

**RECORDING AND DOCUMENTATION PROJECT OF THE LOCAL  
CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR THE “RURICANCHO” PERMANENT  
EXHIBITION IN SAN JUAN DE LURIGANCHO, THE BIGGER DISTRICT OF  
PERU**

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In January, 2012, the Park Service of Lima, a public institution dedicated to the administration of metropolitan parks of the local government, give us the work of creating an exhibition project for the permanent exposition of the new Cultural Center in the Huiracocha Zonal Park located in the district of San Juan de Lurigancho.

The Huiracocha Zonal Park was created on December 30<sup>th</sup>, 1971, as part of a metropolitan project to create and protect areas to be used in the future as metropolitan and zonal parks. These were going to be natural places for recreation and sports for an increasing population who came from different parts of the country to the capital of Peru, Lima, looking for opportunities. These parks began as places where young people went to play football in small courts, and then, they became symbols of a city of immigrants. The migration movements to the capital in Peru began in the sixties, and in the time the zonal parks were created there was already an important quantity of people who came from the other regions with all their cultural baggage, to the cosmopolitan city. This fact causes different kinds of social confrontation, and the immigrants looked for places that remind them their local regions. The parks were perfect places for that, and they were named as the Incas from the Tahuantinsuyo Period, like Sinchi Roca, Lloque Yupanqui, Manco Capac, Huascar y Huiracocha.

The Huiracocha Zonal Park has now broad green areas, a court food, a scenary for events, football and volleyball courts, a lake and a complex of swimming pools.

The proposal of creating a cultural center for the park inside the Huiracocha Park in San Juan de Lurigancho, the most populated district of Lima, considered the cultural needs and characteristics of the local population. A library with books for reader´s animation, university texts and bibliography about the history of the district were included in the project, at the same time, a place for playing dedicated to the babyhood, a place for multiple purposes and two rooms for exhibitions: The Permanent Exhibition Room called “Ruricancho” and the Temporal Exhibition Rooms called “Florentino Jimenez Toma”, dedicated to the contemporary local art.

## **How to tell the history of the most populated district of Peru**

San Juan de Lurigancho is known as the most populated district of all the country and also Latin America. Near one million of inhabitants live in this place, coming from different provinces of Peru. Many children and grandsons of the original immigrants also live here. Most of them populated different urbanizations created in the seventy's, eighty's and ninety's decades, leaving behind their original places because of the armed conflict our country suffered in that period. This conflict was stronger in the south part of the Andean region, that's because most of the immigrants came from Huanta, a town located in Ayacucho, whose inhabitants came to Lima and recreated their principal court and church in this new district. The immigrants kept with them their uses, traditions, patronal festivities, artistic technics, and other cultural expressions that, at the same time, they wanted to protect and transform. Nowadays, San Juan de Lurigancho is the district of Lima that has more population who speaks Quechua, one of the original languages of our country.

Today, the population of this new district is composed by recognized writers, musicians, artists of the retables, ceramists, painters and sculptors.

In the last few days, different organizations of the civil society have contributed to the diffusion and preservation of the history of the district. They organize artistic activities for the strengthening of local identities, focusing in the expressions of proud because of living and being successful in the capital. This fact is very remarkable because in our local reality, people from province who speaks Quechua is discriminated, and for that reason, most of quechua speakers were used to refuse to speak that language, and worst, they denied to know it to avoid being discriminated.

The province clubs organize patronal festivities of crosses and virgins, these events are produced with donations of the local population, and they join a richness in dances and music from different places of the Andean Region like Cusco, Ayacucho, Junín and Cerro de Pasco. The educational centers have also recreated with the students, different kinds of festivities like the Inti Raymi (Fest of the Sun) in the archaeological centers of Mangamarca y la Fortaleza de Campoy, places that -in other period of time- were in risk of total destruction.

It was very important to take advantage of all the cultural initiatives of the local population, because there was not any cultural center or museum dedicated to the local culture in San Juan de Lurigancho, until that time. The British – Peruvian Cultural Institute opened a gallery in 2009, but the exhibitions were related to individual proposals of contemporary artists without any link with the district and the local culture.

In that sense, we understood the proposal of the exhibition rooms in the Cultural Center of the Huiracocha Zonal Park as places dedicated to preserve and show

the cultural heritage that the local population had the initiative to preserve and build. We share the idea of cultural heritage as a collective process:

*“Nowadays, the concept of heritage is an open concept where many different possibilities have place. However, the medular conception of heritage continue being valid; the legacy of the ancestors; but, to be recognized, that past must be meaningful and recognized like that by a determined collective or society” (SANTACANA Y SERRAT, 2007:23)*

We proposed to conceive the cultural center of the Huiracocha Zonal Park as a place of construction of local identities developed by the population, with museological, educational and recreational strategies. For that, we had the local population as principal partners for the recompilation of historic and cultural sources.



Photo 1. Educational activity in the Permanent Exhibition Room called “Ruricancho”.

## **The museographic script**

The museographic script proposal for the Cultural Center of the Huiracocha Zonal Park integrated two transversal axis:

### **1. Democracy and historic memory**

We proposed a museographic script that represents a culturally and generationally diverse community. The project proposed, by one hand, the Permanente Exhibition about the history of the district, showing different kinds of representative objects from different times and documental material, and, by the other hand, the Temporal Exhibition about the local arts and artists, that

represents different generations of artists, various technics, and many cultural traditions.

To reach that goal, we realized a collective consult through the organization of focus groups with the participation of the local population. The people contributed talking about the topics that were presented in the museographic script and they gave their opinions, historic information and ideas, this information was very useful for the improvement of the script. These meetings also served us to program future temporal thematic exhibitions like The Hip Hop and the Urban Art in San Juan de Lurigancho, The Festivity of the Lord of Torrechayoq, Traditions of Huarochiri in our District, and others.

This way, we constructed the history of the district and show it through their own characters, as a history in construction.

## **2. Interculturalism and social inclusion**

The inclusion is the recognition of all the social sectors without any differentiation of the gender, precedence, ascendance, cultural background, physical capability or economical differences.

In the museographic script we propose the integration of the different social groups, different regional associations and different generations.

The museographic proposal seek to be conciliatory and to reinforce the local identity in the district that is not homogeneous, but multiethnic, multigenerational and multisexual. For that reason, collective senses articulated to the social memory were moved, playing a preponderant paper the symbolic dimension of things and facts. We talk about a district of entrepreneurs, a district of immigrants, a district of artists, and a district in continuous construction. The museographic script proposed presented these ideas in permanent and temporal exhibitions.

### **The Permanente Exhibition:**

It shows the local history since the lithic period to these days.

The collection is composed by the archaeological pieces donated by the Ruricancho Institute, a cultural association led by the archaeologist Julio Abanto. A collection of photographic archives was created by the neighbours of the Lurigancho Town and the San Juan Millenium Archive that belonged to the photographer Jorge Eduardo Martínez. It also considered the diffusion of the recreation of the Inti Raymi organized by the students in Campoy and Mangamarca through the exhibition of a film. These actions are relevant to show that the antique heritage of the district can also create new forms of cultural expressions, reinterpretations of the past generated by the local population, from all generations.

## The Temporal Exhibition:

It show the creation of artists from different generations (young and established ones), who develop different technics, coming from different traditions. We had in the same room expressions of the art from Ayacucho (regional art), of the academic art and of the urban art. The diversity of this exhibition became the attraction in the opening event because it showed the place as a gallery opened to all different types of artistic manifestations.



Photo 2. Vessel of pottery Mamiforme Style, white on red, belonging to the Final Formative Period. Found in La Vizcachera Site.



Photo 3. Mate with corn of the Itchsma Culture from the Inca's Period, belonging to the Final Formative Period. Found in Campoy.

## Recovering visual records

To recover visual records from the population was a hard work because we had to find the strategic people who have recorded the most remarkable times of the district. We had to talk to many neighbors to find out finally a good collection of photography of the first inhabitants, the first buildings in the district, the most important social and politic events, public protests, marriages, and family pictures, all of this registration made possible to reconstruct a recent past and to value the history of the district as part of the history of individuals.



Photo 4. Fotografías de los pobladores vecinos del barrio denominado El Pueblito

### **Documenting the living culture**

One of the most difficult duties for us was the documentation of the living culture, because most of the time, it is separated from the recent and remote past.

In this case, we interviewed at the same time the young people and the most aged people in the district to recover the information about San Juan de Lurigancho, not only historic knowledge but also anecdotes to help us discover the strong link between people from all generations and their heritage in the more wide sense.



Photo 5. Mrs. Libia Arias, one of the most antique inhabitant of the district

## Conclusions

First of all, the experience of recording cultural information of a very wide and diverse district was a real challenge. It was necessary to get approach to the population, talk with them, learn from them and in a way, live with them.

With all the information collected from different kind of sources, we had to discriminate and systematize it to be shown in a not technical way. The museographic script constitutes an important tool for the selection of the data to create an exhibition where the entire population feel represented.

The neighbors have to be always the principal character of an exhibition about local identity. The heritage doesn't exist without the human being because we give the value and significance to things.

The photography was a very important tool for recording the important moments of the district, because the image is always a figurative expression of something. But the interviews let us discover an information that we could't find in the books and pictures, an information based on anecdotes that give an emotion to the cold words, and create an imaginary picture of a moment, maybe better, maybe worst, but also real.

The local identity is stronger when it is born in the local population, and not created from outside.



Photo 6. Guided visit in the Temporal Exhibition Room "Florentino Jiménez Toma"