitor studies

than to be surprised as a result of your inadequate assumptions in the absence of empirical data (G. Hein, 1998, 164)[6]

Hence, findings from evaluation studies provide accurate tools to reflect upon audiences and support better-targeted exhibitions and programmes. Professional dialogue (Section 7.2) allows these outcomes to be shared within the institution, with the potential for staff to learn about audiences. Further, for educator_16 (2010) all of Mexican contemporary art museums share the same audiences, and as sometimes these organisations work in collaboration, there is a need to "communicate with each other." This also demonstrates the relevance of a further interinstitutional dialogue, besides the intrainstitutional one that could be taking place constantly within each museum.

Evaluation in Mexican museums' practice takes place through observation or comments books, which offer little interaction between staff and audiences: unlike dialogue, which potentially creates more opportunities to share and discuss ideas about experiences and to stimulate learning for both participants. Evidence from fieldwork interviews do not suggest that dialogue is encouraged enough as part of the evaluation strategy in Mexican contemporary art museums. For example, curator_10 (2010) argues that young audiences have said the museum gives them a lot of information but no opportunities to provide feedback. This indicates limited dialogue as these audiences feel their opinions are not listened to[7].

There is barely any evidence of shared outcomes internally or institutionally, beyond quantitative information about audiences. But current existing tools, such as the books of comments or observation, can help museums listen and learn about what their audiences have to say. These tools can potentially be used to initiate a further dialogue with the audience, but further research is needed to understand this in depth. Dialogue can act as a tool to assess outcomes about learning experiences, and its findings and knowledge can be shared further within the museum.

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[6] This view agrees with Hilde Hein's view (2000, 63) about making assumptions about audiences that are not accurate in practice (Section 7.1).
[7] Limited dialogue was defined in Section 7.3 (page xx). Further, in Section 7.1, Calder (2009, 35-36) referred to the importance of making audiences feel they contribute to the museum too.

Appendix 2.6

Staff in Contemporary Art Museums 2010
(Sorted by museum staff numbers[8])

Name	Abbreviation	Total Number of Staff	Education Staff
Museo de Arte Moderno [Modern Art Museum]	MAM	150	5
Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo [University Museum of Contemporary Art]	MuAC	127**	5
Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso [Former College of San Ildefonso]	ACSI	85*	10
Museo Universitario del Chopo [University Museum of Chopo]	Chopo	74**	2
Museo de la Ciudad de México [Museum of Mexico City]	MCM	73	5
Museo Nacional de San Carlos [San Carlos National Museum]	MNSC	71	4
Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil [Carrillo Gil Art Museum]	MACG	66	4
Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo [Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum]	MTAC	53*	5
Ex Teresa Arte Actual [Ex Teresa Current Art]	Ex Teresa	27	1
Fundación/Colección Jumex [Foundation/Collection Jumex]	Jumex	20	3
Laboratorio de Arte Alameda [Alameda Art Laboratory]	LAA	20*	1
Museo Experimental El Eco [Experimental Museum El Eco]	El Eco	20	0
Centro Cultural de España en México [Spain's Cultural Centre in Mexico]	CCE	15	1
Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros [Siqueiros Public Art Gallery]	SAPS	14*	1
MUCA Roma [University Museum of Science and Arts Roma]	MUCA Roma	13	0

*Without cleaning and security staff
**Data from UNAM (2011c)
Source: Interviews with educators (2009), telephone conversations with museum staff (2010), and museum websites (2010).

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[8] Numbers are approximate according to conversations with museum professionals and research on websites. These numbers do not include volunteers in the Education Departments. This evidence can be improved by having access to accurate data from museums.

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