



# DEM HIST BOARD RETREAT MADRID 25-27 APRIL 2025

HOSTED BY CERRALBO MUSEUM and  
organized by Cecilia Casas,  
Cerralbo Museum curator and  
DEM HIST Secretary



## WHY A RETREAT?

The aim of an on-site board meeting is to have the opportunity for **focused and isolated in-person work** for the members of the board. The dynamics of an in-person meeting allows for faster and more efficient work.

The local meeting also provides the **opportunity of networking** between the board and local DEMHIST individual and institutional members, as well as **professional visits** of interest for the board.



*Demhist board working session at Museo Cerralbo.*

## WHY CERRALBO MUSEUM?

The connection of the Cerralbo Museum to DEMHIST dates back to 2001, when a presentation on the projects of the Cerralbo Museum was made at the ICOM Barcelona 2001 Conference, and the Museum became an institutional member of ICOM closely linked to DEMHIST due to its nature as a house-museum.

Cerralbo Museum was the first Spanish museum (and within the scope of the Ministry of Culture) to be linked to DEMHIST and participate in the international house-museum categorization project led by Rosanna Pavoni (2003).

Its director, Carmen Jiménez, was the first Spanish museum technician to be part of the DEMHIST Board (2011-17), and Cecilia Casas, one of its curators, has been a member of the Board since 2020 and has held the position of Secretary since 2023.

Therefore, the Cerralbo Museum, an internationally renowned Spanish house-museum, has been linked to DEMHIST for nearly 25 years, making it the ideal host for this board member meeting.





## ON SITE PARTICIPANT BOARD MEMBERS

**Timna Seligman** – Chair.

Senior curator of Ticho House, Jerusalem (Israel).

**Roberto Andreu Quevedo** – Vice Chair. Director/curator of Museo de La Merced, (Guatemala).

**Milja Stijovic** – Vice Chair.

Senior curator, Yugoslav Film Archive, Belgrade (Serbia)

**Frank Louhenapessy** – Treasurer.

Chief Financial Officer, Museum Huis Doorn, Barn (Netherlands).

**Cecilia Casas Desantes** – Secretary.

Curator, Museo Cerralbo, Madrid (Spain).

**Caroline Gaillard** – Councilor.

Head of Visitor Studies, Palaces of Versailles and Trianon (France).

**Gianluca Kannes** – Councilor.

Researcher, Turin (Italy).



*Demhist board in the gardens of Palacio de Liria*

## ACCOMODATION

All the participants were kindly hosted at [Residencia de Estudiantes](#), a Spanish public institution under the auspices of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC). This was of special interest for the board due to its history as a residence for artists, intellectuals and researchers. The Board was able to visit its historical rooms dating from the early 20th Century.



*Board members returning to Residencia de Estudiantes*

## PROGRAM

### Friday, April 25.

After breakfast, we gathered on the enclosed porch at the **Residencia de Estudiantes** for our first board meeting session, where we received updates regarding the 2025 Special Project Grants, International House Museum Day, the ICOM Academy pilot project, and our outreach goals.



*Working session at Residencia de Estudiantes*

We then made our way to **Palacio Real**. Where we were met by researcher José Luis Sancho Gaspar, who gave us a fascinating tour through the hidden areas of the palace – both through the expansive royal kitchen areas below ground and the private rooms and apartments above the royal rooms that were used as a "town within the palace" for courtiers, high-level servants and their families.





In the afternoon, the board visited the **Palacio de Liria**, A private noble palace, including collections and gardens that are the property of Casa de Alba. Following major damage sustained during the Spanish Civil War, much of the house has been meticulously restored. Luckily, much of the collections had been put into safe keeping at the Prado and other public museums.



In the evening, **Museo Cerralbo** hosted a reception for the DEMHIST board. Here we were honoured to meet colleagues from house museums in Madrid and Spain, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Culture and ICOM Spain. This networking opportunity to build closer ties between the board and Spanish professionals was a major reason for the retreat, and a highlight of the weekend. The guests included Leticia Sastre, Subdirectora Adjunta de Museos Estatales; museum directors Enrique Varela, director of Museo Sorolla, Carolina de Miguel, director of Museo Nacional del Romanticismo, Pedro González, director of Museo Casa Cervantes de Valladolid, Cerralbo Museum director Carmen Jiménez Sanz and curator Ester de Frutos; ICOM Spain representatives Auxiliadora Llamas (Chair), Luis Pérez Armiño (Vicechair), Isabel Rey Fraile (Secretary) and Ophelia Leon, member of the ICOM International Committees Working Group.



*group photograph on the Museo Cerralbo Main Staircase.*

## Saturday, April 26.

Saturday was our main day for board discussions, held in a working space at **Museo Cerralbo**. We had two sessions, in the morning the central points of the meeting were the upcoming Open Talks (June 11-12, stay tuned for registration), budget updates and the DEMHIST response to the 4<sup>th</sup> round of consultation regarding the ICOM Code of Ethics. Board member Yvonne Ploum was able to join us online to lead the discussion that continued into our afternoon session.



Between the two sessions, we were able to visit the rooms of the Museo Cerralbo, one of the most important Spanish house museums due to its original late 19th Century interiors. It was opened as a museum through testamentary will in 1924 and is run by the Ministry of Culture. Here we ran into director Carmen Jimenez Sanz, and Cecilia Casas Desantes was able to show us her favourite objects and hidden corners. The museum is a veritable treasure trove of eclectic collections and period pieces.





We had lunch at La Charca restaurant, courtesy of Museo Cerralbo. From there, we then proceeded to the **Museo Nacional del Romanticismo**. One of the first house museums of Spain, it was created by the marquis of Vega Inclán in 1924 and dedicated to the Romantic period and is under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture. Here we were met greeted and guided by museum mediator Mayte Cano who brought the stories of the wonderful and unique 19th century collection to life for us.



*In the Museo Nacional del Romanticismo Library, with senior mediator Mayte Cano.*

The evening provided not just a wonderful culinary experience, but also one that satisfied our passion for historical buildings, as we dined in the **Casa Alberto** tapas bar and restaurant, an establishment that has been open since 1827! It will be a meal we will not forget – the restaurant staff were perfect hosts catering to our needs with a smile and classic service.





## Sunday, April 27.

On our final official morning in Madrid, we discovered that we were competing with the Madrid Marathon, but luckily, we were able to reach our destinations on foot or by going underground via the Metro.

A short walk from the Residencia de Estudiantes led us to **Museo Lázaro Galdiano**. Run as a public trust, this house museum has evolved into a fine arts museum with many masterpieces on display including works by Goya, Breughel, Memling, Bosch, and others. Of special interest were the visitable reserves on the upper floor.



From the Museo Lázaro Galdiano we went back in time to the oldest house museum we visited, the charming **Casa Museo Lope de Vega**. Home of the famous Golden Age of Spanish literature writer Lope de Vega. Today, the museum is run by Comunidad de Madrid. We were met by manager Victoria Cano and guided by Santiago Belda whose love and passion for all things Lope de Vega was clear in every word he spoke. It was fascinating to compare the interiors of this 16th century house with the lavish furnishings of the later houses we visited over the weekend.





## FINAL WORD

To summarize the DEMHIST Board Retreat – it was a perfect mixture of professional site visits and working sessions in which we were able to improve our working relations within the board and with our Spanish colleagues. Upcoming DEMHIST and ICOM projects were discussed and advanced, and we are now better prepared for the continued dedication needed to run the DEMHIST International Committee through 2025 and into the future.

We wish to express our gratitude to everyone who made the visit a success, especially the various museum directors, curators and guides who arranged our excellent tours: Palacio Real: Director of the Royal Collections Víctor Cagiao Santacruz, and researcher José Luis Sancho Gaspar; Palacio de Liria: Manager Álvaro Romero; Museo Nacional del Romanticismo: Director Carolina de Miguel Arroyo and mediator Mayte Cano; Museo Lázaro Galdiano: Director Begoña Torres; Museo Lope de Vega: Chief Lorena Delgado, manager Victoria Cano and guide Santiago Belda.

Our special thanks of course to our hosts at the Museo Cerralbo – Director Carmen Jiménez Sanz and our DEMHIST secretary and Cerralbo curator, Cecilia Casas Desantes.

Timna Seligman  
Chair, in the name of the DEMHIST Board



*Inspired by Abbey Road, the DEMHIST board Crossing Serrano Street to Museo Lázaro Galdiano.*