

¿Presentes? Whose (Hi)stories are included in a national exhibition.

This study analyzes opinions and reflections by a group of advanced heritage learners of Spanish after visiting the exhibition *¡Presente! A Latino History of the United States*, the first of its type at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, and which is promoted as the “first-ever exhibition” of the future National Museum of the American Latino. Throughout the exhibition and after it, students are encouraged and directed to observe, analyze, and reflect on aspects such as the choice of artifacts in display, the place and order in which they are in the gallery, the messages conveyed by labels in Spanish vs English, and other ones. After the visit, students write a reflective essay addressing their experience and observations and prepare an oral presentation on the importance of an artifact of their choice. A preliminary activity conducted in the fall of 2022 reveals that while appreciating the effort of this canonical institution to include a diversity of voices and experiences, students feel that some communities lack representation in the exhibition despite the promise of its name. As well, in their reflections, students show a deep awareness of the role of language in the formation, and (auto)perception of cultural and ethnic identity, and even challenge misconceptions regarding bilingualism and language contact in the United States.