

*Our Culture; An Essential Activity*  
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I am not a pessimist. All the opposite. I do believe that in an upcoming morning, I'll take the newspaper and read: *The vaccine is ready*. A few months later, we'll be living in a similar version of our pre-pandemic world. That can happen this Monday, in four months from now, in a year or maybe two. In the meantime, we have to accept that this is *another* normality, and that it's ours. Civil society's normality, not the so called "new".

Here in Mexico, we assume the responsibilities that catastrophes and disasters give us. We have an opportunity here, to think about ourselves and restructure absolutely everything; to reinvent our citizenship. I really think we'll get out of this as a better world, a better country and a better neighborhood.

I am not questioning the policies that now govern us, those with immediate impact on our lives. I am proposing that we take a moment to imagine our near future. Let's imagine; What would happen if there's no vaccine in the next year? If we don't assume this new state as our normality, the day we go out everything will be in ruins. Not only the infrastructure but the entire operational world. But I have to stop there. Let's imagine our cities not in a year but in a month from now. Our personal relationships in a month. And above all, let's imagine our mental health. In a month, there won't be actual ruins. But we will be one. Human beings accustomed to limited spaces, to a limited coexistence.

To assume this normality and to procure our mental health must be today a priority. Culture and the infrastructure that supports it are now more than ever a key tool to help us navigate through this condition. Art and culture have accompanied us during this last months. They have entertained us, activated us and helped us have a good mood, at home. It's time to take the next step.

Today, as civil society, we are ready to accept and declare *culture as an essential activity*. By doing so, we would be able to use our country's culture infrastructure to start relieving our mental health. Also, we'll be taking care of our near future, not only of the immediate one, as our recent governments have accustomed us. In order to do it, we, culture workers, should be now working outside, with every other citizen. Just like the health, food, security and other essential activities workers.

Our infrastructure includes theaters, libraries, archeological sites and museums. I think that the last are key to this reactivation. Museums are spacious enough to allow an experience that respects the recommended person to person distances and every other hygienic measure.

Imagine you leave your house, alone, and use the same transport you use for going to the supermarket. But you go to a museum instead. You'll arrive to a museum with a previously made appointment online. A guard will welcome you and let you know every hygienic measure and will tell you that you can visit all the galleries, just by yourself, for half an hour. When your time is over, a custody that has accompanied you from afar will kindly ask you to leave and allow that the next person to come in.

This pandemic has brought us a unique opportunity! A visit to a museum has always been beyond the mere appreciation of art works. In a museum, the reality stops for a while. Time moves differently. Perception expands. These qualities are extraordinarily important when it comes to have a reflexion time, to get out of the confinement and allow ourselves to be just by ourselves for a second. It's urgent to open the museums now!

Each institution would have to operationally rethink itself. It's possible to open them now and use them as a part of the current health campaign. Society has shown enthusiasm towards this initiative in social media.

To open the museums, only a small part of the workers will be required to return. Only a technician and a guard will be required. Of course only the least vulnerable, and the ones already immune will be called. Additionally, a security element, of which are still working in our museums, will be needed.

The staff's and visitors's health will be priority. Same measures taken at supermarkets and other essential spaces will have to be observed here. This *one by one* strategy is currently being implemented in some countries' art galleries. In some others countries museums have re-opened, with different modes and arguments.

But beyond all the different situations happening all around the globe with the museums, is that museums, with their spaciousness, are going to be key in this new normality. Let's assume that fact now.