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Museum and Young People

ABSTRACT:

This research has been conducted at the Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna in Rome with the goal of experimenting and evaluating new ways of visiting, specifically finalized for high school students.

The early stage of the research has been the collection and analysis of the data originating from the most important surveys, carried out on the relationship among school - youth - museum. It was followed by the record of schools' presence in the Galleria and the distribution of an interview addressed to the teachers from Rome and its province aiming at understanding how teachers approach the museum.

In the light of the outcome of the preliminary investigation, a dossier for teachers "What is a museum" has been fulfilled. The survey collects data in order to describe the ways in which teenagers approach museums and how a guided tour, held according to certain prerogatives, can modify their perception of the museum itself, but also to describe its impact in both cognitive and memory terms.

Three different questionnaires have been drawn up: the first one was administered before the beginning of the activities, the second one at the end of the museum visit, and the third one 15 days after the conclusion of the activities. Besides the questionnaires addressed to the students, an in-deep interview to teachers, to be held at the end of the scholastic year, was done.

Foreword

In a context in which the importance of museum's educational function is more and more strongly reaffirmed and the initiatives addressed to different categories of visitors increase, it is to register a substantial difficulty in reaching and involving a teenage audience. Such a tendency is further increased when the educational offer is focused on modern and contemporary artworks and collections, because of the widespread belief that ancient artworks should be more understandable than those of the present. One can think to high school students visiting museums and monuments: it is an often elusive audience reacting to the compulsory visit with indifference and boredom, boredom if not even trouble.

The research discussed throughout these pages has been carried out at the Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna with the goal of experimenting and evaluating new ways of visiting, specifically finalized for high school students, encouraging the acquisition and increase of knowledge and skills with learning methods typical of the museum, and stimulating the autonomous enjoyment of museums and cultural heritage¹.

1. The preliminary survey

The early stage of the research has analysed the context within which are set the museum's educational initiatives addressed to high school students, with a special reference to the context of the Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna of Rome. Therefore, the collection and analysis of the data originating from the most important surveys carried out on the relationship school – youth – museum² have been followed by the making of a reconnaissance of schools' demand for educational services through the record of schools presence in the Galleria in the s. y. 2006-2007 and the distribution of an interview addressed to the teachers from Rome and its province aiming at understanding how teachers approach the museum.

¹ The research has been carried out by the author in the field of the Ph.D. in Experimental Pedagogy, 22nd cycle 2007-2009, Department of Historical-Philosophical-Pedagogic Research, Sapienza University of Rome.

² See among others MARESCA COMPAGNA, A.A., BUCCI, E., DI MARCO, S.C. (Eds.) (1998). *I giovani e il museo. Indagine pilota sui giovani di 19-30 anni di età residenti in Campania e in Veneto*. Ministry for Cultural Goods and Activities, Department of Studies; ZAMMUNER, V.L., (2006). La fruizione museale: un'esperienza complessa di natura sociale, cognitiva ed emozionale. In C. Frateschi, M. Mistri (Eds.). *I valori dell'arte*, Roma: Carocci; *Musei giovani, Idee, progetti e passioni. I musei si muovono con te*, (Conference Proceedings), L. Longagnani (Ed.), Modena 24 novembre 2006, Modena: TEM 2007; BOLLO A. (Eds.) (2007). *I pubblici dei musei. Conoscenze e politiche*, Franco Angeli, Milano; Consumi culturali e creatività nelle politiche giovanili. linee di tendenze e prospettive. In R. Grossi (Ed.) (2007). *La cultura per un nuovo modello di sviluppo*, 4th Annual Federculture report, Torino: Allemandi Editore; ZERAFA G. (2000). *Teacher and Audience Investigation*, Canberra National Museum of Australia. For a quick review of the researches in this field cfr. FALK, J.H., DIERKING, L.D., FOUTZ, S., (Eds.) (2007), *In Principle, in Practice. Museums as Learning Institutions*, Plymouth, Altamira press, 33-34.

1.2 Schools in the Galleria

Schools always are one of the most represented categories of visitors in museums ever, nevertheless Italy lacks systematic surveys that can at least render the quantitative relevance of this phenomenon. The Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna represents an interesting case study from this point of view. It has been the first museum in Italy to establish - in 1946 - an «educational department» and to constantly promote guided tours and workshops for schools of different grades and stages. For much time these have been carried out by young out-house art historians co-ordinated and trained by an external responsible.

Following the enforcement of the so-called Legge Ronchey (1997) providing for the possibility of entrusting an out-house agent with the management of the «information and educational assistance services» these have been managed by different societies and/or cooperatives. Since 2007 the cooperative Coopculture has been instructed to conduct guided tours and workshops for schools and adult visitors. This activity interfaces with that of the in-house Educational Department, which, in addition to the supervision and control of the out-house agent, promotes initiatives for schools within the framework agreement MIBACT – MIUR of 2014³.

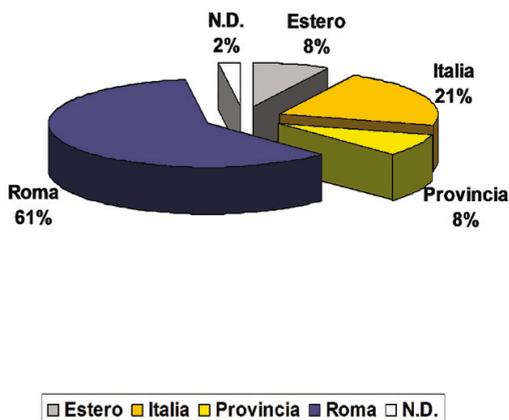


Fig. 1 – Schools' Geographical Origin

³ This framework agreement follows a previous one between the two Ministries of 1998, where the realization of educational experimentations related to cultural goods and planned through a partnership between schools and museums/*soprintendenze* was already provided for.

The schools presence in the Galleria has been recorded by letting the teachers accompanying classes fill out a form containing the following information:

1. School name
2. Type and grade of the class attended by the visiting youth
3. Number of students and couriers
4. Subject taught by the teacher accompanying the class
5. Visit theme (collection / temporary exhibitions)
6. Visit type (guided tour / workshop)

From the analysis of the record outcome it appears quite clearly that the Galleria is a privileged goal for scholastic tourism. The highest concentration of visits takes place during the months when educational trips are more frequent (March-April), and, above all, the percentage of non-Roman schools is quite high.

Moreover, the museum seems to be a privileged goal for high schools – 51% of the total – and among these, those including among the curricular subjects art history or similar matters. The data related to the subject taught by the accompanying teacher confirms the tendency to consider the museum as an educational resource strictly linked to the subject connected to collections typology, thus showing a poor aptitude for the construction of educational paths by using the museum's specificity and that of the objects there housed as instruments for interdisciplinary knowledge building and cross-skills acquisition.

The Galleria's most attractive element is its permanent collection towards which the great majority of the classes – 63% – heads, but also the tendency to arrive at the museum with the idea of visiting it all, without previously planning a possible visiting path corresponding to specific educational requirements, has been recorded.

Eventually, with regards to the type of visit the guided tour directly held by the teacher – 44% – prevails neatly, followed by that entrusted to out-house operators – 13% – while it is slightly relevant the presence of the out-house agent (7%)⁴. The preference for an autonomous visit can be justified by teachers' substantial distrust of operators often held to be young and inexperienced or by the difficulty for schools to commit financially to buying services⁵.

⁴ This survey has been carried out in the first year of franchise management and this could have been one of the reasons of the scanty incidence of proposals. Nevertheless, the impact of the activities carried out by the concessionary has been quite poor in the subsequent years.

⁵ According to the law, admittance for schools is free of charge at the Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna.

1.3 The teachers questionnaire: “The Museum as an Educational Resource”

The questionnaire was built up with the aim of knowing to what extent museum is an educational instrument, what are the most employed methods, what difficulties do teachers meet while including the activities to be held at the museum in their programming. Structured around 36 questions – mainly with closed answers – the questionnaire has investigated the following thematic areas:

1. Museum enjoyment within the school orbit;
2. Teachers participation into school and museum partnership projects and refresher courses concerning museum education;
3. Educational use of contemporary art museums;
4. Museum enjoyment by teachers while after-school;
5. Personal data.

The questionnaire has been handed out to a sample of 400 teachers on duty during the s.y.2007-2008 in the Municipality of Rome in different school grades. 385 questionnaires turned out to be valid⁶.

The data collected through the questionnaire give the cue to a reflection on the school and museum relationship after a long time of legal experimentation and innovation contributing to emphasizing museum’s educational role and the need to find effective ways of relating with schools and other educational agents.

The results of this survey seem to outline a scenario with still some dark zones, though, and the relationship between school and museum does not seem to be supported by actual forms of partnerships and exchange between the two institutions.

Teachers know museums and attend them during their spare time with a certain assiduity. Over 40% declare to visit museums often; nevertheless, this activity is held by the majority to be far from their professional context. Only a slight percentage of teachers declares to visit museums just for professional reasons – 7% – and still lower is the percentage of those

⁶The sample turned out to be made up of 98 primary school teachers, 96 from 1st grade high school, and 184 from 2nd grade high school. The choice to work only with teachers on duty in the Municipality of Rome has been determined by the consideration that it is the Galleria nazionale d’arte moderna’s territory of reference where the experimental survey takes place. The teachers to be submitted with the questionnaire have been selected on the basis of the location of the schools where they serve in. This sampling scheme is determined by the need to verify a research under-hypothesis according to which the schools located in the outskirts of the city are less willing to enjoy the museum as an educational resource.

having attended refresher courses pertaining to museums and/or museum education (6%).

Once at school over 50% of them brings their classes on a museum visit, thus implicitly acknowledging its educational value, mainly identified with the chance of expanding on disciplinary subjects, but also of promoting new ways of active learning and educating students to use a museum.

As to this point, the differences in the distribution of frequency in relation to the school grade could suggest some considerations. Particularly, if one considers the data according to which elementary school teachers more clearly identify the museum as a place where to experiment active forms of learning, while high school teachers are mostly linked to the museum as a possibility to develop disciplinary knowledge.

One could suppose that such a different approach could derive from the specificity of the two different school orders. In the primary school the «enhancement in the educational programming of cultural and environmental resources of the territory and the structures operating on it» has been ruled by law in 1985⁷ and is still reaffirmed in the *Indicazioni per il curricolo per la scuola dell'infanzia e per il primo ciclo d'istruzione* (2007)⁸. In the high school, on the contrary, the chance to use the cultural heritage as an educational resource is almost exclusively entrusted to the possibility of an openness towards the territory and the cultural institutions operating on it provided for by the so-called «school autonomy»⁹. Moreover, the strong disciplinary compartmentalization characterizing high schools can act as a deterrent to the planning of activities of education to museum and heritage, like also shown by the answers on the reasons preventing from the museum visit. In this case, too, the difference between various school grades is still quite noticeable. As to elementary school teachers, one does not go or goes little to the museum because of practical reasons (costs, displacement, bureaucratic issues), while for high school teachers curricular deadlines are the main obstacle.

High school teachers, more than those of other grades, still indicate with a higher percentage a preference for the autonomous guided tour, just because in that case the visit strengthens the knowledge learned in

⁷ Ministry of Public Education, dPR (Decree of the President of the Republic) 12th February 1985, *Approvazione dei nuovi programmi didattici per la scuola primaria* (Approval of the New Educational Programmes for Primary School).

⁸ Ministry of Public Education, Directive No. 68, 3rd August 2007.

⁹ Cfr. Ministry of Public Education, dPR (Decree of the President of the Republic) No. 275, 25th February 1999, *Regolamento in materia di autonomia delle istituzioni scolastiche* (Regulation on the Subject of Local Management of Schools).

class. The requirement for a close correlation between disciplinary subjects and museum visits seems to find further confirmation in the increase in visits to museums and exhibitions by lyceum and art secondary schools with respect to other high school types. That was probably a need poorly considered by those who – in the museums – deal with the planning of educational activities for schools and is one of the critical elements of the relationship between school and museum. The correlation between disciplinary subjects and museum visits is generally conceived as a coincidence of topics – one studies the Renaissance and then goes to visit the Uffizi – less easily a museum can offer itineraries and activities that, starting from the specificity of the objects it keeps, can suggest the teacher a way of working by appealing to the skills of examining, describing, comparing, assuming, and classifying information, that can be applied to the different disciplinary fields.

Actually, the preference granted to guided tours¹⁰, although the effectiveness of this instrument has been questioned by pedagogues and museum education experts in the last few years, seems to confirm the teachers' poor awareness of the museum specificity as a place where to activate active learning processes based on knowledge building from the direct examination of objects set in an environment different from the classroom¹¹.

On the other hand the lack of a specific preparation on these topics is one of the critical points emerging from this survey and the poor consideration of the museum's educational role seems to last even nowadays in teacher's educational proposals. Up to now the educational paths for future teachers – the TFA, *tirocini formativi attivi* (active formative trainings) – provide only occasionally and in a marginal way some specific initiatives of formation to museum education.

This does not mean that teachers do not take the museum into account while carrying out their activity – just the opposite – and not only because after all they go there quite frequently, but also because if we go back and read their answers to the question on the main goal of the visit, we realize that collecting the answers «to make cultural heritage known» and «to encourage museum attendance» we reach a percentage of over 23%

¹⁰ It is to be remembered that the possible answers to the question on the educational intervention held to be the most effective included, among others, three different ways of guided tours: carried out by the class teacher, carried out by the operator, carried out with the help of information cards or other structured materials.

¹¹ The main critic to the traditional guided tour is justified by its being – very often – a standing lesson where the student is asked anything more than putting into practice his/her skills in listening and comprehension of oral discourse.

of the total. It seems, consequently, that teachers hold education to the knowledge of the cultural heritage and to museum attendance to be one of school's duties. This is what really happens, in fact. Many other surveys on museum visitors reveal, for instance, that for the majority of people the first – and sometimes – only intermediary for museums and exhibitions visits is represented by school.

The proposals on the museums part joined in that context, ending up to determine a widening in the offer to which the school has addressed itself mostly considering them a sort of catalogue to attain to in order to increase its own educational proposals – more in terms of quantity than quality – but without managing to create a real integration between the educational proposals from the classroom and the specificity of education «from» the cultural goods.

The recent reform named of the «good school» introduces some important innovations: if it is true that the request for re-introducing and increasing the hours dedicated to art history in high schools had no consequence, nevertheless museums and cultural heritage more in general are acknowledged as a strategic educational resource, and this is why schools and teachers are invited to carry out partnership projects with the cultural institutions on the territory. Besides, specific measures are taken for teachers' education and updating¹².

2. The survey issue

The issue out of which the survey has started is the need to describe the effectiveness of the educational activities addressed to high schools students carried out within a modern and contemporary art museum in relation with two targets:

1. To acquire and improve knowledge and skills related to a specific content through learning ways typical of museum reality;
2. To build up the enjoyer's skills by spurring the spontaneous enjoyment of the museum and cultural heritage.

In the light of the outcome of the preliminary investigations and on the basis of what described in the reference literature the survey issue has been submitted in the following terms:

1. What instruments can the museum offer to help teacher's work and students' learning?

¹² Law of 13th July 2015, No. 107.

2. Considered the most widespread instrument, how can the guided tour be structured so to be effective both for learning and stimulating spontaneous fruition?

3. Structure and carrying out of the survey

In order to answer to the first question a dossier for the teachers has been worked out: *Che cos'è un museo. La Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna. (What is a museum. The Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna)*. The aim was to work out an instrument easily usable even by the less experienced teachers, capable of combining the need to give information and widening on the visit theme and to suggest working methods appropriated to museum realities¹³. Consequently, a method of conducting guided tours has been worked out curing the formation of the operator giving all the guided tours.

The survey has involved 11 schools, selected on the basis of a judgmental sampling considering the school's location with regard to the museum, the relevance of art history teaching in the course of studies and the students' level of age. The museum tour carried out by the operator was supported by the activities held in class by the teachers before and after the visit¹⁴.

3.1 The research instruments

Since this survey intends to collect data in order to describe the ways in which teenagers approach museums now and how a guided tour, held according to certain prerogatives, can modify their perception of the museum itself, but also to describe its impact both in cognitive and memory terms, it has been considered that a questionnaire to be submitted in different moments of the experimentation could be the most appropriate instrument. Three different questionnaire have been drawn up, therefore: the first one to be submitted before the beginning of the activities, the second one at the end of the museum visit, and the third one at about a distance of 15

¹³ The dossier is downloadable from the museum website <www.gnam.beniculturali.it> (last access 15.10.2015) and is structured according the following items: 1. Goals 2. Path presentation 3. Visit preparation 4. Path of the visit 5. Ways how to carry out the visit 6. Activity of consolidation of the museum visit in relation to educational *curricula*.

¹⁴ The final sample is made up of 11 schools: 3 art school, 3 *lyceum* schools, 3 professional schools with art history teaching, 2 technical schools where art history is not taught.

days after the activities conclusion. Besides the questionnaires addressed to the students involved in the experimentation, also an in-deep interview for teachers has been drawn up, to be held near the end of the scholastic year.

To define the contents and to construct the items the most common indicators employed to evaluate the impact of museum learning have been referred to, selecting the most appropriate to the type of activity and audience examined.

With reference to the aim of the visit, the indicators employed are:

1. Knowledge of specific themes:
 - Form and function of an art museum, collections care and management, temporary exhibitions, permanent collection, setting-up, activities for the audience, professionals involved in the museum activities
 - The establishment of the Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna within the political context of Post-Unification Italy
2. Understanding of ideas and concepts:
 - Setting-up as a narration of the relationship between museum and artworks (grasping and explaining the relations between the different elements on the diachronic and synchronic axis)
 - Evolution of form and function of an artwork through different historical moments
 - Meaning and role of museums and cultural heritage in contemporary society
3. Other skills:
 - Spatial orientation
 - Observation skills
 - Description skills
 - Ability to infer
4. Change in aptitudes and values:
 - Museum perception
5. Evident signs of liking, inspiration, and creativity:
 - Liking of the guided tour
 - Perception of its goal and specificity

3.2 The main results

Even though with proper prudence owing to the descriptive type of the survey and to the sample's scantiness¹⁵, this research has provided some

¹⁵ The valid questionnaires have been: 452 for the entrance one, 432 for the post-visit one, and 378 for the fall-out one.

data of sure interest. Generally speaking, the structure of the tour has met a remarkable agreement on the students' part who appreciated the contents and the participative quality.

I liked the way how the guided tour was held	a.v.	%
Not at all	6	1,4
Little	10	2,3
Quite	124	28,6
Much	294	67,7
Total	434	100

But the connection with the activities carried out in class has less evidently been caught.

The museum visit helps me with my schoolwork making it more interesting	a.v.	%
Not at all	19	4,4
Little	99	22,8
Quite	201	46,3
Much	115	26,5
Total	434	100

This limitation clearly occurs back again in the answers given by teachers during their interviews: «The immediate impact – claims a teacher from a professional school – was extremely positive, they were excited, the visit was beautiful, but is like a window that opens and immediately closes [...]» because, like a teacher from a scientific lyceum claims, «experience must be included in an educational path of which it forms a moment».

It is interesting to associate these data with the answers given by students to the entrance questionnaire where, among other things, one can infer that school is very often, still, the only medium to draw the youngster closer to the museum.

How many times and with whom have you visited a museum in the last 10 years?						
	Never	From 1 to 5	From 5 to 10	Over 10	Does not answer	Total
Alone	69,0%	11,5%	1,3 %	1,8%	16,4%	100
With my family	26,3%	36,9%	11,3%	14,2%	11,3%	100
With the school	2,7%	43,4%	30,5%	18,6%	4,9%	100
With my friends	50,2%	23,0%	6,6%	4,9%	15,3%	100

And museums' spontaneous enjoyment is connected to the social and cultural context of origin:

Family's cultural level	None	From 1 to 5	From 5 to 10	Over 10	Does not answer	Total
High	39,8	27,3	8,1	11,8	13,0	100
Medium - high	56,3	18,3	6,3	1,4	17,8	100
Medium - low	56,0	28,0	2,7	-	13,3	100
Total	50,2	23,0	6,6	4,9	15,3	100

It follows a vision often equating museum to classroom: 46% of the sample indicates education and formation as museum's specific goal, while only 17% consider it as place for pleasure, too. Further confirmation to that idea is suggested by the answers to the question asking to indicate to what idea of museum – among those listed here below – they felt closer:

«In a Museum, the beautiful works become, for the arts and for the nation, schools from which art lovers can learn notions, artists can make useful observations, and the audience receive some right ideas». (Diderot and D'Alembert's Encyclopédie)

«Museums are the shelter of old age, illness, and death» (Jean Grenier)

«Museum is the house of collectivity's dreams» (Walter Benjamin)

In that case, too, how it can be inferred by the chart below, museum

perception as a place for education assimilable to classroom is very evident:

What is the museum definition that gets closer to your idea of museum?		
	a.v.	%
Encyclopédie	253	56,0
Jean Grenier	61	13,5
Walter Benjamin	127	28,1
Does not answer	11	2,4
Total	452	100

This attitude that we could define «conservative» is mirrored in the answers to the question about their preference among the artworks by Canova, Pascali, and Boccioni housed at the GNAM¹⁶.

The majority of students chooses Canova with explanations ranging from «it's more beautiful» to its easy understanding and the appreciation of its technical execution. Those who choose Pascali catch its ironic side, the impulse to go beyond the first impact, and, moreover, it reminds them of cartoons. For nowadays teenagers, in fact, dinosaurs are part of their childhood imagination, and probably because the theme and the form reminds them of a part of their life, *Dinosauro dorme* attracts them more than a work like *Antigrazioso* by Boccioni, indicated as favourite only by 11% of the sample, especially with justifications linked to its «oddity».

What are your favourite artworks among the following?		
	a.v.	%
Ercole e Lica	251	64,4
Dinosauro dorme	96	21,2
Antigrazioso	51	11,3
Does not ansie	14	3,1
Total	452	100

¹⁶ The three artworks have been chosen being representative of three different ways of approaching art making: Canova for the perfection of form and the technical skills, Boccioni for provocation, and Pascali for game and irony.

Conclusions

The survey on teenagers, school, and museum about which is given summarily account here intended to disclose some aspects of this triangulation: to what point school, and, particularly, high school, is interested in museums? Why are nowadays students not able to appreciate a visit to the museum? Are there any instruments and working methods that can not only positively involve the youth, but also contribute to their educational process? The research field is limited to the school and museum relation; the considerations coming out of it show the consequence of this perspective. The learning carried out at the museum is a free learning in itself, but in the case of the school visit, in order to be effective – and this is clearly demonstrated by this research – it has to be included into a structured educational path.

Schools go to the museum, but they often go there carelessly. The data on school presence at the GNAM tell us that schools, particularly high schools, go with a certain frequency to the museum – more the lyceum than the technical and professional schools – but since to go often to the museum is not possible, the wish to visit it all prevails, with unavoidable negative effects on the possibility for students to appreciate, remember and learn something from the visit. Other critical elements emerge from teachers' questionnaire: the difficulty, mostly in high schools, to participate into the initiatives offered by the museum because of the pressure of scholastic deadlines, and the poor disposition to imagine museum as an instrument to be used crosswise, and not only by the teachers of the addressed disciplines for exclusively curricular widening.

Museums' proposals are presented to schools like a sort of rich and captivating catalogue, and the presence of services agents in museums – obviously careful to the economic and financial aspects – has made this tendency more evident. The lack, on teachers' part, of specific education to the use of museum at school is equally evident. The tendency is then that to «rely on» the museum, choosing among pre-packed activities, without intervening to turn the visit into a moment of structured educational path, or bringing the class on one's own and proposing, in most cases, a frontal lesson on the themes previously dealt with in class. The educational issue does not concern only teachers, but also museum operators. In the last few years – thanks to the renewed attention to museums not only as places for artworks conservation, but careful and interested in their audience – courses have increased with the purpose, on various levels, to form museum education operators. The professional figures of Responsible for

Educational Services and educational operators are described in many repertories and recognized as essential within museums. Nevertheless, they hardly find their own identity and location.

And how much do teenage students attend the museum and how they perceive it? What are their ideas about art? Teenagers go to the museum with their school, often the only medium to come into contact with cultural institutions, but school can almost do anything to encourage a spontaneous attendance of the museum. The figures of this survey are quite clear and supported by other surveys. The youth going to the museum beyond the school visit do that out of family habit, because of their social and cultural background. But that is not all; to go to the museum with the school and, more, to attend it in ways comparable to classroom ones influences the perception of it. In their imagination museum is an authoritative institution where one goes to learn, because – like many answered – «it is right» or «it is good for you». Only a slight percentage thinks that the museum can be associated to an emotional dimension of pleasure; the artworks kept there are there, according to the majority of the sample, for their historical value and not for their aesthetical one. On the contrary, modern theories on museum learning do emphasize much the importance of the emotional dimension in the experience of collections visit. Such a museum vision, that we could define «prescriptive» is mirrored by the opinions on figurative art. The attraction for classical, beautifully executed, production prevails neatly, and maybe not only for the traditional preconception making people cry out in front of a contemporary artwork «I can do that, too!», but because art, like museums, is a serious thing and has to be considered as such.

This survey, though, demonstrates that something can be done by renewing the tool-box, and no spectacular initiatives are needed. The path “*Che cos'è un museo. La Galleria nazionale d'Arte moderna*” has aroused students' interest and curiosity. All the guided tours have been very much attended; both teachers and students appreciated their content and the way of holding them. The great majority of the sample has declared to want to go back again to the museum beyond the school visit, and some of them, for sure, did it. The data from the final questionnaire seem to indicate that something changed both in museum perception and new knowledge acquisition, as well as application of different skills and abilities. Obviously, one must proceed with extreme caution in the use of these data, both because the survey was carried out on the basis of one and only museum visit and the high sample number does not enable a huge generalization. Last but not least, the descriptive nature of the survey did not

allow to collect enough data to determine the occurred acquisition of new skills in a rigorous, scientific way. On the contrary, having worked with a varied sample as to kind of schools and of social and cultural contexts of origin allows to determine how these variables affect the visit's effectiveness, instead. A last consideration concerns the importance of the relation between school and museums. Even though well prepared and agreeable, a museum visit must be shared with teachers and become part of a particular educational path in order to have positive effects on learning.

Under this perspective the recent regulatory innovation involving both the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism and the Ministry of Education provide new instruments that can favour the building of educational paths putting the museum and the cultural heritage at the centre. The National Plan for Education to Cultural Heritage that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism has been called to follow up yearly, starting from this year on, and the acknowledgement of the role of cultural heritage in citizen's education often appealed to in the recent school reform, if applied properly can contribute to the construction of a real partnership between school and museum.