

Plenarvortrag

PV VII Mi 8:30 Plenarsaal

Reconciling the past and the present: The shared history of physicists and museums — ●MARTA C LOURENCO — Museums of the University of Lisbon/CIUHCT, Portugal

Each generation is responsible for selecting the limited number of objects that get to be preserved for the future, in museums, libraries and archives. These objects shape our understanding of the universe and ourselves and, in the long-term, determine our common heritage, history and identity.

Throughout the 20th century, physicists have played prominent roles in the creation of museums and science centres in Utrecht, Osaka, Montreal, Cambridge, Rio, Lisbon, and other locations across the world.

These museums covered not only physics but also astronomy, biology, mathematics and chemistry, and other fields. Moreover, physicists have been actively involved in creating *museums of influence* that changed the history of museums themselves, e.g. the Palais de la Découverte in Paris (1937), the Exploratorium in San Francisco (1969) and the CosmoCaixa in Barcelona (2004).

What motivates physicists to create museums? Is it a special interest in the past? Is it a desire to communicate science to broad audiences? Is it a desire to be remembered? In this talk, I will use examples to explore the relations between physicists and museums. I will also discuss old and new ways in which contemporary physicists continue to contribute to the preservation, study and public interpretation of our scientific heritage.