

The musealisation of migration between clichés and stereotypes: the presence of women in the MEI museum settings

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ABSTRACT

Who was the typical Italian emigrant? What does the public expect from the museum when we talk about emigration? The paper will illustrate how the exhibition of MEI aims to deconstruct clichés and stereotypes on Italian emigration and in particular on female emigration. Great attention is given to female migration in the past, highlighting how migration has influenced social dynamics both among emigrants abroad and those who did not leave, remaining in their countries.

Who is the typical Italian migrant today? Is he/she an emigrant or an expat? Which stereotypes continue to be present in the collective imagination?

In the second part of the paper, special attention will be given to young generations who have emigrated in the last twenty years, through testimonies reflecting on what it means to find a job, to make children and to build new relationships, to live away from their families and speaking and thinking in another language. The analysis of the testimonies reveals an approach to these issues partly still influenced by gender and class differences.

CV

Giorgia Barzetti is currently curator and coordinator of the MEI- Museo Nazionale dell'Emigrazione Italiana project and she works for the Mu.Ma- Institution of maritime and migration museums in Genoa. Since October 2020, she has contributed to the MEI project, which will be open to the public in 2022, coordinating research and exploitation of national cultural heritage linked to migration, through the use of new technologies.

In the three-year period 2017-2020 she was curator of the Mudec - Museum of Cultures in Milan, where she was responsible for the conservation and enhancement of ethnographic collections. She has also curated and organized several exhibitions, in particular those relating to the project "Milan City World" a multi-year project, which each year focuses on one of the many international communities living in Milan.

In the past she was a freelance researcher, working mainly on cataloguing and digitising historical artistic heritage.