

“¡EL TANGO SERÁ POPULAR!”^A

TANGO WILL BE OF THE PEOPLE
- OR WILL BE NOTHING (A)

O NO SERÁ NADA

TANGO IS A FEELING THAT IS DANCED



In the XXI century, cultural policies of Buenos Aires, Argentina, contributed to the idea of the city as the 'Mecca of Tango': thousands of pilgrims from all over the world and the country travel every year to the city to experience this authentic cultural expression from La Plata River¹ - or the "Buenos Aires' soybean"², as the ex-president would say -, specially for the annual Tango Festival and World Championship. After a few legislative attempts³ to make it official, the cultural miracle culminated when UNESCO declared Tango as Cultural Heritage of Humanity from Buenos Aires City and Montevideo, Uruguay.

The top-down heritage activation process⁴ of Tango left the community aside from decisions and it became the manifestation of the symbolic power of the city and the country⁵

IS SHOWCASE COMMODITY?

Tango is now championship-paradigm and neo-liberal-tourism-policies-oriented, which provokes a dispute over the legitimacy, memory, transmission and recreation of this popular art⁶.



The COVID-19 crisis left the tango community unarmed, with no arms to embrace. Milongas - the dance halls - are shutting their doors one by one and artists are perishing the abstinence since it is the Tango's essence the anti-pandemic protocol⁷.

SMALL CLOSED SPACES, AGGLOMERATION OF PEOPLE, MUSIC, DANCE, POETRY, EMBRACE, BOHEMIA
= THE ANTI-COVID PROTOCOL



Although the Ministry of Culture offers the BA Milonga program, which implements mechanisms of protection and promotion of Milongas in the city,⁸ many artists are left without support nor labour rights⁹. The city's ombudsman is working to design a safety protocol for the return of activities for artists and to guarantee the cultural worker's rights¹⁰; however, the Tango Economy today still relies exclusively on governmental support, which makes the struggle historically cumbersome - especially with the political swings of governments that one moment supports Culture, and the next neglects it.

The Tango cries desperately for a sustainable model to emancipate itself by involving community participation, Tango institutions (such as the National Academia of Tango, museums, social organisations and cultural centres), the private sector and the international community since it is today a global, massive, urban and complex cultural manifestation¹¹. But above all things, the only way of making Tango sustainable is the community becoming able to co-plan with government actors and control the heritage and tourism processes, diversifying their revenues and managing issues related to the private market¹¹.

#EMERGENCIACULTURALBA

#CULTURALEMERCENCYBA

¡EL TANGO SERÁ SUSTENTABLE!

TANGO WILL BE SUSTAINABLE
- OR WILL BE NOTHING

O NO SERÁ NADA

¹ Morel, H 2013, 'Buenos Aires, la meca del tango: procesos de activación, megaeventos culturales, turismo y dilemas en el patrimonio local', *Publicar - Em antropología y ciencias sociales*, vol XI, n XV, pp. 57-76, <http://ppct.caicyt.gov.ar/index.php/publicar/article/view/2756>

² 'Macri named tango as the Buenos Aires' soybeans, and wanted to save it for tourists' 2010, *Radio Estación Sur*, 10 August, viewed 16 October 2020, <https://radioestacionsur.org/2019/05/07/quiero24/>

³ Legislature of Buenos Aires City 2003, Cultural Heritage of the City of Buenos Aires Bill 1227/2003
Legislature of Buenos Aires City 1998, Tango -Cultural Heritage of the City of Buenos Aires Bill 130/1998

⁴ Prats, L 2009, *Antropología y patrimonio*, 3rd edn, Editora Ariel, España, Barcelona.

⁵ Lacarriue, M 2013, 'Patrimonios de consenso/disenso: de la despolitización a la valoración política de los procesos de patrimonialización', *Boletín de Antropología*, Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, vol. 28, no. 46, pp. 79-99.

⁶ Morel, H 2009, 'El giro patrimonial del tango: políticas oficiales, turismo y campeonatos de baile en la ciudad de Buenos Aires', *Cuadernos de Antropología Social*, vol.30, pp. 155-172.

⁷ Centenera, M 2020, 'La pandemia deja sin tango las noches de Buenos aires', *El País*, 29 August, viewed 17 October 2020, <https://elpais.com/cultura/2020-08-29/la-pandemia-deja-sin-tango-las-noches-de-buenos-aires.html>

⁸ Ministry of Culture of Buenos Aires City 2020, Bamilonga, viewed 17 October 2020, <https://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/bamilonga>

⁹ 'El aislamiento desnuda la crisis de los trabajadores del tango' 2020, *Página 12*, 29 April, viewed 17 October 2020, <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/262378-el-aislamiento-desnuda-la-crisis-de-los-trabajadores-del-tan>

¹⁰ 'Trabajo conjunto con el sector del tango danza' 2020, Defensoría del Pueblo Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 24 September, viewed 19 October 2020, <http://www.defensoria.org.ar/noticias/trabajo-conjunto-con-el-sector-del-tango-danza/>

¹¹ Chair UNESCO of Cultural Tourism Untref-Aammba 2013, 'Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial, identidad y turismo. El Tango como expresión Rioplatense', Argentina, Buenos Aires, viewed 12 December 2016, http://www.turismoculturalun.org.ar/pdfs/Workshop_tango_espanol.pdf

A Popular saying in Argentina in defense of Tango as a popular cultural expression.

B Fileteado Porteño - A popular art genre typical from Buenos Aires City, declared Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in 2016. Often related to Tango artwork. Portrait of Carlos Gardel, the Godfather of Tango, and fileteado frame by Alfredo Genovese (<https://fileteado.com/>)

C Osvaldo Pugliese - famous musician and maestro of Tango. It is popularly called Saint Pugliese and said that his image and songs bring good luck. Fileteado artwork by Diego Martín Prenollio (<http://diegoprenollio.blogspot.com/>)