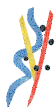


# THE ROLE OF THE MUSEUM IN THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG ADULTS MOTIVATION, EMOTION AND LEARNING

Edited by  
STEFANO MASTANDREA and FRIDANNA MARICCHIOLO



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Stefano Mastandrea, Fridanna Maricchiolo

## *Introduction*

Museums are often described as informal means of learning, with the potential to offer different kinds of knowledge, from art to history, from science to technology (Bartels & Hein, 2003; Nardi, 2004).

The literature concerning museum visitor studies has shown that there may not be much of an attraction in these temples of culture for adolescents and young adults. In the USA in 2008, a large-scale survey on public participation to different cultural events reported that only the 12.9% of Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 years visited at least one museum during the previous year (Williams & Keen, 2009). In Germany, about the 23% of young people between 15 and 25 years reported visiting at least one museum of art, science, or history during the previous 12 months of the survey (Kirchberg, 1996). These findings have been confirmed by other data around the world: in France, people between 15 and 24 years corresponded to about 15% of visitors (Lemerise, 1999); in Australia and New Zealand, art museum visitors between 20 and 29 years were the 26% of the population (Mason & McCarthy, 2006). These results suggest that in different parts of the world, museums do not attract very many young people.

There are a number of reasons that may explain this lack of interest. Young adults often see museums as a place for old people, more focused on the past, while their interests and needs are more oriented to the present and the future (Shrapnel, 2012). What often leads this group to attend a museum is not real interest, but a mere curiosity or 'duty' that forces them to take part in an experience. Without being accompanied by a genuine desire, attendance is related to attitudes of indifference (Bartlett & Kelly, 2000). Many young people would make the equation museum = school; both are places to acquire knowledge regarding a great number of subjects (art, science, history, anthropology, etc.). Regarding the learning

process, it might be difficult for them to distinguish museum from school; the risk is that museums are seen as an addition to their learning workload and therefore look very unattractive and boring.

Bearing in mind all of these explanations, it is important to verify the interest manifested by young adults towards museums. For these reason an international research project has been funded and based at the University of Roma Tre (coordinated by Stefano Mastandrea). The first aim was to create an international network of researchers interested in discussing and working around the topic of museum fruition by young adults. The group was constituted by scholars of nine different Countries: Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Taiwan, and the USA. Once the researchers group was established, the purpose was to create a survey on a large scale to investigate attitudes, motivations, personality traits, emotions and learning processes regarding the museum visits experience. After a deep discussion among researchers a questionnaire articulated in two parts was created; the first regarding socio-demographic variables: art education training, parents school diploma and profession; the second part covering the experience of museum visit with particular reference to motivation, personality traits, attitudes, emotional experience and learning processes.

The questionnaire was translated in the language of each participating Countries (Chinese, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, and Portuguese). Participants of the research was made up by a sample of undergraduate university students of different non art or architecture Faculties in order to avoid participants with a high level training in art. Participants were recruited from the Faculties of psychology, sociology and education. The questionnaire was administered in two modalities: paper and pencil (delivering the questionnaire to several groups of participants) and on line through the LimeSurvey system.

An international congress was organized in October 2013 in Rome by the Department of Education and the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology of the University of Roma Tre. All the international partners of the project participated presenting the findings of each single research unit. The first part of the congress was held at the Department of Education and the second part at the National Gallery of Modern Art of Rome. The data and findings presented at the congress constitute the chapters of this proceedings book.

We would like to thank all the partners from the different Countries who participated in this research project: Jo Chiung-Hua Chen (National Taiwan Normal University), Joao Frois and Carolina Silva (Lisbon University, Portugal), Hana Gottesdiener, Jean-Christophe Vilatte and

Pierre Vignaud (University of Paris Ouest Nanterre-La Défense, Paris, France), Holger Hoege (University of Oldenburg, Oldenburg, Germany), Aniko Illes and Peter Bodor (Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest, Hungary), Helmut Leder (Department of Psychological Basic Research, University of Vienna, Austria), Paul Locher (Montclair State University, New Jersey, USA), Pablo Tinio (Queens College of the City University of New York, New York, USA), Lisa Smith and Jeff Smith (College of Education, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand). The Italian research team of the Department of Education of the University of Roma Tre was composed by Gabriella Bartoli, Giuseppe Bove, Lorenzo Cantatore, Giuseppe Carrus, Daniela Marella, Fridanna Maricchiolo, Stefano Mastandrea, Paola Perucchini, Alberto Quagliata. Moreover we wish to thank Maria Mercedes Ligozzi (Visitors Department, Galleria Nazionale di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea of Rome) and Stefania Vannini (Education Department, Museo delle Arti del XXI secolo - MAXXI, Rome).

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Gabriella Bartoli

*Psychological Research on Museum*

ABSTRACT:

The talk presents the historical events at the origin of the cross-cultural research conducted recently by a group of psychologists at Roma Tre University. GNAM and MAXXI – the two contemporary art museums in Rome where part of the scientific works are held – are described in some of their peculiarities, that is to say urban position, architectural structure, interior design, human resources. It is underlined that a complex network of factors contributes to promote functional visiting itineraries, with regard to purposes of aesthetic fruition as well as of wider educational impact.

I enjoy following up Emma Nardi's speech, as it allows me to recall the far-away origins of a research work, which brought us to this two-day seminar/congress.

I had recently arrived in Rome, at the half of the Nineties', as a teacher of General Psychology in the former Pedagogy degree in Roma Tre, when two pedagogy colleagues – Benedetto Vertecchi and Emma Nardi – asked me to contribute to their specialization course in Museum Didactics, describing the cognitive processes (perception, in particular) implied in the museum fruition. The interest leading our group to develop research in this field, especially on Art museums, was born.

We are now gathering in the headquarters of the Department of Education; showing a great sensitivity and scenic intelligence, Stefano Mastandrea thought of bringing us to the GNAM (National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, collecting works from the XVIII and XIX century) tomorrow afternoon, and then to the MAXXI (National Museum of the XXI century Arts) on Saturday morning.

GNAM and MAXXI are two very different places, though both extremely evocative, even because of the environment characteristics which distinguish them.

In the first case, we face an eclectic building, designed by the architect/engineer Cesare Bazzani (Fig. 1); inaugurated in 1911 for the Universal

Exposition, it is surrounded by the park of Valle Giulia and can count on such good neighbours as the Etruscan Museum of Villa Giulia, various cultural institutes and one of the Architecture Departments of Rome.



Fig. 1 – The Façade of the Galleria Nazionale di Arte Moderna, Rome

In the second case, the building designed by Zaha Hadid in 1998 and inaugurated in 2010 rises up in the former Montello Barracks area, of which it maintains some pavilions, and is aptly integrated beneath the houses of the Flaminio district, which are reflected in the mirror-windowpanes of the protrusive top of the building (Fig. 2).

These two evocative places, in their peculiar exterior façade, seem to anticipate the pleasure of the following fruition; the one with its reach decoration, overlapping the harmonic neoclassic elements; the other with its dry and intriguing dissymmetry. At least so it would appear to well-disposed observers.

And yet, we know how long-standing and inconclusive the problem which is the core of this Congress is, that is how to foster and potentiate one of the main functions of a Museum – the educational one – in young people, who seem widely indifferent, uninterested, or at least superficial in their fruition capability.

Some of the factors that explain this phenomenon have been long indicated. Among them, the fact that past relics, if perceived in «static», «solemn», «enumerative» contexts, do not speak easily to the young; in fact, they do not speak at all, remaining «silent», as Claudio Strinati (former superintendent of the Rome museum pole) underlined many years ago. Alas, this phenomenon still occurs, to the shame of the different

devices conceived and enacted by the specialist didactics during the last decades. Most times, current observations on museums attendance on the side of young people give us an alarming picture of the situation.



Fig. 2 – The MAXXI museum by Zaha Hadid, Rome

The researchers gathered here today will tell us how much this phenomenon has a bearing today, on the basis of recent data, collected systematically during 2012-2013 in different countries in various parts of the world.

Now, in contributing to the opening of the works, I'd like to mention two women who have both worked much to promote and present avant-garde visual artists in the best way: Palma Bucarelli and Zaha Hadid. Both contributed – each according to their own role – to making the above mentioned museums open and vital spaces.

Palma Bucarelli, an art historian, was appointed superintendent of the GNAM in 1941 (in the middle of World War II); and how did she start her mandate? By secretly transferring the works of the gallery to Palazzo Farnese in Caprarola (province of Viterbo, Lazio region), to save them from the dangers of the war.

We remind her for the tenaciousness, the insightfulness and the bravery she showed in over thirty years of activity, in selecting and proposing artists



who were by the time profound innovators, and who, precisely for this reason, run up against the darts and arrows of a certain post-war conservative culture in Italy. So, despite everything, she introduced Picasso in 1953, Mondrian in 1956, Pollock in 1958, Burri in 1959, Manzoni in 1971.

She was equally capable in organizing advertising to campaign which regularly corresponded a great success of public; not to mention the fashion shows hosted in the Gallery (Cantatore, 2010; Petrignani, 2012).

We come now to the Hadid's merits: she created an architectural structure that holds requisites of both high aesthetic value and great functionality. A structure which mesmerizes for its expressive power, but at the same time give to people venturing in an initial sense of displacement, due to the peculiar development of its internal paths: circular, upward and labyrinth-like. A displacement feeling that, however, gradually turns into an impression of accessing a different dimension from everyday life: the dimension of aesthetic delight. In pre-organizing the access to the aesthetic dimension, the very same experience of wandering without a destination is extremely efficacious (Figg. 3-5): a visiting path that is not economical, but stimulates curiosity and the will to explore (Zaha Hadid Architects, 2009).

Now it is time for Stefano Mastandrea, the coordinator of the cross cultural research, to introduce the topic; personally, I am much grateful to him for embracing, together with his collaborators, the heritage of a twenty-years commitment that brought us to the current accomplishment.



Fig. 3 – The interior of the MAXXI



Fig. 4 – The interior of the MAXXI with the black stair



Fig. 5 – The interior of the MAXXI with a dance performance

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Alberto Quagliata, Lavinia Bianchi<sup>\*</sup>

## *Art in Learning Process*

### ABSTRACT:

In learning processes, the affective-relational aspect plays a strategic role of no less importance than the cognitive sphere. The traditional education offerings of schools and, even more, universities, very often neglect the necessary integration between these aspects.

Art, in its various forms and its many languages, can promote motivation, interest, participation and passion in the learner and can be an effective element of connection between “the reasoning of the heart and the reasoning of the mind”. The art languages are characterized by an uninterrupted flow of images, awesomeness, references, open-mindedness which predisposes to meta-learning, a crucial resource for the global education.

A network connecting von Foerster, Van Gogh, Bateson and Frida Kahlo stems from narration about art, ethics, therapy, science and political activism.

«Imagination is more important than knowledge generally. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand»

Albert Einstein

### *Introduction*

In learning process, the affective-relational setting plays a strategic role, no less important than the cognitive one: the traditional educational organizations, schools and even more universities, very often neglect the necessary integration between these two settings. The construction of knowledge sets both the cognitive and the emotional sphere in a mutual, virtuous relationship: the emotional uninterrupted, analogic, iconic, evocative

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<sup>\*</sup> Alberto Quagliata wrote *Introduction* and *Art and learning*; Lavinia Bianchi wrote *Bateson, Picasso, Matisse, Van Gogh and Frida Kahlo*.

approach of the narrative thought well integrates itself with the rational, digital, mathematical, operational approach of the logical thought.

The art languages are characterized by an uninterrupted flow of images, solicitations, references, open-mindedness which predisposes to *meta-learning*, a crucial resource for the global education; in the preface of *Learning how to learn* (1984), Gowin and Novak write: «for almost a century students of education have suffered under the yoke of the behavioural psychologists, who see learning as synonymous with a change in behaviour. We reject this view and observe instead that learning by human leads to a change in the meaning of experience [...] behavioural psychology and much of currently popular “cognitive science” neglects the significance of feelings. Human experience involves not only thinking and acting but also feelings».

### *Art and learning*

Socio-cultural Constructivism and the Complexity theory encourage teachers and educators – being responsible for learning process – to overcome the cartesian dichotomies. The separation between different branches of knowledge – the cartesian assumption about an original separation between body and mind, reason and heart, biology and culture, genetic and learned – is doomed to fail as a methodological approach.

Day after day, *liquid modernity* increases uncertainties and expectations of change and, at the same time, in a planetary vision, requires an in-depth imagination of new worlds to live, as well as of new lives and individualities: the morinian idea of «subject as a system» points to a new definition of the «subject», to its responsibility towards himself, all the human beings and the entire ecology of the living creatures. Pascal writes:

«The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know. We feel it in a thousand things. I say that the heart naturally loves the Universal Being, and also itself naturally, according as it gives itself to them; and it hardens itself against one or the other at its will. You have rejected the one and kept the other. Is it by reason that you love yourself?»

In its various expressions and languages, art can promote motivation, interest, participation and passion in learners: art is an effective way to trigger significant achievements. The idea of significant learning, introduced by Ausubel (1978), was ignored by behavioral psychology, ruling at that time; thanks to the biologist Nowak and to his research team, the Ausubel's idea of knowledge was re-evaluated and got a planetary notoriety, through the

instrument of the concept maps.

The idea of significant learning states that knowledge starts from the integration of new concepts with already conceived ones and from the original synthesis that creates meaning: this synthesis allows to link new information to that already known through new relations and new relations of relations.

Disch writes: «Creativity is the ability to see relationships where none exist».

There are three necessary conditions for the relationship creation:

1. learning goals must have an internal coherence in order to encourage the cognitive, emotive, affective and creative aspects of each representation;
2. the learner is endowed with a cognitive structure containing previous information which can be linked with new information through similitude, analogy or continuity;
3. the learner is motivated to relate his cognitive structure with new information, so that new knowledge takes a psychological meaning.

Within this process, the logic-rational and the analogic-intuitive thinking alternate: thanks to the flow, the *creative flow*, recurrent events and sudden swings take place. The *creative flow* is characterized by several elements (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996):

4. great inner lucidity about what to do and the how to get it;
5. the awareness of being suitable for the aim;
6. serendipity;
7. the lack of temporal perception, and a strong focusing on the present;
8. the awareness of intrinsic motivation, as every result of the flow is inspiring in itself;
9. a condition of ecstatic perception which leads us out of our daily awareness;
10. a total involvement in what we are doing, to activating our maximum concentration.

Gardner (2006) asserts that the «aim of education is not to give a conclusive answer, but to promote knowledge without deleting mystery and the ability to wonder».

Art is astonishment: through an artistic experience, learning is enlivened, built and shared.

In *Five Minds for the Future* (2006), Gardner locates five necessary attitudes (disciplinary mind, synthesizing mind, ethical mind, creative mind and respectful mind) for the education of the future, an education which



is aware of having to gear the interdependence-world with peaceful and respectful society. In his book, Gardner assumes a prescriptive and militant point of view, going further the mere description; his ethic aim is significant: «in the description of mind one cannot avoid an examination of values».

In Art there are many examples of synthesizing mind, such as Filippo Lippi's frescoes in the Santa Maria Assunta Cathedral in Spoleto. In this extraordinary artistic decoration, Lippi tells *The story of Mary*, skillfully employing the architectural structure of the choir to highlight global vision of the scene. The sequence of the frescoes represents, from left to right, the Virgin's life: Annunciation, Death, Nativity and Coronation, which is painted on the apsidal semi-dome.



Fig. 1 – Cathedral of the Assumption of St. Mary in Spoleto, Italy (1466)

In the psycho-pedagogical sphere, there are many authors who treat about passionate argumentations for the creation of a radical rethinking of our educational system in order to cultivate creativity and aesthetics: the sociologist and philosopher Bourdieu, for example, did not restrict his own research to the «Sociology of Literature», but he went much further in order to create a general theory of the «symbolic store» in society: art and literature are significant part of that «store».

Many important scholars of pedagogy, such as Bruner, Dewey and

Montessori, have highlighted the importance of art in education, making it closer to contemporaneity and to the social approach to knowledge.

In the video *Changing Education Paradigms*<sup>1</sup>, Robinson strongly criticizes the purely factual knowledge system of schooling, which he considers anesthetizing and stigmatized and thus contributing to creating stigmatized and demotivated children.

The core of the «grass-roots revolution» is the *lateral thinking* (De Bono, 2002), that is the ability to solve problems by studying them from multiple and creative standpoints. According to Robinson<sup>2</sup>, the crucial problems lay on our outmoded industrial system. With regards to creativity, lateral thinking and talent scouting *Epiphany*, in the video *Do schools kill creativity?* Robinson tells the story of Gillian Lynne, known as the choreographer of *Cats* and *The Phantom of the opera*, who used to be a hopeless student. Her teachers informed her parents that probably Gillian had a learning disorder: nowadays, we would call it ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), but Gillian's story was in the 1930s and ADHD had not been invented yet.

Gillian was only 8 when her mother contacted a psychologist who, after observing her for a long while, decided to leave Gillian alone in the room. As the psychologist left the oak-paneled room, he turned on the radio on his desk. When the psychologist and Gillian's mother got out of the room, they just stood watching at Gillian. The minute they left the room, she was on her feet, moving along the music. «Mrs Lynne, Gillian isn't sick, she's a dancer. Take her on a dance school», said the doctor. Gillian was happy at the dance school, together with other people who could not sit still, and had to move to think. She eventually graduated at the Royal Ballet School and she had a wonderful career. She has worked on some of the most successful musical theatre productions in history, for the enjoyment of the public, and became a multimillionaire.

Somebody else might have put her on medication and tell her to calm down.

*Bateson, Picasso, Matisse, Van Gogh and Frida Kahlo*

Gregory Bateson was an English anthropologist, social scientist, cybernetics co-founder and linguist, whose studies turned out to be crucial in

<sup>1</sup> See <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U)> (last access 04.09.2016).

<sup>2</sup> See <[https://www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity](https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity)> (last access 04.09.2016).



many fields: as a co-founder of the system theory, he inspired the «double bind theory. As far as knowledge is concerned, he asserts that there is no separation among the different fields of science: specifically, so it is for science and art.

In the short film *An ecology of Mind*<sup>3</sup>, Nora Bateson, Gregory's daughter, says «the Batesons look at art as a part of the grace of nature». In the same film, her sister Mary Catherine<sup>4</sup> says that «every kind of aesthetic answer is an answer to relationship [...] the experience we get from reading a poem or from looking at a picture is an unconscious examination of the many and different relations that artist has been able to represent».

Gregory Bateson (1972) says «art is a part of man's quest for grace, for the attainment of grace, the reasons of the heart must be integrated with the reasons of the reason».

Art is an uninterrupted learning method, it is holistic, aesthetic, capable of linking experiences and knowledge.

Picasso, Matisse, Van Gogh and Frida Kahlo are emblematic example for our speech.

Picasso wrote: «As a child, I could draw like Raphael, but it has taken me a lifetime to learn how to draw like a child».

Changing learning basis is an action that Bateson (1979) describes as «learning level III»: «[...] learning to violate the conformity to rules, to free oneself from habits of thoughts and to prevent to get into them, to act a profound redefinition of the self-experience into models previously unknown and, in the meantime, to consider valid all the models until further notice».

Matisse writes that «creativity takes courage»; we like to imagine that Bateson was thinking about *The dance*<sup>5</sup> when he wrote: «[...] the right way to begin to think about the pattern which connects is to think of it as a primarily (whatever that means) dance of interacting parts».

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<sup>3</sup> *An ecology of mind. A Daughter's Portrait of Gregory Bateson*, 2010, is a film that outlines, from different angles, as a jazz variations on a theme, an intellectual biography, the uninterrupted study of the «pattern that connects», the interrelations between the natural system, the relationships of everything with everything else: with life, nature, living organisms, religion, the behaviour of schizophrenics, the sacred, the methodology of the Alcoholics Anonymous, the confused mind of anorexics and art in nature.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Catherine Bateson, Gregory's and Margaret Mead's daughter, anthropologist and psychologist, was co-author together with her father of a series of meta-dialogs (metalogs) and wrote *Angels Fear. Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred*.

<sup>5</sup> Henri Matisse, *Dance I*, 1909, oil on canvas, 259.7x390 cm (Museum of Modern Art, New York City), retrieved from <<http://uploads6.wikiart.org/images/henri-matisse/dance-ii-1910.jpg>> (last access 04.09.2016).

Before painting *Starry Night on the Rhone*, Van Gogh wrote: «A starry sky, for example, well, it's a thing that I'd try to do».

Whilst working on *Starry Night*, Van Gogh felt a deep sense of the sacred and wrote a «serene» letter to his brother Theo; here are some short passages of this letter:

«Arles, 28 of September 1888,

The starry sky painted by night, actually under a gas jet. The sky is acacia marine, the water is royal blue, the ground is mauve, the town is blue and purple, the gas is yellow and the reflections are russet gold descending down to green-bronze. [...] It does me good to do difficult things, it does not prevent me from having a terrible need of, shall I say the word – of religion – , then I go outside in the night to paint the stars. [...] There, I would like to arrive to reassurance that makes one happy cheerful and alive all the time».



Fig. 2 – Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night Over the Rhone* (1888)

Art makes one happy in the same way as knowledge. Bateson writes (1972):

«All we need to be sure of is that, at any moment, achievement may

be just around the corner, and, true or false, this can never be tested. We have got to be like those few artists and scientists who work with this urgent sort of inspiration, the urgency that comes from feeling that great discovery, the answer to all our problems, or great creation, the perfect sonnet, is always only just beyond our reach, or like the mother of a child who feels that, provided she pays constant enough attention, there is a real hope that her child may be that infinitely rare phenomenon, a great and happy person».

We come across the *perfect sonnet* in music too, for example in the *Concierto de Aranjuez*, a composition by Joaquín Rodrigo written in 1939, probably Rodrigo's best-known work. Rodrigo, being not very satisfied with his previous works, during a banquet said that – bizarre premonition – the next night he would create his masterpiece. And so it was. He described the *Concierto* itself as capturing «the fragrance of magnolias, the singing of birds, and the gushing of fountains» in the gardens of Aranjuez.

In her extraordinary work, through iconic expression and body language, Frida Kahlo supported both narrative therapy and a form of biographic narration.

The main characteristic of Frida's art – who considers resilience as an existential mile-stone and expresses herself through the use of vivid and meta-significant colors – is her capability to conceive the unconceivable. The concept of «inter-culture» – so multifaceted and undefinable, though pivotal in pedagogical, psychological and sociological research – is expressed in Frida Kahlo's works through immediate emotional epiphany. In *Self Portrait Along the Borderline Between Mexico and the United States*, Frida shows her dual aptitude towards the «Land of gringos»: she wears unusual sweet pink frock and lace gloves. At the same time, she herself is far from being demure. As in her first self-portrait, her nipples show beneath her bodice; her face is poised for mischief and, again in defiance of propriety, she holds a cigarette. She holds a small Mexican flag too, which tells us where her loyalties lie. Frida stands on a boundary stone that marks the border between Mexico and the United States. In *Self-Portrait on the Border Line* a fire-spitting sun and a quarter moon are enclosed in cumulus clouds that, when they touch, create a bolt of lightning. By contrast, the single cloud over the United States is nothing but industrial smoke spewed from four chimney stacks labeled FORD: instead of encompassing the sun and the moon, the American cloud besmirches the American flag, whose artificial stars have none of the dazzle of Mexico's real sun and real moon. Whereas the Mexican side of the border has a partially ruined pre-Columbian temple, the United States has bleak skyscrapers.

Whereas Mexico has a pile of rubble, a skull, and pre-Columbian fertility idols, the United States has a new factory with four chimneys that look like automatons. And whereas Mexico has exotic plants with white roots, the United States has three round machines with black electric cords. The Frida nearest machine has two cords: one connects with a Mexican lily's white roots, the other is plugged into the United States side of the border marker, which serves as Frida's pedestal. Frida, of course, is as motionless as a statue, which is what she pretends to be. With the high-voltage irony of her withering glance, Frida once again looks like a «ribbon around a bomb». This self-portrait comes seventy years before publishing of the book *The Double absence* by Sayad (2001): in this book, the immigrant is «atopos», a person without place, displaced, a «bastard» between citizen and real outsider.



Fig. 3 – Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait Along the Boarder Line Between Mexico and the United States* (1932)



Musical language – proposed by the *concierto* and recalled by Nora Bateson, using the jazz-metaphor to tell about her father’s intellectual experience – allows us to complete our paper with a last intense suggestion, connecting Chavela Vargas’s<sup>6</sup> *Paloma Negra* to Frida Kahlo’s *Paloma*.

*Paloma negra paloma negra dónde, dónde andarás?  
[...] Quiero ser libre vivir mi vida con quien yo quiera  
Díos dame fuerza que me estoy muriendo  
por ir a buscar*<sup>7</sup>.

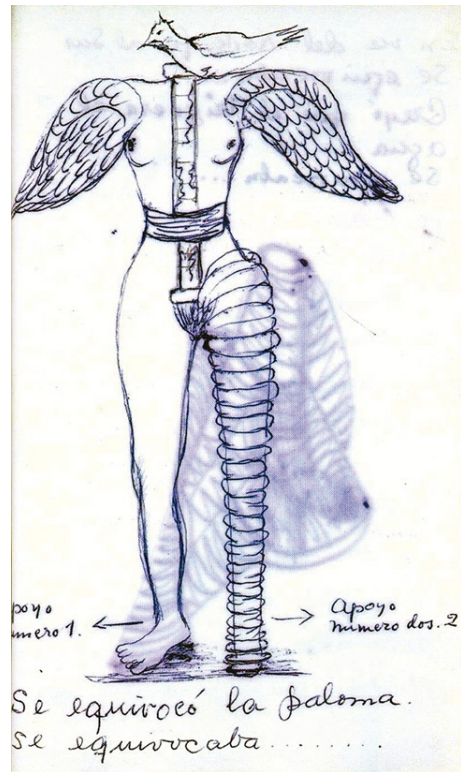


Fig. 4 – Selected by The Diary Of Frida Kahlo

<sup>6</sup> Chavela Vargas was a Mexican singer. She is especially known for her rendition of Mexican rancheras, but she is also recognized for her contribution to other genres of popular Latin American music.

<sup>7</sup> *Black dove, black dove where are you going? I want to be free and live my life with whom I choose. Lord, give me strength for I'm dying to go find her.*

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Paul J. Locher

*Comparison of the Perception and Evaluation of Paintings  
Viewed in the Original versus Reproduction Formats*

ABSTRACT:

Comparability of the perception and evaluation of paintings viewed in the original versus reproduction formats (e.g., slide-projected, computer-generated, paper images) is discussed in this paper. The United States participants' responses on this project's questionnaire items related to this issue indicate a very strong tendency on their parts to see the valuable contribution to an aesthetic experience of interacting with original artworks in a museum setting. These findings are consistent with those of other research studies designed to evaluate the ability of various types of surrogates to reproduce the perceptual and expressional power of an original painting. Taken together, the contents of this paper support the saying that «when it comes to experiencing the pleasure of great art, there is nothing like the original».

Most museum professionals as well as individuals unsophisticated in the visual arts would agree with the saying that «when it comes to experiencing the pleasure of great art, there is nothing like the original». However, only a small percentage of individuals are physically able to view a painting by a renowned artist in the original in a museum or gallery setting. Rather, most people experience great works of visual art in some form of reproduction, either in a printed format, such as books, posters, and postcards, as slide-projected images, or increasingly as high quality digital images on personal devices. The aesthetic adequacy of surrogates of original artworks has been and continues to be a topic of much discussion among art educators (e.g., Hubbard, 2007) and aesthetics theoreticians (e.g., Bundgaard & Stjernfelt, 2015). Remarkably, however, relatively few researchers have investigated empirically the comparability of viewer reactions to different reproduction formats of artworks with those of museum visitors viewing originals of the same works. This issue has become of even greater importance in recent years because of the



increasing use of the internet to view art by older and younger adults alike (e.g., Alelis, Bobrowicz & Ang, 2015). Yet, much more work has focused on the building of systems that produce high quality digital images of art that seem to capture somewhat faithfully the physical qualities of art than studies of individuals' perceptions of structural and expressional qualities of art images delivered by these systems. Furthermore, a limitation of much experimental aesthetics research is the fact that the art reproductions used as stimuli lack ecological validity in that they are either very frequently smaller (e.g., computer screen images) or sometimes larger (e.g., projected images) in size than the originals. Given the wide-spread use of reproductions of art in aesthetics research, one would suspect that many studies have been conducted to examine what aspects of an original artwork survive when an observer experiences it in a museum as compared with reproductions of it seen in different image formats in experimental settings. In fact, there are relatively few such studies reported in the literature since the new imaging technologies emerged. The findings of a select few of these studies are presented later in this paper.

But first, I will report the responses of a sample of United States participants in this research project to six questionnaire items (each using a 5-point response scale) dealing with their attitudes concerning the contribution of seeing original artworks and the value of a museum visit to an aesthetic experience. Forty-six female and 24 male university students ranging in age from 19 to 25 years ( $M = 20.2$  years) volunteered to complete the questionnaire. With respect to their reported artistic education received in school and outside of school, the most frequent responses were *a little bit* and *some* for the former item and *none* and *a little bit* for the later item. Additionally, in response to the question, How often have you visited a museum, exhibition, etc. in the past 12 months?, 37% of the sample replied *never*, 22% replied *1 time*, and 40% replied *2 or more times*. Of those participants who said they visited a museum, the types of collections most frequently visited were modern and contemporary, ancient art, and science and technology (51%, 46%, and 22%, respectively – percentages include multiple category responses).

It was found that 41% of the sample agreed *much* or *very much* that their motivation to visit a museum in the past 12 months was to see the original works. Seventy-five percent *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with the statement, I do not think that it is necessary to visit a museum to learn what it displays; it is enough to visit its website. Similarly, 68% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with the statement, I do not think that it is necessary to go to a museum or an exhibition to learn about the topics in them;

it is enough to read about them in books. Fifty percent of the sample reported that their motivation to visit a museum in the past 12 months was to learn more about art with a closer experience. Seventy-four percent of participants *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with the statement, Museums do not provide adequate information for a good understanding of the works or objects exhibited. Finally, 62% *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that museums are boring. Taken together, participants' responses indicate a very strong tendency on their parts to see the valuable contribution to an aesthetic experience of interacting with original artworks in a museum setting. This observation is supported by their responses to the questionnaire item, How eager are you to visit a museum in the next 6 months? Ratings ranged from *somewhat* - 28%, to *much* - 15%, and *very much* - 20%.

The remainder of this paper presents the findings of a select sample of research studies designed to evaluate the ability of various types of surrogates to reproduce the perceptual and expressional power of an original painting. One such study was conducted by Locher, Smith, and Smith (2001) at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. They examined the influence of image format on the perception and evaluation of pictorial and aesthetic qualities of paintings viewed in one of three different formats within the museum, either the originals seen in the galleries, as slide-projected images, or as images on a computer screen. Volunteer participants in the study were art-sophisticated and naïve adult museum visitors. They rated each of nine paintings by renowned artists (e.g., Bruegel, El Greco, Rembrandt, and Vermeer) under one of the three format conditions on 16 measures of physical and structural characteristics, aesthetic qualities, and novelty of content. Locher and Dolese (2004) had art-trained and naïve university students perform the same task in a follow-up study with postcard images of the 9 paintings in a laboratory setting.

Results of the two studies revealed that ratings of the adjective pairs which assessed qualitative stimulus properties of the compositions (items: symmetrical-asymmetrical, homogeneous-heterogeneous, continuous-intermittent, patterned-random) and quantitative features (items: simple-complex, crowded-uncrowded, homogeneous-heterogeneous) were very similar across the original and three reproduction formats for both sophisticated and naïve individuals. Moreover, sophisticated visitors consistently rated paintings across all formats as more complex, asymmetrical, varied, and contrasting than did naïve visitors. Thus, with respect to the physical and structural qualities of the art, the four presentation formats exhibited what Locher, Smith, and Smith (1999) call «pictorial sameness». This notion asserts there are surrogate conditions under which the reproduction of an original painting may be as

perceptually valuable as the original and that viewers are able to adjust to the fact that when they are looking at reproductions they are able to «look past» the limitations of the medium. That is, when looking at the Rembrandt painting on the computer screen, for example, participants accommodated to the image and focused their attention on the pictorial accomplishments of Rembrandt. They understood they were viewing a facsimile, adjusted to the limitations of the facsimile they were encountering (e.g., the smaller size of the artwork), and concentrated on the art.

On the other hand, expressional and aesthetic qualities of the art images delivered by the surrogate formats studied by Locher *et al.* (2001) did not produce pictorial sameness. Specifically, the majority of the artworks used as stimuli (those by Chardin, Christus, Giotto, Rembrandt, van Eyck, and Vermeer) were rated significantly more pleasant, interesting and surprising on average in the original format than in reproduction by all observers; ratings for the artworks by the sophisticated observers were again consistently higher than those of the naïve observers across formats. These findings suggest that when it comes to experiencing the pleasure of art, the adage «there is nothing like the original» may in fact be valid. Furthermore, as one would expect, differences in reactions to the artworks among the paintings did obtain. Ratings of the pleasingness and interest across formats for the works by Bruegel, El Greco, and van Ruisdael demonstrate that much additional research into the influence of format is needed to identify the characteristics of paintings which contribute to the hedonic value of a composition in the original compared to the reproductions of it typically seen by the public.

Taylor (2001) investigated the ability of four types of surrogates to reproduce the expressional qualities of original paintings using a research design similar to that employed by Locher *et al.*, (2001). Volunteers at the Toledo (Ohio) Museum of Art who were unsophisticated in the visual arts responded to the same 20 Western European and American paintings seen in five formats – oil on canvas paintings, printed pages from books, color slides projected on a screen, black-and-white glossy photos, and digital images on a computer's 13 in. monitor. Participants rated the ease of identifying feelings and emotions in the images differently across formats; originals received the highest average rating of 4.5 (with 1 indicating *very difficult* and 5 indicating *very easy*) followed by the color slide projections, photographs, digital images, and book page formats ( $M_s = 3.7, 3.0, 2.9,$  and  $2.8$ , respectively). They rated the formats on the intensity of emotions experienced in the following order: original art, color slide projections, photographs, digital images, and book pages ( $M_s = 4.5, 3.5, 2.7, 2.7,$  and

2.6, respectively; with 1 indicating *very difficult* and 5 indicating *very easy*). Participants also rated the formats for their ability to re-create the feeling of looking at an oil on canvas painting as follows: color slides, digital images, book pages and photographs ( $M_s = 3.6, 2.7, 2.5,$  and  $2.2,$  respectively; with 1 indicating *not very successful* and 5 indicating *very successful*). The result of an analysis of variance performed on each of these three sets of data was significant, follow-up analyses were not reported. Taylor's findings demonstrate that originals were clearly superior to all of the surrogate types studied at conveying the expressional content depicted in paintings included as stimuli, as was found by Locher *et al.*

Quiroga, Dudley, and Binnie (2011) provide evidence that presentation format matters with respect to the way viewers look at and experience the same artwork in a museum gallery versus electronically in a laboratory setting. They compared the eye movements patterns of participants viewing the actual painting *Ophelia* (1851-1852) by Millais for a few minutes in the Tate Britain museum to those looking at a digital image of it on a monitor in a laboratory setting for 1 minute with no particular task. (The level of participants' art sophistication is not mentioned.) The painting depicts Ophelia, a character from William Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, floating in a river just before she drowns. The painting is known for its depiction of the detailed flora of the river and the riverbank, stressing the patterns of growth and decay in a natural ecosystem. Quiroga *et al.* observed that the majority of fixations for the laboratory participants were directed to the figure of Ophelia, especially clustering over her face and hands. On the other hand, participants who viewed the original painting in the Tate Modern directed their gaze mostly over the undergrowth surrounding Ophelia which contributes to the context in which she lies. The researchers suggest several reasons for these differences in scanning patterns as a function of format. First, the physical behaviors of viewers differed between the two groups. Viewers at the Tate were free to alter their stance to adjust their viewing position and distance from the original to obtain more detailed information about the image such as the compositional features, the brushstrokes and texture of the paint, etc. Such movements were highly restricted in the laboratory setting where participants were seated in front of the image, unable to walk about the artwork. However, viewers in the laboratory did not indicate that they felt so restricted due to lack of actual physical behavior so as to stop them from tilting their heads to look at the painting from different angles. Standing in front of the painting, free to move about in front of it while tilting the head enabled the museum subjects to acquire greater detail about the original image.

Furthermore, as the researchers point out, «if we zoom into details in the museum, we see the brushstrokes and the texture of the paint, whereas if we do the same in the lab, we just see pixels». (Quiroga *et al.*, 2011: 17).

Quiroga *et al.* (2011) suggest two other factors that very likely contributed in some degree to the observed differences in viewers' scanning behavior in the two presentation format conditions. The first of these is the difference in size of the images. While the size of the original work was close to that of the displayed digital image in the laboratory setting, (76.2x111.8 cm *vs.* 1024x768 pixels, respectively), the difference could have influenced the eye fixation patterns. This is an issue relevant not just to the findings of this study but as Taylor (2001: 2) points out, the size of the image is a factor influencing how users perceive the many electronic surrogate forms that are now used to represent original works of art. The second factor is also universal to the issue of painting format. It consists of the special value assigned to original artworks and the cultural aura of the museum itself to which Smith (2014) has attached the term 'the museum effect'. With respect to the value of original artworks, people give more value to originals painted by famous artists simply because they have observed this fact about the art world in the news media. For example, it was widely publicized that Paul Gauguin's painting *Nafea Faa Ipoipo (When Will You Marry?)* (1892) remains at the time of this writing the most expensive painting ever sold at \$300 million. Recently, Locher, Krupinski, and Schaefer (2015) demonstrated that viewers' beliefs about the authenticity status of a painting (originals, copies, or fakes) serve as a powerful context cue that triggers, in a direct and in a mediated top-down fashion, art-sophisticated and naïve viewer's behavioral and visual responses to art.

As mentioned, the aesthetic adequacy of surrogates of original artworks has been and continues to be a topic of much discussion and some research among art educators. For example, Hubbard (2007) investigated the influence of presentation format on 14-year-olds' responses to a Renaissance painting by the artist Petrus Christus entitled *A Goldsmith in his Shop, Possibly Saint Eligius* (1449) seen in one of four viewing conditions. Participants saw either the actual painting in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, or as a postcard, on a computer screen in their school, or they saw the painting counterbalanced across all three levels of reproduction. The students responded to a structured interview designed to engage them in dialogue with the pictorial contents of the work as they viewed it for 20 minutes. Hubbard observed commonality in response content across formats for issues related to compositional details, the use of color, and the narrative suggested by the painting. There were also differences in participants' reactions to the

originals compared to those elicited by both types of reproduction. For example, the visual clarity and richness of the larger original led to more accurate identification of the painting's components and to more complex interpretations of the painting than the same components perceived in the reproductions. Furthermore, the narratives of participants who saw the original were more consistent with the one described in the wall label prepared by the museum. Additionally, students who saw the work in all three formats preferred the original to the reproductions. They explained that this was because the size of the original made it easier to examine the smallest details of the composition. As mentioned earlier, digital images of artworks are typically seen in a much diminished size compared to the original.

Finally, participants who compared the three formats stated that the original was «the real thing» which made them feel they had access to something unique and socially valued. This observation is consistent with the notion described above that art museums are imbued by the public with high social status and with the literature describing the contribution of the social prestige factors that have become associated with art museums and original masterworks. Smith (2014) has proposed a model of what he calls «the museum effect» that describes the many factors that contribute to what happens when people visit an art museum. Tinio, Smith, and Smith (2014) also provide a detailed description of a number of elements that contribute to an individual's experience with art in a museum context. Some of these include: 1) the motivations and expectations of museum visitors; 2) their demographic characteristics, personal histories, and level of art-related knowledge, and 3) their behaviors within the galleries.

In conclusion, the United States participants' responses on this project's questionnaire presented above indicate a very strong tendency on their parts to see the valuable contribution to an aesthetic experience of interacting with original artworks in a museum setting. The research findings reviewed in this paper provide strong support for their attitudes and those of art museum professionals concerning this issue.

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Lorenzo Cantatore

*The Museum as a Tool for Social Education. The Experience of Palma Bucarelli (1945-1975) at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna*

ABSTRACT:

The first chapter of the history of museum education in Italy was written by Palma Bucarelli (1910-1998), director of the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome from 1940 to 1975. In the hands of this beautiful, educated and intelligent woman the museum became a school, daily open to the public of any age and of any social class, wishing to show the latest trends of Italian and International contemporary art. After the end of fascism, with the help of Lionello Venturi and Giulio Carlo Argan, Palma Bucarelli proposed new cultural communication strategies (educational exhibitions, conferences, video projections); for all these reasons Palma Bucarelli was awarded with the title of "First woman manager of culture in Italy".

In Italy, in order to carry out a research project on the role of the museum in the education of the young people from a historical point of view, it is vital to examine the contribution given by the person and the place that are unanimously considered by Italian museology to hold the absolute primacy in the field of museum education: Palma Bucarelli (1910-1998) and the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome.

This beautiful, well read, intelligent and extremely resourceful woman, who reconstructed the identity and the role of this prestigious cultural institution in the context of contemporary culture and society after World War II, in fact wrote the first chapter of the history of museum education in Italy, as we know it today. Palma Bucarelli was the first woman to run an Italian State museum. When she was appointed between 1940 and 1941 (initially on a temporary basis, to replace the previous Superintendent who had been called up), she was very young (only in her thirties, as she was born in 1910). Her biographical and intellectual experience gained impetus from the very debris and rubble of the war and the reconstructive enthusiasm of the Liberation. Indeed, Gabriella Bartoli

has already rightly reminded us of how Palma Bucarelli responded to the trials of the war period, when she managed to rescue many of the masterpieces belonging to the National Gallery of Modern Art, threatened by the bombings as well as by theft from the retreating Nazi army<sup>1</sup>.

Shortly after the Liberation of Rome (June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1944), the National Gallery of Modern Art was the first Italian museum to reopen to the public, a distinction of which Superintendent Bucarelli was extremely proud. Nevertheless, something more had to be done, perhaps something that nobody had tried to do before with such ethical and moral conviction, with such a strong sense of what belonged to the public and of the relations between cultural institutions and society. Citizens had to be brought into the Gallery, to ensure that the museum had a public as wide and numerous as possible.

In Italy, in 1945-1946, the ideas of American pragmatism and pedagogic activism (from John Dewey onwards) were finally starting to circulate. In fact, during the period of Fascist cultural autarchy, these innovative currents of thought had been censored. In the American perspective, schools and cultural institutions (starting with museums) were centres of extraordinary intellectual vitality and creativity – both individual and at the same time social – and played a crucial role in building a democratic citizenship.

Bucarelli enthusiastically welcomed these new ideas, which she approached using two different channels. First, she established a close collaboration with the Allied Control Commission (ACC), which played an active role and worked closely in the various Roman public offices. Its sub-commissions were in fact organised in such a way that they could control the Italian reconstruction, including at the Ministry of Education, on which cultural heritage and museums depended (a specific Ministry of Cultural Heritage would be born in Italy only in 1975). In those years, school policy, and more generally, culture policy was geared, at least theoretically, towards a view of strongly promoting social mobility (which was denied by the pedagogical-educational classism typical of both

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<sup>1</sup> Palma Bucarelli recorded the events in war-torn Rome during the Liberation period in her daily diary full of valuable information about the life of intellectuals in that difficult time (see BUCARELLI, P. (1977). *1944: cronaca di sei mesi*. L. Cantatore (Ed.), Roma: De Luca). The day after the Allies arrived in Rome, the same Bucarelli wrote an article for the journal *Il Mercurio*, directed by the writer Alba de Cespedes. In it, she recalled the perilous adventure of rescuing the most precious works of art from the National Gallery of Modern Art (see BUCARELLI, P. (1944). *Opere d'arte alla macchia*. *Mercurio*, I (1), now in ID. (2010). *Cronache indipendenti: arte a Roma fra 1945 e 1946*, L. Cantatore (Ed.), Roma: De Luca, 29-31.

Liberal and Fascist Italy). One of the main promoters of this was Carleton Washburne (1889-1968), one of Dewey's finest students and collaborators in Winnetka (Chicago), who arrived in Italy together with the Allied army and was a collaborator for Ministers Adolfo Omodeo, Guido De Ruggiero, Vincenzo Arangio Ruiz, Enrico Molè and Guido Gonella. This climate of democratic renaissance encouraged Buracelli to give 'her' museum the status of a school; even more so when, finally, the great historian and art critic Lionello Venturi returned to Italy after a long period in exile (first in France, then in the United States) due to his antifascist ideas. He was among the few academics to refuse to swear allegiance to Mussolini's regime<sup>2</sup> and was one of the first academics to commit himself to the scientific, philological and historiographical enhancement of critical activity and study applied to contemporary art. Back in Rome, he recovered his university chair and relaunched his teachings among young people, by beginning to theorise the urgent need to build a firm relationship between art and public, as well as the professional and educational function of the museum. Bucarelli, who had not time to get to know him before the war, showed up with a letter with which she bluntly invited him to pay a visit to the National Gallery of Modern Art, making already a clear reference to the need to «clarify» and «publicise» the heritage of that museum. These two verbs would highlight her museological and museographic mission for the next 30 years of her supervision<sup>3</sup>. Bucarelli used to recall Venturi's cultural heritage especially as follows:

«Before Lionello Venturi» – she wrote – «an art historian who had worked on modern art would be considered an amateur or a “journalist” in the Italian academic and official field. Venturi, who was not only a great art historian, but also a great art theorist, demonstrated instead how one could not have a clear vision of the past if one did not have a clear notion of current problems. Those problems involve us more closely at an ideological and human level. Again, he demonstrated how a clear historical consciousness determines, in the present, a firm commitment to action»<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> See BOATTI, G. (2001). *Preferirei di no: le storie dei dodici professori che si opposero a Mussolini*. Torino: Einaudi.

<sup>3</sup> Bucarelli's letter to Venturi, dated on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1945, was published in CANTATORE, L. *Introduzione*. In BUCARELLI, *Cronache indipendenti*, cit., 9. See CARLENZI, E. (2015). Palma Bucarelli e gli apporti critici di Lionello Venturi e Giulio Carlo Argan alla Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna di Roma, *Bollettino Telematico dell'Arte*, 19<sup>th</sup> April (768), retrieved from <<http://www.bra.it/txt/a0/07/bra00768.html>> (last access 16.05.2016).

<sup>4</sup> BUCARELLI, P. (1962). Ricordo di Lionello Venturi. AICA. *Bollettino della sezione italiana*, year I, issue I, July-September, (3).

This «firm commitment to action» of Venturi, and therefore also of Buccarelli, poured over into the great pedagogical and militant idea of the «museum-school». As contemporary art was worthy of theoretical and philological study and of entering university and school classrooms (where it would be fully accepted only many years later, due to delays and reluctance), thus it also deserved to be valued as much as possible by public museums and to be made available through special pedagogical, educational and didactic programmes. Where schools and universities had not yet arrived, the only State institution responsible for the promotion of contemporary art, the National Gallery of Modern Art, promptly intervened.

Venturi came back to Italy with a myriad of ideas and of bright and vibrant materials, suitable for linking the museum with the culture and the consciousness of all, at a time of deep and traumatic political, social and economic change. The biggest bet was to communicate abstract art, widely accused of Hermeticism, to the general public. In Venturi's opinion, Abstractism was in fact a truly democratic language<sup>5</sup>. The passion for this new current bonded him to his most brilliant student, Giulio Carlo Argan, and to Buccarelli herself, who would thereafter always maintain a privileged intellectual relationship with both Venturi and Argan. Therefore, Lionello Venturi was the main driving force behind Buccarelli's idea of establishing a permanent education programme within the walls of the National Gallery of Valle Giulia. The original educational exhibition had to be set out using reproductions of works and information panels about the authors, the cultural contexts, the historical periods, with overviews and explanations of the techniques used, and so on. This idea already matured and materialised in 1946 with the exhibition of the masterpieces from the XIX and XX centuries (*French Paintings of Today*, October 1946 - April 1947, in which Venturi held two conferences on the origins of contemporary painting, on April 8<sup>th</sup> and on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1947). There ensued a great scandal brought about by the more conservative art lovers. It seemed a mockery to see in a museum framed colour photographs (brought back from the United States by Venturi) instead of original works of art. Yet, although unsophisticated and based on the good will of a few officials and employees who were not put off by the total lack of technical and economic means, it was a brilliant and pioneering way to inform, educate and raise awareness. Many realised this and rejoiced. Contemporary art was still taboo in schools and universities, however. These large photographs at

<sup>5</sup> See CAMERLINGO, R. (2009) «Non ho mai lavorato per gli artisti o per i critici, ma solo per il pubblico»: storia della Didattica in Galleria (1945-1975). In M. Margozi (Ed.), *P. Buccarelli: il Museo come Avanguardia*. Milano: Electa, 67.

the National Gallery of Modern Art, explained and commented, allowed the visitors to understand and evaluate them, as well as to develop their own personal impressions and taste. An authoritative witness testifies to the novelty and the revolutionary meaning of that event. This witness was the painter Piero Dorazio, who was not yet twenty at that time:

«In 1946, Lionello Venturi returned to Italy and presented at the National Gallery of Modern Art an exhibition of colour reproductions of the most representative works of the century, from the Impressionists to Chagall. This exhibition was an excellent chance for modern art in Italy because it was visited and discussed by all artists, from Palermo to Milan, and presented works and models which no one had ever supposed even existed»<sup>6</sup>.

Thus, both experts in the field and casual visitors immediately found that this initiative gave them the chance to renew and increase their figurative culture. In fact, if on the one hand it was all about opening up to young artists, giving them the chance to express themselves and set out their views, as well as about letting them become aware of the latest international experiences, on the other hand, for Bucarelli, there was the challenge of opening to the general public, to a potentially mass audience by providing the tools to understand the meaning of contemporary art. Paola Della Pergola, the Director of Galleria Borghese and not always sympathetic to Bucarelli's ideas, emphasised that «after 1945 a different audience regarding their numbers and quality began to attend the museum», and that they had to «adapt the museum to the need to accommodate a much more numerous and less culturally prepared audience, which was nevertheless difficult to do because of their simplicity»<sup>7</sup>.

While in Italy the reconstruction of a school that would finally be democratic, void of Fascist ideas, post-Gentilian and post-Bottaian, free and open to all (as stated by articles 33 and 34 of the Constitution) was under discussion, Bucarelli also wrote her Neorealist page. She dreamt about redeeming the humble (workers, simple clerks, students from every type of institution), welcoming them to 'her' museum, at times suited to their work and study needs, and about providing them with accessible educational tools which might let them become assiduous frequenters of that place, without getting bored or embarrassed and with no inferiority

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in MARINI CLARELLI, M.V., Palma Bucarelli: il Museo come Avanguardia. In *P. Bucarelli: il Museo come Avanguardia*, cit., 9.

<sup>7</sup> CAMERLINGO, (2009). «Non ho mai lavorato per gli artisti o per i critici, ma solo per il pubblico», cit., 64.

complexes. The Gallery, which had always been considered a haughty and distant temple, now had to become a centre for meetings and cultural exchanges, where everyone might satisfy their curiosity without being embarrassed about their ignorance. A reference point for all citizens.

The first experiment was a success so that «in the summer of 1949 Bucarelli decided to reserve an entire wing of the museum for “educational” events, allocating four halls for exhibitions and a lounge, equipped with a screen, chairs, a projector and an amplifier, for the meetings and conferences which, from 1951, were to be held every Sunday morning [...] to allow workers and students to attend»<sup>8</sup>.

In the *Art Bulletin of the Ministry of Education* of 1952, Bucarelli would draw up an initial account of this great little museographical revolution. Here, the Superintendent made clear reference to the American model (we know that the first educational exhibitions had been organised by the Museum of Modern Art in New York from 1935)<sup>9</sup> and to the central role of an institution like UNESCO – and ICOM within it – in encouraging her idea of a «living, educational and, in the best sense, museum for art propaganda» as «the audience asks for no more than to be helped to understand»<sup>10</sup>. She understood that, as Mariastella Margozi acutely summarised, «“showing” was the main duty of her work in the museum and “knowing how to show” had to take on a practical form until it became a real applicative methodology»<sup>11</sup>.

The idea for the living museum, the breeding ground for ideas where artists and public could meet one another, reached its full maturity during the 1950s. Meanwhile AICA, the International Association of Art Critics, was founded, with Bucarelli playing an active role in the association by stimulating discussions about museum education. After all, these are the years when Herbert Read’s ideas, as well as his volume, *Education through Art*, were brought to Italy by Giulio Carlo Argan, and translated and published by Adriano Olivetti’s Edizioni di Comunità in 1954. A great novelty, art documentary, was now being used alongside the didactic exhibition and

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>9</sup> On the relations between Bucarelli and MoMA, see CAMPOLMI, I. (2011). “What is a Modern Arte Museum?”: Palma Bucarelli e la GNAM: il modello del MoMA in Italia. In L. Cantatore and G. Zagra (Eds.), *Palma Bucarelli a cento anni dalla nascita*. Roma: Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, 79-115.

<sup>10</sup> BUCARELLI, P. (1952). Le manifestazioni didattiche nella Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna. *Bollettino d’arte del Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, April-June, 185-186.

<sup>11</sup> MARGOZZI, M., Doni e depositi: la politica di Palma Bucarelli per accrescere le collezioni della Galleria nazionale d’arte moderna. In *P. Bucarelli: il Museo come Avanguardia*, cit., 27.

educational conference methods. Fanatical in support for the usefulness of the new medium aimed at making the public aware and part of the major issues of art (which, for her, *must* affect all closely), Palma herself ventured into the world of directing with four documentaries, which unfortunately cannot be traced nowadays, dedicated respectively to Scipio, Gino Rossi, Macchiaioli and Impressionism. The cinematographic language applied to art captivated and thrilled her at the same time, as it allowed her to reach immediately and with great success a larger and varied audience, even though they were physically distant.

The museum machine set up in a decade of Bucarelli's superintendence provided an inflexible and detailed event factory, as noted by Matilde Amaturò:

«Press conferences, press releases, annual agenda and reports disclosed to the press, photographic reproductions for exhibition panels, boards and panels specifically designed to collect informative material, black-and-white and colour slides, videos and films. The result is a supply of materials, made up of a variety of constituent parts, whose numerical quantity defines its weight and scope on the general system of the “speaking museum”, meant for an audience that must acknowledge and understand»<sup>12</sup>.

Bucarelli at the same time maintained close relations with the State's highest authorities and with the most important politicians, while communicating her projects and informing about what she was doing and what she would like to continue to do in the future. Yet, all this required human as well as economic resources. In 1959-60, she managed to obtain from the Minister of Education, Joseph Medici (ex-Minister for the Budget), an important funding, extraordinary for its time: the sum of 300 million lire with which she was able to buy a Monet, a Modigliani and a Van Gogh. Shortly afterwards, she began to think about another of her great dreams, namely to extend the Gallery to adapt it to standards typical in other parts of the world, where museums were increasingly becoming meeting places for social aggregation based on scientific research, promotion, meetings and socialising. For this reason, first in the US and then in Rome, Palma met the great contemporary architect Walter Gropius, who more than any other considered the combination of art and school as playing a central role in requalifying contemporary society. This first hypothesis of entrusting

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<sup>12</sup> AMATURÒ, M., Il pubblico di Palma Bucarelli: oltre la didattica. In *P. Bucarelli: il Museo come Avanguardia*, cit., 72.



Gropius with the expansion project had to be buried (the State apparatus was still unprepared and laggard towards such an ambitious idea); so, Bucarelli and Argan focused on the Neapolitan architect Luigi Cosenza, for whom, as Bucarelli points out, «the social and specifically educational aim of architecture was not only a theoretical but also a moral principle»<sup>13</sup>.

Bucarelli was experimenting hands-on with all the initiatives and services that are today regularly made available to the public by almost all the museums in the world, so much so that we have come to consider them obvious. This was not the case in the sixties when, still driven by the same spirit that had placed her at the helm of the National Gallery of Modern Art during World War II, Bucarelli was experimenting with the theory and practice of museography, proudly proclaiming her leadership in small, yet great initiatives:

«If, ultimately, it may be desirable for all museums to have, in addition to a scientific status, also a social one, then it is an absolute and primary objective for a Modern Art museum. It would not make any sense to carry out an intense didactic activity – such as the one carried out by the National Gallery for twenty-five years and which has inspired many Italian and foreign museums, if this teaching did not result in a more animated cultural and social life for the museum. The public must feel at ease in the museum, be able to study, discuss, perhaps even with the museum directors or with other artists, in a place where they can feel at home. The Gallery has been equipped with a small cafeteria, where you can enjoy a coffee or a non-alcoholic drink or smoke a cigarette; a garden full of sculptures has been opened, where you can get a breath of fresh air. However, we are still a long way off from our ambition for the museum-school which we aspire to. Much remains to be done before we can see our museums transformed into aesthetic centres of culture, into real centres that produce culture. How can we hope for museums to become schools in a country where schools themselves are considered to be like museum pieces?»<sup>14</sup>.

Indeed, the extension designed by Cosenza constituted the crowning achievement of Bucarelli's thirty-year supervision with the building of a new place: «We wanted to build an instrument to produce culture», as she

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<sup>13</sup> BUCARELLI, P. (1988). Ampliamento della Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna: progetto di Luigi Cosenza. In G. Cosenza and V. Bazzarini (Ed.), *Luigi Cosenza: l'ampliamento della GNAM ed altre architetture (1929-1975)*, Napoli: CLEAN, 14.

<sup>14</sup> BUCARELLI, P. (1972). *Funzione didattica del museo d'arte moderna*. In *Il museo come esperienza sociale* (Atti del Convegno di studio), Roma 4-5-6 dicembre 1971, Roma: De Luca, 87.

explained later; «a museum-school must be the instrument of a method, and as methods are subject to change, space must be at the same time distinctive and capable of changing»<sup>15</sup>. Within a space conceived in this way, it must be possible to make art as well as criticism of art, but also music, literature, cinema, architecture and above all, at the same time, research and promotion of the activities. Unfortunately, these noble intentions were relegated to the limbo of utopia because of the shameful management of public affairs. We still have the words of Palma Bucarelli who, in 1972, shortly before retiring, twenty years after that first budget for museum education, summarised the situation in an account full of the moral significance that this woman had always attached to her work in the service of the State and citizens: «culture is education». I am «convinced about making the museum a manufacturer of culture», about «competing alongside the museum to build a democratic culture», about building «dynamic and direct contact between the museum and the general public from all walks of life and class, with the specific aim of capturing young people». Finally, «if teaching is useful to the public, it is equally useful and necessary to the museum, as it provides valuable guidance for establishing the right methodology to be adopted. Thus, it has been possible to verify through experimentation what has eventually become one of the fundamental principles of modern museography: if not geared towards teaching, then museography is reduced just to the trivial matter of furnishing the museum»<sup>16</sup>.

A lesson full of hope and expectation that Palma Bucarelli, at the end of her long life, never tired of pointing out to new generations of interlocutors, repeating an assertion made during her initial period of cultural and civil commitment when, from the pages of a newspaper in the elated and optimistic days of the Liberation, she proclaimed:

«I think that if all people, even those not naturally disposed to niceties by nature, were brought up in such a way that they could become really moved by some splashes of colour in a painting and devoted their spare time to this, then there would be less desire for wars around and perhaps even going about daily business would be less difficult»<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> BUCARELLI, (1972). *Funzione didattica del museo*, cit., 15, 17.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 85 and ff.

<sup>17</sup> BUCARELLI, P. (1945). *Mostre d'arte. L'Indipendente*, 30<sup>th</sup> October, now in ID. (2010), *Cronache indipendenti*, cit., 65.



João Pedro Fróis, Carolina Silva

*Portraits of Meaning Making:  
Mediation Strategies in Encounters with Artworks*

ABSTRACT:

This chapter is based on the outcomes of the research project «Mediation and Meaning Making Strategies in Art Museums»<sup>1</sup>. The main goals of the research project were to understand how could the use of specific mediation strategies help individuals in the interpretation of artworks, and if those meaning making processes vary across people with and without a background in visual arts. In order to achieve this goal a five-month workshop was organized, involving twenty-four participants who engaged in continued encounters with three chosen artworks in the museum. During the workshop participants were introduced to and used different mediation strategies – written and visual, developed to map and record their individual dialogues with each artwork.

*Meaning making strategies in art museums*

Theoretical and empirical research on the topic of meaning making within the visual arts has been expanding in recent years, namely due to the work carried out by scholars in different fields – philosophy, visual culture, museum and art education (Barret, 2010; Carroll, 2003; Émond, 2010; Fróis & White, 2013; Fróis & Silva, 2014; Parsons, 1987; White, 1998). The topic of meaning making within the visual arts has direct implications for the improvement of communication activities in art museums. In that sense, the development of theoretical frameworks aimed at understanding human behaviour in its interaction with the arts within museums is an important issue for the training of art museum educators and teachers (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990; Goodman, 1984). Within our research's theoretical context, artworks are considered as potential means and tools to structure our inner worlds – emotions,

<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FTC) funded this research project: PTDC/CPE-CED/099280/2008.

thoughts, and motivations. Therefore, encounters with artworks allow us not only to understand what artists seek to communicate through their art, but also enable new understandings of the self, mediated by subjective interpretations, judgments and feelings. Meaning making is a dynamic and multidimensional learning process intimately linked to the motivation of individuals and to their awareness of their experiences with the arts.

Our empirical research aims at further developing the theory of meaning making and understanding the phenomenology of the reception of artworks. In particular, we are interested in tracking and analyzing the discrete experiential moments involved in what John Dewey (1934) described as ‘an’ experience, that is, an experience that participants deem to have significance, a sense of completion and fulfillment, in other words, an aesthetic experience. For Lev Vygotsky (1927-1928, Fróis, 2011), one of the structuring axes of an aesthetic experience was the similarity between the artist’s creation and the viewer’s perception. The ‘readers’ should show solidarity towards the poet because when we perceive an artwork we recreate it anew every time we come in contact with it. This idea moves away from the structural, impersonal analysis of artworks, drawing closer to the psychological analysis of the relationship between art as a «technique of social exchange» and the real person (Fróis, 2010). In other words, an encounter with an artwork usually places individuals face to face with themselves. Due to its multiple and underlying psychological functions, this is an extremely complex process that demands a cognitive and emotional involvement on the part of the viewer, an urge of wanting to stay. The deeper the involvement in these cognitive and emotional processes, the more intense will be the learning and the meaning assigned by viewers to their own experiences (Funch, 2012). This awareness opens new challenges for art museum education – regardless of their greatness, the ‘value’ of an artwork fades if not met by an attentive gaze, a thinking mind and a ‘sensitive self’ (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000).

### *Main steps of the meaning making imaginative process*

Within the context of this research project we further developed the four-step meaning making approach advanced by Boyd White (1998-2009). His proposal includes a set of interpretation-oriented strategies that actively involve individuals in mapping the paths integrated in their experiences with artworks. The four-step approach produces visual and written ‘texts’ that contribute simultaneously to individuals self-awareness

of their meaning making processes, while also making them visible and shareable with others. Envisioned as *a continuum* it includes four mediation strategies: note writing, aesthetigrams, quadrant, and text writing (Fig. 1).

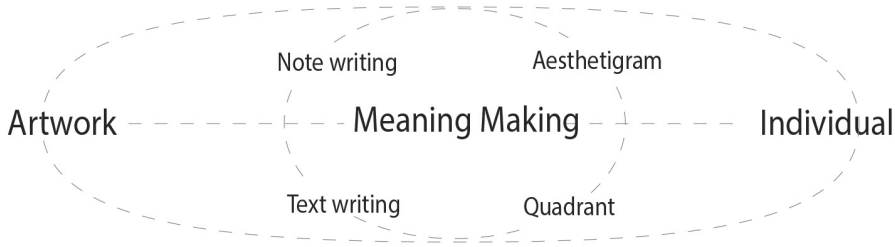


Fig. 1 – *Main Steps of the Meaning Making Imaginative Process*

1. Note writing: notes are a stream of consciousness, a written record of the first contact with the artwork, which can include the initial impressions, thoughts, free associations and descriptions about the artwork. They might also describe the context in which the artwork is seen, as well as the viewer's feelings. These written records emerge from the natural flow of individuals' meaning making process, and are taken during their encounters with an artwork.

2. Aesthetigram design: the term aesthetigram results from the combination of two words: aesthetics and diagram, and was coined by Boyd White (1998). An aesthetigram is a concept map constructed by the viewer and intends to help him/her to diagrammatically visualize the main moments of the meaning making process. Its construction is based on the note writing and the use of *a priori* defined categories (Tab. 1).

*Tab. 1 – Definition of the Categories Used in the Construction of Aesthetigrams*

	Category	Definition	Keywords
Cognitive Dimension	Perception	Can be a gaze without a specific aim or focus; a visual path with or without connection to the work of art in presence. Can also be a generalization of form, a tendency to summarize.	Gaze, identify, discriminate, recognition, description
	Memory	Not specifically comparative associations to the previous circumstances of the observer's life connected or not to the world of art. Specifically comparative associations with other works of art.	Free associations, specific associations, comparison
	Knowledge	Specific knowledge, connected or not to the world of art, which clearly guides the response to the work of art. The awareness that lack of contextual knowledge prevents attempts to interact with the work.	Information, influence, knowledge
	Reflection	Spontaneous critical activity about the affective character of the work. Meaning of the work in relation to the social context of both the artist and the observer	Criticism, thought, analysis, relationships between elements
Affective Dimension	Feelings	It is not necessary to have an exact word to define what is felt, just the idea that attention is focused therein: sensory elements; merit of the artistic technique; overall expressive meaning; subjective expressive meaning.	Projection, subjective influence, affects
	Emotion	Can be considered a subcategory of feeling(s) to which a precise term can be attributed – happy, sad, shame, fury, etc.; or a combination of terms – attraction/repulsion, fury, admiration, etc.	Primary emotions, secondary emotions
Imaginative Dimension	Daydreams	They are not quite memories but rather an emphatic state of imaginative reverie induced by the encounter with the work of art, a 'symbiosis with the work'.	Empathy, imaginative reverie, hypothesis
	Seeing as	In its essence it is a comparative act between what is presented to the observer and what could be. It can also be an interpretation that transcends the external aspect of the work.	Imagine, interpret, recreate, invention
	Expectations	Can be an expectation directed at the work: a comparative act between what is anticipated and what was found before; or a self-directed expectation: the observer's anticipation of his/her response to the work or event.	Comparison, anticipation, assumptions



*Tab. 1 – Definition of the Categories Used in the Construction of Aesthetigrams*

Behavioral Dimension	Attitude	Positive, negative, or indifferent interaction with the work of art. In general, attitudes are positive or negative points of view on people, places, things, or events, all considered as the object of the attitude.	Assessment, criticism, opinion, interpretation
	Taste	General preference for certain types of images, themes, styles, etc. Can also be a random preference, an arbitrary or specific choice of the work.	Individual projection, choice, preference
	Judgment	Can be a provisional assessment: a questioning or confirmation of the initial response, a change of opinion; a provisional final assessment; or a definitive final assessment. To deliberately abstain from manifesting any type of assessment.	Assessment, criticism, opinion, interpretation
Associative Dimension	Bracketing	Need to momentarily set aside an idea or feeling regarding any one or all of the axes of the experience of meaning-making – of the observer, of the context, or of the work.	Pause, wait
	Additional Moments	Associations that take the subject beyond the work though the work is their starting point. Tendency to involve other senses. They can also be reflections that occur after the encounter with the work of art.	Pause, ideational complement, parallel thoughts
	Explanation	The work is understood as a puzzle, a set of symbols to decode or a problem to be solved.	Decode, message, research

White, 2009; Fróis, White, Silva, 2013

This set of categories was proposed by Boyd White and was based on his own research and other empirical and theoretical sources (Housen, 1983; Feldman, 1987; Feinstein, 1989; Parsons, 1987; White, 2009). As individuals learn to identify and structure the ‘experiential moments’ that come together in their encounters with an artwork, they gradually become aware of what would otherwise be fleeting and often-wordless moments. An experiential moment is simply any single moment (in time) of which one is consciously aware<sup>2</sup>. Aesthetigrams act as a strategy

<sup>2</sup> We experience our world as a series of moments, like frames in a movie. They are, of course, cumulative, so the meaning of any series of moments is the result of that accumulation, a gestalt, in other words. The gestalt is pre-reflective and immediate and spontaneous. It is

for the clarification of language. The purpose of such visual records is to provide a permanent source of data for the study of otherwise evanescent phenomena – art-generated, meaning making processes<sup>3</sup>. On the basis of such records, the «teacher» (facilitator) is then in a position to suggest alternative perspectives and approaches to the artwork; or individuals may use the aesthetigram as a self-teaching device (Fig. 2).

3. R.L. Jones Quadrant: the R.L. Jones Quadrant, or model of phenomenological balance, was developed by R.L. Jones (1979) who, in order to portray the complexity of an aesthetic experience, developed a diagram, a circular structure defined by four main dimensions: *cognitive*, *intrinsic*, *affective*, and *extrinsic* (Fig. 3)<sup>4</sup>. Each of these cardinal points suggests opposite theoretical orientations. For example, *intrinsic* refers to a formalist attitude towards the artwork, whereas the *extrinsic* orientation focuses on its instrumental or utilitarian value. The *cognitive* pole represents a purely intellectual attitude towards the artwork and its opposite, the *affective*, represents an emotional response. Between these vertical and horizontal axes are their diagonal filiations – *sterile*, *primeval*, *sentimental*, and *iconic*. For Jones, in order to become aesthetic, the experience would have to move from the circle's periphery to its center, therefore becoming less extreme and move towards a phenomenological balance.

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based on the accumulated previous experiences in our lives. E.g., we know we are looking at a painting of a car because we have seen many cars before in our lives and we have certain attitudes about cars that colour our immediate response to the painting.

<sup>3</sup> While building the aesthetigrams, individuals also take notes on whether, in each moment, their attention focused on the Viewer (V), Context (C), or Object/Artwork (OA). This VCOA scheme is a helpful indicator for understanding the meaning making process. It aims at helping individuals reflect about the origin of the focus of their attention in each «experiential moment» of their encounter with an artwork. The size of the circles identifying each of the moments is important since it indicates the intensity of that signaled moment for the individual: the smaller circles means less importance, while the larger circles mean greater importance. The links between the circles indicate the unilateral or bilateral influence of the moments recorded by the participants, while their numbering indicates their sequence.

<sup>4</sup> The model *I-Thou*, *I-It* developed by the Austrian philosopher Martin Buber (1878-1965), presented in his book *I and Thou* (1958), was an important reference for the development of R.L. Jones's model of phenomenological balance.



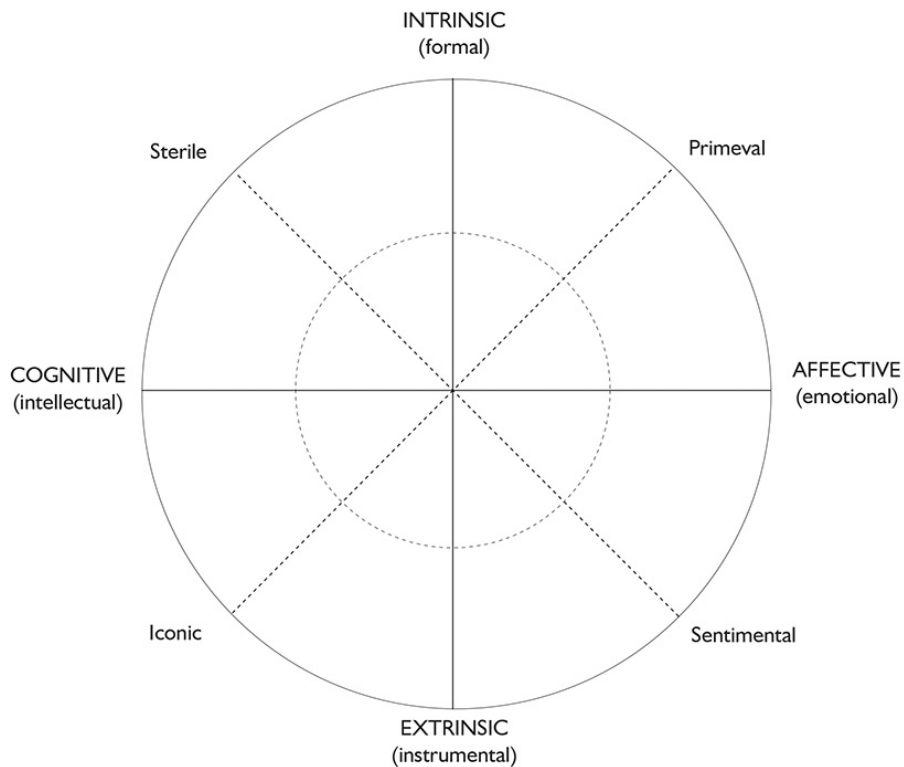


Fig. 3 – Model of Phenomenological Balance: R.L. Jones Quadrant

Boyd White included the quadrant in his meaning making strategies to encourage participants to explore the patterns in their meaning making processes. After building the aesthetigrams, participants organized their different experiential moments according to the R.L. Jones quadrant<sup>5</sup>.

4. Text writing: text writing is the fourth and last ‘tool’. It is a final written record combining the previous steps: notes, aesthetigram, quadrant and post-encounter reflections. Individuals write a text in retrospective, summing up their ‘dialog’ with the artwork.

<sup>5</sup> The comments associated to each moment were decisive to choose where to place each circle. Moments associating two or more categories could be placed in different points in the circle.

### *Research project*

In this research project we used and further developed the meaning making framework proposed by Boyd White. Our main goal was to understand how groups of adults, with and without a background in the visual arts, organize their experiences with artworks in museums, through the use of the aforementioned mediation strategies. The two main research questions framing our study were:

1. How can the use of mediation strategies guide meaning making in encounters with artworks?
2. To what extent does the academic background of the participants determine their appreciation of an artwork?

In this chapter we will focus mainly on the first research question.

### *Participants*

A group of 24 individuals were involved in our research, twenty of which were women<sup>6</sup>. The average age was approximately 33. The 24 participants were categorized as *artists* ( $N = 12$ ) and *non-artists* ( $N = 12$ ). The artists were categorized as such due to their background in the visual arts, meaning that they had a Bachelor of Arts in painting, sculpture, design, or architecture. Most of the artists (58%) and non-artists (68%) were teachers, and some of the artists ( $N = 3$ ) had also experience in art museum education. The group integrated mainly former students from the Faculty of Fine Arts and the Institute of Education of the University of Lisbon. The group consisted of individuals naturally open to experience and curious about the inner and outer world<sup>7</sup>. Regarding their cultural

<sup>6</sup> The call for the participation in the workshop was directed to master degree students in education (didactics of history, languages, geography, etc.) and arts (painting, design, sculpture) formally announced in the Institute of Education and in the Faculty of Fine Arts of Lisbon University. Participants freely participated in the workshop and a commitment document was signed between the parts.

<sup>7</sup> The Reviewed NEO-PI Personality Inventory was chosen to characterize the sample in relation to the dimension *Openness to Experience* assessed by that inventory. This dimension includes six facets (Fantasy, Aesthetics, Feelings, Actions, Ideas, and Values). The results in this dimension indicate values above average for the Portuguese population (Lima & Simões, 2000). No statistically significant differences were verified between the group of artists and the group of non-artists ( $U = 44$ ,  $ns$ ). As stated by the NEO authors, the dimension *Openness to Experience* is strongly related to some aspects of intelligence, such as divergent thinking, one of the accepted components part of the creativity construct. This dimension thus reflects a proactive search, the appreciation of experience itself, tolerance

habits, we concluded they were culturally active people, interested in the problems related with museums' communication with their different types of visitors<sup>8</sup>. They considered museums to be relevant institutions for the cultural development of individuals.

### *Workshop*

As part of our study a five-month workshop was organized. The first two months were dedicated to introducing the topic of meaning making and 'experiencing' the mediation strategies with participants. During the following months, each participant worked individually, only consulting the project team but not other participants. The aims of the workshop were: a.) to introduce participants to research in the field of educational mediations in art museums; b.) to present the theoretical model being developed within our research project; c.) to accompany participants' interpretation of artworks in museums; d.) to analyze the data produced by the participants in collaboration with the project team. Overall, participants spent an average of 40 hours on this study: 24 hours on the training workshop; around 3 hours in encounters with artworks in the museum; and 12 to 15 hours on autonomous work.

### *Artworks*

Three artworks were used in our study, two paintings and one video. The choice of these artworks was guided by the following parameters: 1.) to potentially elicit empathy in the viewers; 2.) to differ in terms of their media; 3.) to be exhibited in the permanent collection of the museum collaborating with the project (Gulbenkian Modern Art Centre, Lisbon).

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and exploration of what is not familiar. (COSTA, P.T., MACCRAE, R.R., *Manual, NEO-PI-R*, Lisbon: CEGOC, 2000 - NEO Portuguese version by M.P. de Lima e A. Simões)

<sup>8</sup> Data collection for the socio-graphic characterization of participants was based on a questionnaire with thirty questions that they filled in at the end of the workshop. During the workshop, most participants had an occupation related to teaching and training: eleven were teachers (45.8%), four were trainers (16.7%), three were museum education monitors (12.5%) and three were cultural managers (12.5%). Twenty-three participants were graduates (95.8%) and one was completing graduation; seven were postgraduates in arts and social sciences (29.2%); nine had a master's degree (37.5%) – four in arts, four in education sciences and one in sociology. During the project, eleven subjects (45.8%) said they were doing a master's degree – four in the teaching of visual arts, three in museum studies, and five in philosophy (aesthetics). During secondary education, about 50% of the participants attended art classes.

The artwork *Le Cadeau* (1982), a painting by Martha Telles (1930-2001), was used as a warm-up during the workshop<sup>9</sup>. Participants first experienced the four mediation strategies: note writing, aesthetigrams, quadrant, and text writing, using this artwork. The other two artworks used were the video by Rui Calçada Bastos (1972), *The Mirror Suitcase Man* (2004)<sup>10</sup> and the painting by Sarah Affonso (1899-1982), *Portrait of Matilde* (1932)<sup>11</sup>.



Fig. 4 – *The Mirror Suitcase Man* (2004) by Calçada Bastos (1972) DVD, 4'30" (CAM/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Photo: Paulo Costa)

<sup>9</sup> Martha Telles, *Le Cadeau* (1980), retrieved from <<https://gulbenkian.pt/cam/collection/?title=Le+cadeau>> (last access 19.10.2016).

<sup>10</sup> Rui Calçada Bastos lives and works in Lisbon and Berlin. He attended the School of Fine Arts of Porto and Lisbon. In the *The Mirror Suitcase Man* «We can assume that memories are what the man in *The Mirror Suitcase Man* keeps in his mirror suitcase [...] We focus all our attention on this object, which mirrors the city, people, transport, trees and streets. Arrivals and departures of the train or underground, doors that close, stairs that go up, station platforms, passing cars – the character's wanderings are slow, sometimes pausing, but varied, working like a record of the anonymous movements in the city». (Excerpt from: NAZARÉ, L. (2013). Os outros lados do espelho. In J.P. Fróis, B. White, C. Silva (Eds.), *Diálogos com a Arte*, Lisboa: Universidade de Lisboa, 36-37. Rui Calçada Bastos *The Mirror Suitcase Man* (2004), retrieved from <<https://vimeo.com/57058192>> (last access 15.09.2015).

<sup>11</sup> Sarah Affonso (1899-1983) is a Portuguese painter who became famous within the context of the second generation of Portuguese Modernism. *Portrait of Matilde* (1932) is an oil painting that portrays her friend Matilde Carço. This picture is a good example of her command of mild color shades and her dynamic control of the plastic surface. It succeeds in balancing the pictorial area with the prime importance of the drawing, by means of a soft modelling of volumes and the representation of shadows in order to avoid the radical evidence of the plane. Matilde is portrayed in a scene of her daily life, facing us, shoulders slightly bent forward, leaning against the back of the chair and reading a fully open book, written in compact characters, which is lying on the table. (Excerpt from: TAVARES, C., O quotidiano na pintura de Sarah Affonso. In J.P. Fróis, B. White, C. Silva (Eds.) (2013), *Diálogos com a arte*. Lisboa: Universidade de Lisboa, 37-38.





Fig. 5 – *Portrait of Matilde* (1932) by Sarah Affonso (1899-1982), Oil on canvas, 80x55.5 (CAM/ Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Photo: J.M. Costa Alves)

## Results and discussion

### *Multidimensional analysis of meaning making*

Once initial data was collected, we submitted it to qualitative and quantitative analyses. Both spheres will be addressed in this chapter. When analyzing the content of the written data: notes and final texts, indicators, subcategories, and categories, which were later grouped into dimensions, emerged. We began by comparing the results of the two groups, artists and non-artists, and further developed multiple-correspondence analyses to map the proximity between categories and their association to participants. This procedure was adopted for the notes and final texts and allowed to identify certain meaning-making profiles formed by artists and non-artists. For the aesthetigrams, we quantitatively analyzed the use, intensity, and focus of the predefined categories for artists, non-artists, and the group as a whole. The results were complemented by content analysis of the commentaries associated with the aesthetigrams of each of the participants. The analysis of the R.L. Jones quadrant was carried out in two stages: the first was centered on mapping the categories onto the quadrant, while the second aimed at mapping the dimensions, allowing us to identify their distribution in the quadrant.

In this section we will focus on the comparative multidimensional analysis of two of the artworks used in our study: the painting *Portrait of Matilde*, and the video *The Mirror Suitcase Man*. Participants followed the ‘meaning making steps’: note writing, aesthetigram, quadrant, and text writing, twice with each of the artworks, visiting them at the museum for at least two times. The repetition of the process intended for them to gain a deeper awareness of their meaning making processes, and to follow and explore the changes, and or confirmations, from their initial interpretations. Although the multidimensional analysis of each artwork revealed that there were significant differences in the presence of some of the categories between the first and second encounters<sup>12</sup>,

<sup>12</sup> The two encounters were compared considering the entire group (‘artists’ and ‘non-artists’). In the note writing of the *Mirror Suitcase Man*, there were differences between the categories *form-content* ( $U = 170.00$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ), and *taste* ( $U = 239.50$ ,  $p = 0.081$ ), both more present in the first than the second encounter. In the text writing there was a significant difference in the presence of the *interpretative* dimension ( $U = 128.50$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), more present in the first encounter than the second, in particular the categories *knowledge*, *explanation* and *judgment*. The *procedural* dimension was more present on the text writing of the second encounter ( $U = 173.50$ ,  $p = 0.011$ ). In the note writing of the *Portrait of Matilde* the categories *form-content* ( $U = 133.00$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and *association* ( $U = 191.50$ ,  $p = 0.031$ ) were both more present in the first than the second encounter. The category

as well as both groups<sup>13</sup>, in order to compare the two artworks we decided to merge the encounters and consider the results of the entire group: ‘artists’ and ‘non-artists’. The comparison between the two artworks for the note writing, aesthetigrams and text writing focused on the frequency of the categories and dimensions, as well as their intrinsic semantic content. The results between the two artworks for the R.L. Jones quadrant were compared based on the positioning of the categories and dimensions in the quadrant. We compared for each artwork and mediation ‘tool’ the differences between all categories and dimensions, and when comparing the two artworks we compared the differences between the same categories and dimensions.

### *Note writing*

Focusing on the note writing, content analysis revealed the presence of the same meaning making dimensions and categories for the two artworks<sup>14</sup>. Overall, eleven categories emerged: *form*, *form-content*, *explanation*, *hypotheses*, *association*, *knowledge*, *judgment*, *attitude*, *taste*, *well-being*, and *tension* which were grouped in four dimensions – *formal*, *cognitive*, *behavioral*, and *affective* (Tab. 2). While taking notes, participants adopted different approaches organizing their initial writings by topics, isolated words, or sentences. Some participants complemented the written records with schematic drawings of the artworks, highlighting the main focus of their analysis. In the notes, emphasis on the *formal* dimension was common in the two artworks, revealing that the initial encounters with the

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*attitude* ( $U = 201.50, p = 0.022$ ) was the only one significantly more present in the second encounter. In the text writing there were differences in the *interpretative* dimension ( $U = 102.50, p < 0.001$ ), more present in the first than the second encounter.

<sup>13</sup> For the comparison of the two groups (‘artists’ and ‘non-artists’), the two encounters were merged. In the note writing of the *Mirror Suitcase Man*, there were significant differences between the groups in the category *form* ( $U = 130.50, p = 0.001$ ), *association* ( $U = 174.50, p = 0.016$ ) and *explanation* ( $U = 197.00, p = 0.057$ ), all more present in the notes taken by the artists. In the text writing there was a significant difference in the presence of the *procedural* dimension ( $U = 166.00; p = 0.006$ ), more present in the texts of the non-artists, whereas the category *hypothesis* ( $U = 239.50, p = 0.081$ ) was more present in the texts written by the artists. The category *taste* ( $U = 240.00, p = 0.039$ ) was only identified in the texts of the non-artists. In the note writing of *Portrait of Matilde*, the *formal* dimension ( $U = 29.000, p = 0.013$ ) was more present in the notes of the artists than the non-artists. In the text writing there are significant differences only in the category *context* ( $U = 213.00, p = 0.040$ ) integrated in the *contextual* dimension, and which is more present in the texts of the non-artists.

<sup>14</sup> Differences in the quality of the content were identified only in the ‘thinner layers’ of the content analysis – subcategories and indicators.

artworks focused on identifying formal aspects and describing narrative content. This approach was complemented with cognitive, judgmental and affective inferences that, although less frequent, expressed participants' unique ways of seeing. Although content analysis highlighted a similar conceptual 'structure' for the video and the painting, expressed by the presence of similar categories and dimensions, the frequency and quality of content of each category showed the conceptual, technical and affective specificity of each work.

*Tab. 2 – Content Analysis of the Note Writing. Dimensions and Categories*

	Definition	Examples
<b>Formal</b>	References to the use and combination of the artwork's formal elements. The viewer's attention is focus on the description and analysis of the form, content, and articulation of the two.	
Form	It includes references to the formal content of the artwork. Viewers highlight the way the composition, space, shadow, colour, perspective, scale and geometry are organized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dark, black and white and not contrasting shades</li> <li>- The brush stroke is accentuated and visible, round trace</li> </ul>
Form-content	References to the formal contents of the artwork as well as what it is represented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A man appears in the plan, takes the suitcase, and in slow steps exits the scene</li> <li>- Her hair is meticulously brushed. There is a slight waving in the bangs that shows her forehead. Her face is pink and the look points down towards the book</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive</b>	Reflections are made leading to a personal meaning making.	
Explanation	Viewers produce direct observations about the links between the formal elements and the content represented. The meaning assigned can be temporary or conclusive. Questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A mirrored suitcase, carried out by a man that gradually tells fragments of a narrative</li> <li>- The end of the housewife stereotype towards a literate and active woman in society</li> </ul>
Hypotheses	Viewers question what they are observing; make conjectures, show doubt, and ask questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The character steps away with the suitcase, is this the end of the narrative?</li> <li>- The book has illustrations, it seems voluminous, is it a technical book or a storytelling one?</li> </ul>

*Tab. 2 – Content Analysis of the Note Writing. Dimensions and Categories*

Association	Individuals make associations between what is represented in the artwork and their personal experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a background sound as if I was watching an old movie.</li> <li>- The figure hairstyle places her somewhere in the 30s, the vanguards epoch.</li> </ul>
Knowledge	Direct references to the art world: artists, artworks and or artistic movements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I know the work of the artists and like it a lot.</li> <li>- Now I know who is this figure, I remember researching this artwork and found out she was a friend of Sarah Affonso, her name was Matilde.</li> </ul>
<b>Behavioural</b>	Is related to a critical assessment of the artwork and a subjective positioning towards the meaning making process.	
Judgement	Assumption of a critical, analytical and or judicative assessment of the formal and narrative content of the artwork.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annoying sound (I don't like it, it irritates me)</li> <li>- It is without a doubt a great</li> <li>- ARTWORK!</li> </ul>
Attitude	Participant's behaviour or attitudes towards the artworks: viewing, detour, and post-encounter research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I did not feel the need to see it again.</li> <li>- I intentionally sat on a bench at a distance and observed the painting.</li> </ul>
Taste	A choice that assigns a positive or negative aesthetic quality to the artwork.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I really liked the idea, considering that cinema is one of my greatest passions.</li> <li>- I like her position. I like her face and the posture of her hands.</li> </ul>
<b>Affective</b>	References to emotions or feelings evoked by the formal and narrative elements of the artwork.	
Well-being	Assign a positive quality to the artwork. Although the affective focus is on the artwork it generates in the individual a deep feeling of well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The threes move in an unconventional way and that image makes me curious.</li> <li>- Serenity. This portrait from Sarah Affonso transmits me serenity.</li> </ul>
Tension	Assign a negative quality to the artwork. Although the affective focus is on the artwork it generates in the individual a deep feeling of disquietude and tension.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mystery is the main feeling that this video transmits.</li> <li>- Is the woman's look sad or attentive?</li> </ul>

When comparing the frequency of the categories between the two artworks, statistical differences were found in the presence of the categories *form* and *well-being*, which were both more present in the notes written about the painting *Portrait of Matilde* (Tab. 3). In the video *The Mirror Man Suitcase* there was a higher incidence in the categories *form-content*, *attitude* and *tension*. We concluded that the video, due to the particular features of this medium, led participants to a longer period of observation focusing on the work's formal and narrative features. The temporal dimension of the work called for a prolonged analysis in an attempt to capture and map the totality of the presented narrative. The category *form-content* was linked in the video to direct descriptions of the action portrayed – within a plan, of the suitcase or the suitcase man, sequence of plans, between different characters. These descriptions were complemented with references to specific elements represented in the video, visual – suitcase, garden, city, trees, and or audio – origin, language.

Tab. 3 – ‘The Mirror Suitcase Man’ and ‘Portrait of Matilde’

Note Writing. Categories. Descriptive Statistics for the Whole Group						
	<i>The Mirror Suitcase Man</i>		<i>Portrait of Matilde</i>			
Categories	M	DP	M	DP	U	P
Form-content	24,75	16,46	8,88	7,45	101,00	0,000
Form	3,54	3,04	7,54	6,02	164,50	0,010
Explanation	4,88	3,21	3,38	2,16	209,50	0,102
Association	3,67	3,91	1,96	1,92	213,50	0,117
Hypotheses	2,67	2,26	2,71	2,49	287,00	0,983
Judgement	2,50	1,53	2,50	2,64	264,00	0,615
Attitude	1,83	1,97	1,08	1,64	199,00	0,056
Knowledge	1,04	1,63	1,13	1,92	274,50	0,763
Tension	1,54	2,23	0,54	1,28	209,00	0,064
Well-being	0,50	0,78	1,33	1,37	186,00	0,022
Taste	0,29	0,55	0,63	1,01	246,00	0,288



Although both *form* and *form-content* were the two categories more present in the note writing for the two artworks, there was no significant difference between the use of these categories in Sarah Affonso's painting. This shows that the formal features of the painting – technique, composition, light, and color, were 'scrutinized' more in articulation with the narrative features in the painting than in the video. In the notes written about the painting the references to *form-content* focused on the women's figure – her face, posture, clothing, hands and hairstyle, as exemplified in the following excerpt: «Her hair is meticulously brushed. There is a slight waving in the bangs that shows her forehead. Her face is pink and the look points down towards the book». Participants also made allusions to the space and objects represented, in particular the book.

The *affective* dimension, although less present in the notes of the two artworks, when compared to the other three dimensions – *formal*, *cognitive* and *behavioral*, was the one that best outlined the differences in terms of empathy with them. While comparing the categories that integrated the *affective* dimension it is possible to say that the video provoked in the participants more negative feelings than the painting, which was mainly associated with positive feelings. In the notes written about the video the category *tension* was more present than the category *well-being*, whereas in the *Portrait of Matilde* the opposite happened. The video evoked in the participants feelings of inquietude, disharmony, suspense, mystery, and expectation, whereas the main feelings evoked by Sarah Affonso's painting were calm, serenity, and empathy. In general, during the first 'reading' of the artworks, the *behavioral* dimension, including the categories *judgment*, *taste* and *attitude*, was sparsely present in the notes, meaning that participants avoided taking final standpoints about the artworks in their initial processes of interpretation. Nevertheless, the category *attitude* was more present in the notes taken during the encounters with the video.

### *Aesthetigrams*

Following the note writing, participants 'transpose' their initial written impressions into visual diagrams<sup>15</sup>. While building the aesthetigrams they used a set of predefined categories (Tab. 1). By assigning one or more categories to the individual experiential moments<sup>16</sup> of their encounters

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<sup>15</sup> The note writing took place in the context of the museum, whereas the aesthetigrams were created *a posteriori* using the visual mapping software Inspiration, which had been introduced during the workshop.

<sup>16</sup> 'Experiential moment': any single moment (in time) of which one is consciously aware.



with the artworks, they were able to organize patterns in their meaning making process. The aesthetigrams allowed them to 'fixate' and visualize their impressions on a moment-by-moment basis. The uniqueness of each participant emerged in the multiple ways they organized their aesthetigrams. Three types of aesthetigrams were identified for both artworks: *linear* (Fig. 6), *rhizomatic* (Fig. 2) and *radial*<sup>17</sup>. In the video there was a general tendency to build linear aesthetigrams, which can be linked to the temporal dimension of the medium and the narrative portrayed. The analysis of the aesthetigrams was mainly quantitative, based on the frequency of use of each category. A complementary qualitative content analysis was done focusing on the written comments associated with each experiential moment, aiming at 'confirming' participants' understanding of each category.

The category *perception* was the most used in the aesthetigrams of both artworks, with a significant difference from all the other categories, which reveals that there was also a tendency in the aesthetigrams for an analytical approach, as was previously identified in the initial note writing. When we compared the categories used in the aesthetigrams for *Portrait of Matilde* and *The Mirror Suitcase Man* there were significant differences in some of them (Tab. 4). The categories *explanation*, *memory* and *seeing as* were used more often in the aesthetigrams of the video, whereas the category *knowledge* was used more often in the aesthetigrams mapping the encounters with Sarah Affonso's painting. Focusing on the *cognitive* dimension the differences between the two artworks were in the frequency of the categories *memory* and *explanation*, both more used in the video, and the category *knowledge*, more used in the painting. The difference in the frequency of use of these three categories was echoed in the written comments associated with them. In both works the interpretations were plural, focusing on the theme-concept, the characters and narrative represented, as well as the technique. Both painting and video evoked in participants knowledge linked to the art world, as well as memories from personal experiences.

<sup>17</sup> On a linear aesthetigram the individual experiential moments, despite some inter-twinnings, are overall organized sequentially in one direction; on a linear aesthetigram they are organized around a central moment or image, for example of the artwork being 'analysed'; and on a rhizomatic aesthetigram the organization of the experiential moments is more intertwined.

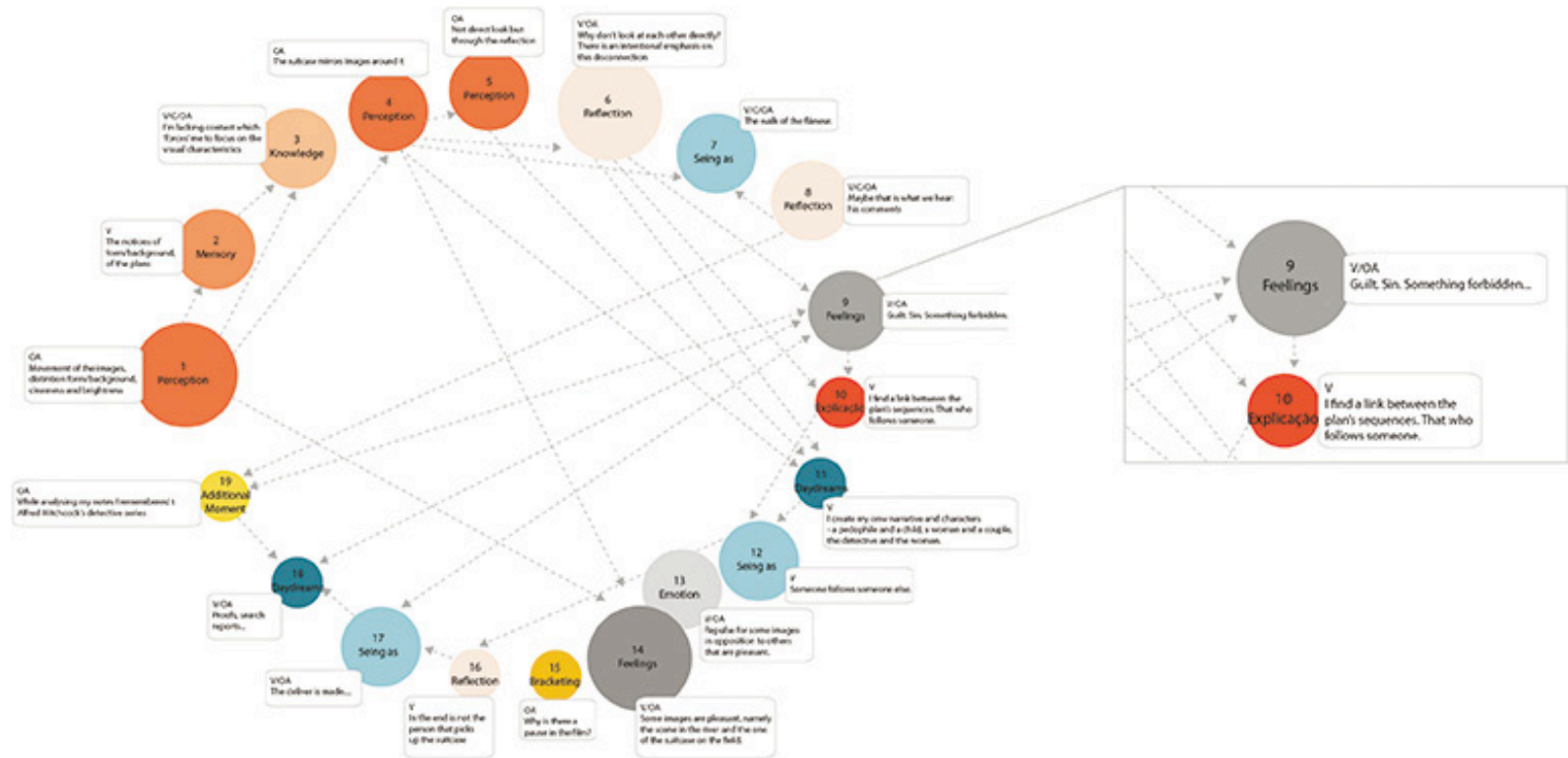


Fig. 6 – *The Mirror Suitcase Man*. Example of an Aesthetigram

Tab. 4 – ‘The Mirror Suitcase Man’ and ‘Portrait of Matilde’

<i>Aesthetigrams. Categories. Descriptive Statistics for the Whole Group</i>						
	<i>The Mirror Suitcase Man</i>		<i>Portrait of Matilde</i>			
Categories	M	DP	M	DP	U	P
Perception	16,25	11,01	13,33	6,86	-1,49	0,14
Reflection	5,96	4,86	4,96	3,68	-1,11	0,27
Explanation	4,79	3,24	2,33	2,35	-2,93	0,00
Seeing as	3,33	2,58	2,17	2,28	-1,80	0,07
Judgment	2,33	2,08	3,13	3,05	-1,08	0,28
Knowledge	1,75	1,80	3,29	2,53	-2,52	0,01
Memory	3,46	2,93	1,54	1,32	-3,02	0,00
Feelings	2,00	1,53	2,54	2,50	-0,62	0,54
Additional Moments	2,21	2,11	2,04	2,05	-0,64	0,52
Daydreams	1,13	1,15	1,50	2,04	-0,79	0,43
Bracketing	0,92	1,14	1,29	1,81	-0,90	0,37
Expectation	1,25	1,65	0,88	0,99	-1,15	0,25
Taste	0,50	0,66	1,00	1,41	-1,63	0,10
Attitude	0,67	1,01	0,63	0,88	-0,05	0,96
Emotion	0,67	1,05	0,58	1,02	-0,28	0,78

The category *seeing as* is part of the *imaginative* dimension, and was pre-defined as corresponding to the comparative act between what is shown

to the viewer and what he considers it might be. It can also be an interpretation that goes beyond the 'interior' of the artwork. In *The Mirror Suitcase Man*, this category included hypothesis, recreations and comparisons focusing on the mirrored suitcase, the overall meaning of the work, the suitcase man and the sound. Although less frequently, some associations were established with *Portrait of Matilde*, prompted by the female figure represented, the book, the setting and or the concept-theme of the painting.

### *R.L. Jones Quadrant*

When building the quadrant, participants placed the experiential moments of their aesthetigrams on the plan. The written comments associated in the aesthetigram with each moment were determinant to the decision on where to place them in the quadrant. To further understand participants' meaning making processes we grouped the aesthetigram categories in five main dimensions: *cognitive*, *affective*, *imaginative*, *behavioral*, and *wait*. When placed on the quadrant, the *cognitive* dimension highlighted an intellectualized approach to the artworks, as it was mainly distributed between the *cognitive-intrinsic* quadrants (Fig. 7-8). The *affective* dimension, when compared to the *cognitive* dimension, was less diffused in its position in the quadrant. The *behavioral*, *imaginative*, and *wait* dimensions were more scattered throughout the quadrant, presenting a similar distribution in its inner and outer areas.

While comparing the positioning of the categories in the quadrant for both artworks, there was a variation between the placement of the categories *judgment* and *attitude*, although their frequency of use in the aesthetigrams was similar (Fig. 9-10). The category *judgment* was defined as a provisional assessment, a questioning or confirmation of the initial response, a change of opinion. It could also include the decision to deliberately abstain from making any type of assessment. It is possible to visualize that the category *judgment* in Sarah Affonso's painting was positioned in the interior zone of the quadrant, which reveals that it was used in a more integrated way. Both positive and negative evaluations were elaborated around *Portrait of Matilde*, classifying the represented elements – women, setting, and book; technique – stroke and color; and the concept-theme. For the video this category shows a more fragmented positioning in the quadrant, meaning that it was more peripheral for the meaning making process. Positive and negative evaluations were made about the video, classifying the elements observed – suitcase, suitcase man, and setting; technique – sound, image; and the concept.

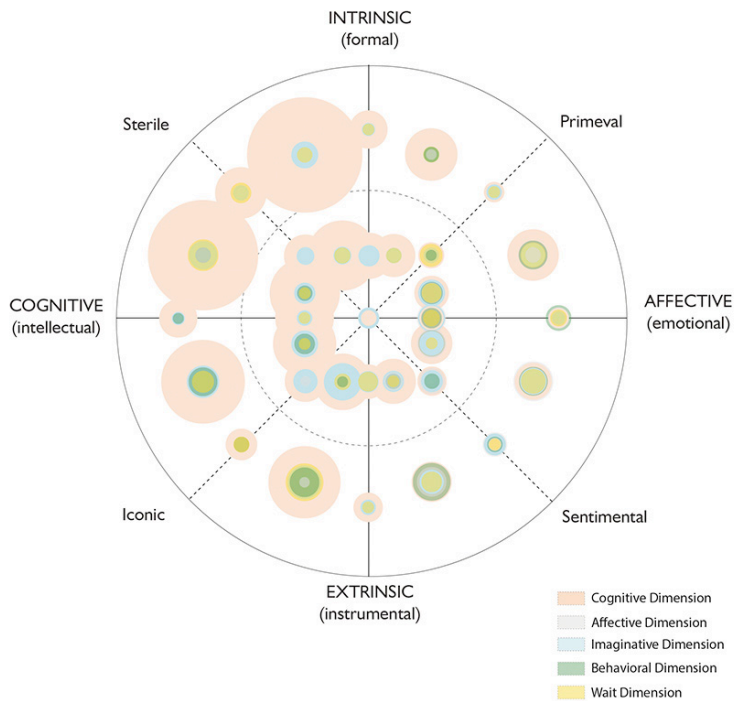


Fig. 7 – *The Mirror Suitcase Man*. R.L. Jones Quadrant. Cognitive, Affective, Imaginative, Behavioural and Wait Dimensions

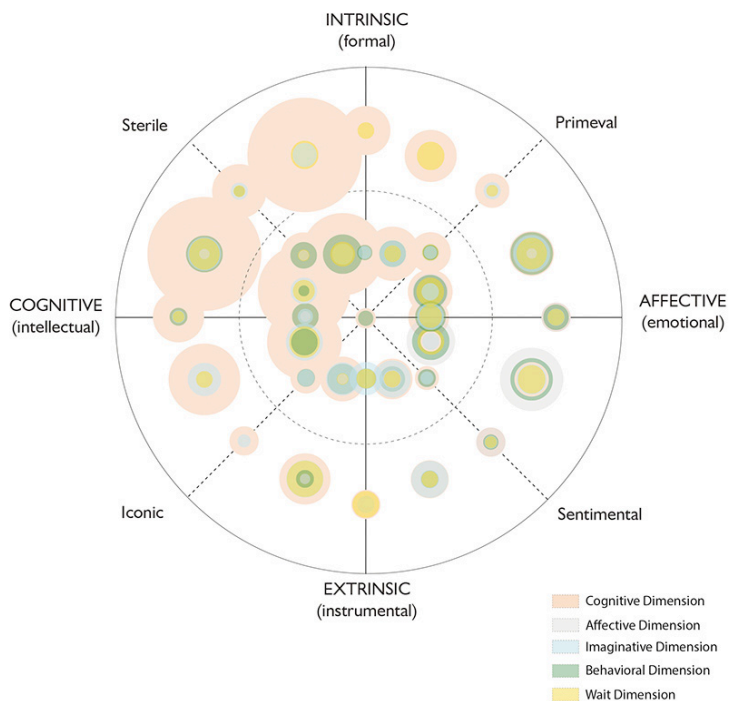


Fig. 8 – *Portrait of Matilde*. R.L. Jones Quadrant. Cognitive, Affective, Imaginative, Behavioural and Wait Dimensions

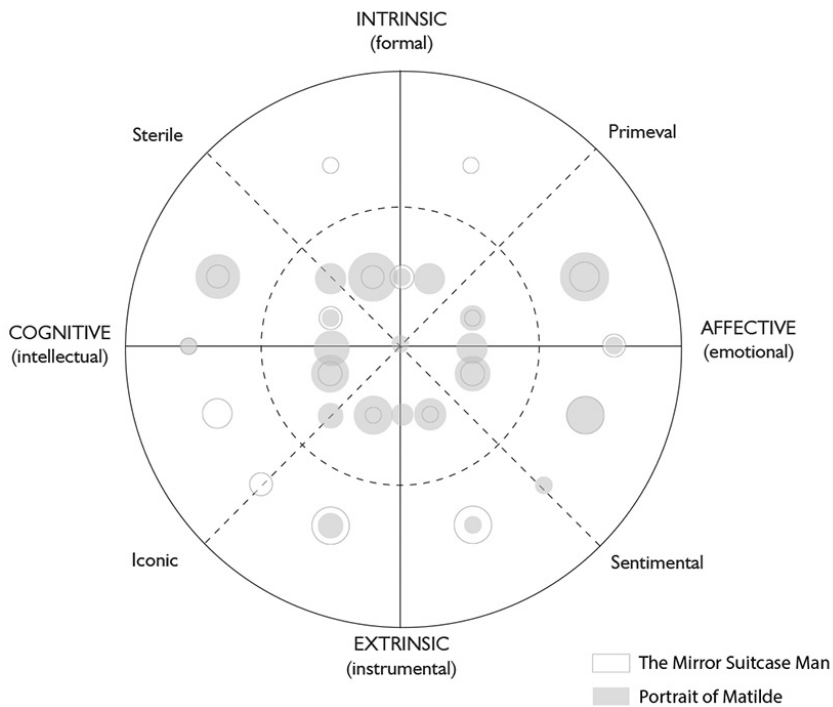


Fig. 9 – *The Mirror Suitcase Man* and *Portrait of Matilde*. R.L. Jones Quadrant. Category Judgment

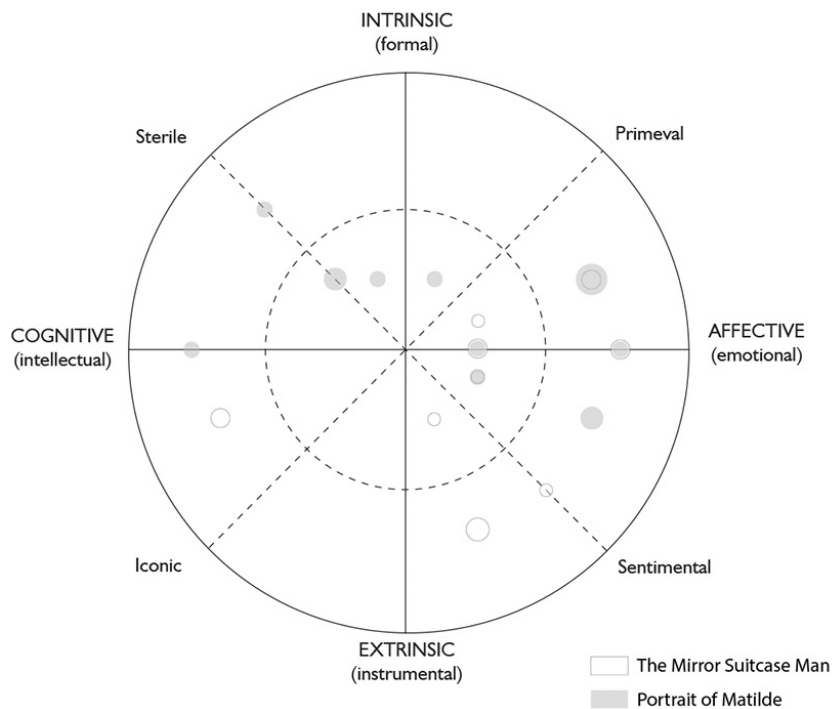


Fig. 10 – *The Mirror Suitcase Man* and *Portrait of Matilde*. R.L. Jones Quadrant. Category Attitude

The category *attitude* was defined as a positive, negative, or indifferent interaction with the artwork. Overall, attitudes could be positive or negative points of view on people, places, things, or events, all seen as the object of the attitude. For Sarah Affonso's painting the category *attitude* was positioned mainly between the quadrants *sterile* and *sentimental*. For the video this category was distributed between the quadrants *primeval* and *cognitive*. In both artworks the use of the category *attitude* was linked to participants' decision to stop their encounters. In the case of *The Mirror Suitcase Man* that decision was influenced by the conditions of the exhibition space and the poor quality of the sound and projected images, which led them to leave the room. This influence may help understand their choice to position this category in the more extrinsic zones of the quadrant.

### *Text writing*

The final texts integrated the 'three-step continuum' that led to them, revealing a cohesive approach to the artworks. One main *interpretative* dimension emerged from the content analysis of the final written texts of the two artworks (Tab. 5). This dimension incorporated the four dimensions present in the note writing – *formal*, *cognitive*, *affective*, and *behavioral*. This confluence can be interpreted as a result of participants' gradual self-awareness of their meaning making processes. There were no significant differences between the two works in regard to the interpretative dimension (Tab. 6). In both cases this was the most present dimension, however there was a tendency for a higher presence in the video. Although content analysis revealed a similar conceptual 'structure' for the two artworks, represented by the presence of similar categories and dimensions, the frequency and quality of content of each category showed once more the conceptual, technical and affective specificity of each work<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Differences in the quality of the content was only present in the 'thinner levels' of content analysis – subcategories and indicators.



Tab. 5 – Content Analysis of the Text Writing. Dimensions and Categories

	Definition	Examples
Interpretative	Open-ended possibilities presented in individuals' narratives created in response to the artworks.	
Form-content	References to the formal elements of the artwork and what is represented in it	- <i>My focus was on the still plans, as if the image could live on its own. I see a suitcase resting in a field, it seems to merge into the landscape as it reflects it. A man that walks from the left to the right picks up the suitcase. A man walks (without the suitcase) besides a woman. In a urban environment the suitcase reflects the tram that passes by</i>
Hypothesis	Includes fragments of text that reveal individuals' imaginative reveries	- <i>Suddenly, at a certain point I realized I had been driven into the projection. The suitcase was projecting the floor and a bench that were not in the image. I immediately envisioned them behind me</i>
Association	Includes references to memories, which can directly or indirectly link to individuals' experiences, and associations between formal elements and specific knowledge	- <i>The way her arms and hands were drawn reminded me neo-realistic paintings, although the theme does not resonate with that: it is a daily scene, a bourgeois context</i>
Explanation	Individuals produce interpretations about the formal and narrative elements of the represented content. The meaning-making assertions tend to be conclusive	- <i>The book, painted with curvilinear lines and its open pages, seems to represent an open atmosphere, reinforced also by the aerial point of view that give more volume while showing it from different perspectives. As if in its quality of a mere inorganic object it was also enjoying a moment of relaxation</i>
Projection-affects	Reference to emotions and feelings evoked by the formal and narrative contents of the artwork	- <i>Among swings and empty garden benches, the strange character seems to search something, reinforcing the viewer voyeuristic position</i>
Knowledge	Includes references to the art world, the artwork and artist being analysed	- <i>I did not know the work or the artist but it was a good surprise and in the future I will try to know more about this work and this young artist</i>
Judgment	Assumption of a critical, analytical and judicative thought about the formal and narrative content of the artwork	- <i>In my opinion this is a poetical exercise, an ode to life or a representation of life that allies nature and progress. The different components that form life and at the same time. An exercise that captures gestures, behaviours, and daily actions giving them with a poetic and emotional dimension</i>
Attitude	Description of the behavioural and or actions of individuals towards the artworks	- <i>I sat on one of the benches available in the museum. My contemplative and adoration attitude towards the work was intertwined with my annotations</i>

Tab. 5 – Content Analysis of the Text Writing. Dimensions and Categories

Procedural	Includes references to the instrumental dimension of the meaning making process, namely the evaluation of the mediation tools, comments on the overall experience – engagement and learning, and post-encounter moments like research for information about the work in analysis.	- The note writing about the artwork became a discovery exercise. An urgent movement to find, relate, dissect, identify, and write down everything that would come to my mind. This process allowed to a kind of materialization of the encounter with the artwork to happen.
Contextual	Includes references to the artworks visualization context, and comments on how that might have influenced the meaning making process and individuals attitude towards the artwork	- The painting is placed near other works that represent activities linked to the lives of possible intellectual figures

Tab. 6 – ‘The Mirror Suitcase Man’ and ‘Portrait of Matilde’

Text writing. Dimensions and Categories. Descriptive Statistics for the Whole Group						
	The Mirror Suitcase Man		Portrait of Matilde			
Dimensions/ Categories	M	DP	M	DP	U	P
Interpretative Dimension	20,33	9,32	16,58	7,34	220,50	0,164
Explanation	7,58	4,36	3,96	2,91	135,00	0,002
Form-content	3,21	4,81	3,25	3,21	228,00	0,209
Judgement	2,83	2,28	2,13	1,92	238,00	0,296
Attitude	2,42	2,87	1,63	1,97	234,00	0,253
Association	1,75	1,73	1,21	1,38	238,50	0,291
Projection-affects	1,33	1,61	1,13	1,57	274,50	0,768
Hypothesis	0,29	0,55	1,71	1,92	140,00	0,001
Knowledge	0,75	0,90	1,17	1,63	264,50	0,602
Procedural Dimension	2,13	2,61	2,58	3,50	269,50	0,697
Process-tools	0,83	1,90	1,08	1,93	254,50	0,417

Tab. 6 – ‘The Mirror Suitcase Man’ and ‘Portrait of Matilde’

Meaning Making	0,67	0,92	0,92	1,89	287,00	0,982
Encounters	0,63	0,71	0,25	0,53	202,50	0,036
Artworks	0,00	0,00	0,33	0,70	228,00	0,020
Contextual Dimension	0,92	1,28	1,42	1,47	228,00	0,190
Context	0,63	0,82	0,67	1,09	278,50	0,823
Secondary events	0,29	1,08	0,75	1,03	187,50	0,008

Within the *interpretative* dimension, the category *explanation* was the most used in the final texts for the two artworks when compared to all other categories, except *form-content* in Sarah Affonso’s painting. Overall, the category *explanation* included individuals’ interpretations about the formal and narrative content presented. The emphasis on this category indicates a transition from a more analytical and fragmented approach, recorded in the note writing, towards a more intellectualized and concise approach in the final texts. In *The Mirror Suitcase Man*, explanation focused on the presented narrative. Participants interpreted it as a journey, a cycle where city and countryside, mass movements and individualities dialogued, converging to an open-ended final.

Another important element was the suitcase, seen by many as the main ‘character’ of the video. Camouflaged, it merged itself with the different surroundings, which amplified the ambiguity of its role. The identity of the suitcase man was also questioned, in particular the impact of his anonymity. Participants’ approach to the conceptual dimension of the video highlighted its dichotomist dimension: reality/fiction, mobility/immobility, viewing/being viewed, which unfolded through an open, enigmatic and mysterious narrative. The following excerpts exemplify the intertwinement of their interpretations:

«The suitcase is the center of the narrative and the true protagonist of the action. This daily object acts as a box whose function is to contain and dislocate objects without revealing them. It becomes mobile through human interaction. While reflecting its surrounding the suitcase acts as a screen, and even when it is still it can portrait movement. [...] In a way the mirror symbolizes the eye and assumes the presence of something alive». (Sarah, ‘artist’)

«The understanding that the suitcase and the man represent the key to a mystery makes me think that the suitcase, which is always closed, contains everything and everyone that it reflects. That was for me the explanation and the reason for this succession of images. An accessory object from a random business man has in this video a crucial role due to its mirrored surface». (Emma, 'artist')

«There is a very strong aesthetic in the artwork being analyzed – the use of black and white and the sound reminded me of the 8mm projectors. I think it invokes a time of the past and memory. The video reveals a succession of images that are linked by quick light halos, which in association with the theme of the images and the way they were filmed, contributes to the unfolding of the video as a succession of oneiric and calm images, as if representing a dream». (Anna, 'non-artist')

Also framed by the *interpretative* dimension, the category *hypothesis* was more present in Sarah Affonso's painting. It includes fragments of text that reveal individuals' imaginative reveries. In the *Portrait of Matilde*, participants projected in the figure possible actions and placed themselves in the role of the artist. Other hypothesis questioned the identity of the women, the book and the context and theme represented, as exemplified in the following excerpt: «The position of the figure, leaning with no tension, seems to make her closer to the viewer, to me. It reveals a certain intimacy, as if we were part of a reserved and sheltered space»; «We seem to wait for her to finish her reading so that she could look at us and give us the opportunity to know her better»; «How would a woman be represented today? Sitting in front of a computer?» Two smaller dimensions were identified in the content analysis of the final texts – *procedural* and *contextual*. The *procedural* dimension was, for both artworks, the second most present, although it was significantly less frequent than the *interpretative* dimension. In the final texts participants presented a meta-analysis of their meaning making processes, revealing a self-awareness of their own learning. The *contextual* dimension was the least present in the two artworks, when compared to the other two dimensions – *interpretative* and *procedural*. Although some attention was given to the impact of the context – museum setting, surrounding artworks, its influence on the works' interpretation was marginal.

### *Summary and conclusions*

«I have forgotten the word I intended to say,  
and my thought, unembodied, returns to the  
realm of shadows»

Ossip Mandelstam, *The Swallow*

Meaning making is a dynamic and multidimensional learning process intimately linked to the motivation of individuals and to their awareness of their experiences with the arts. With this research project we aimed at further developing the theory of meaning making and understanding the phenomenology of the reception of artworks. The individuals who participated in this study belong to a specific culture, and are informed by similar educational and cultural backgrounds. This cultural, social and personal knowledge was reflected in their interpretative and learning processes. Although the encounters with the artworks and subsequent engagement with the meaning making strategies we proposed was done individually, participants shared with the research team their learning processes and discussed their interpretation and use of each meaning making strategy.

The meaning making approach introduced to the participants in our study implied the 'step-by-step' use of four strategies: note writing, aesthetigrams, quadrant, and text writing. The notes were a direct and free written record of the encounters with the artworks. The content analysis of the notes revealed an emphasis on a formal approach, focused on identifying the formal aspects and describing the narrative content of the artworks. This approach was complemented with cognitive, judgmental and affective inferences that, although less frequent, expressed participants' unique ways of seeing. The *affective* dimension, although less present, was the one that best outlined the differences in terms of empathy with each artworks e.g. the video evoked in the participants feelings of inquietude, disharmony, and suspense, whereas the "Portrait of Matilde" evoked calm, serenity, and empathy.

The aesthetigrams allowed participants to organize 'visual concept maps', intertwining the initial written notes and predefined categories. In an educational context, the purpose of the aesthetigrams is to potentiate a platform for dialogue between the teacher/mediator and the student/viewer, allowing for alternative perspectives and approaches to the artwork to emerge. The quadrant reorganized the individual experiential moments included in the aesthetigrams onto a plan limited by four cardinal poles: cognitive, affective, extrinsic and intrinsic. After the first encounter with

each artwork there was a broader tendency to scatter the experiential moments in the quadrant, whereas after the second encounter those were grouped more in the center of the quadrant. This tendency is in tune with R.L. Jones's theory, that an individual's experience is more 'aesthetic', or at least more integrated, when it is more concentrated in the center of the quadrant. The final text writing was a summary of the interpretative process resulting from the encounters with the artworks and worked as a more poetic and conclusive narrative, which incorporated the global engagement with each artwork. One main interpretative dimension emerged from the content analysis of the final written texts of the two artworks. This convergence can be interpreted as a result of participants' gradual self-awareness of the different dimensions involved in their meaning making processes: sensory, cognitive and communicative.

The results obtained in this project open up possibilities for the conception and organization of strategies for the training of art museum mediators and teachers in different fields.

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Martina De Luca

*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 heritage<sup>1</sup>.

### *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 – museum<sup>2</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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 2014<sup>3</sup>.

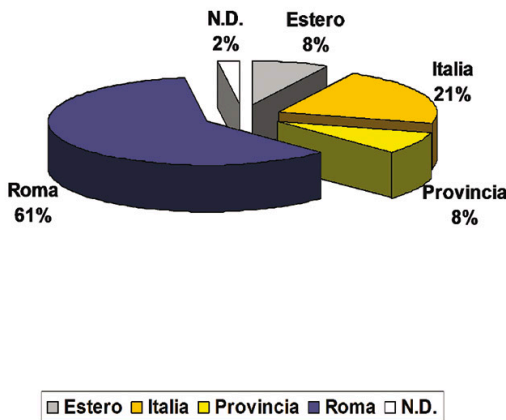


Fig. 1 – Schools' Geographical Origin

<sup>3</sup> 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%)<sup>4</sup>. 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 services<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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 valid<sup>6</sup>.

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

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<sup>6</sup> The 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 1985<sup>7</sup> and is still reaffirmed in the *Indicazioni per il curricolo per la scuola dell'infanzia e per il primo ciclo d'istruzione* (2007)<sup>8</sup>. 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»<sup>9</sup>. 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

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<sup>7</sup> 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).

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Public Education, Directive No. 68, 3rd August 2007.

<sup>9</sup> 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 tours<sup>10</sup>, 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 classroom<sup>11</sup>.

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%

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<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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 updating<sup>12</sup>.

## *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?

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<sup>12</sup> 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 realities<sup>13</sup>. 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 visit<sup>14</sup>.

#### *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

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<sup>13</sup> The dossier is downloadable from the museum website <[www.gnam.beniculturali.it](http://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*.

<sup>14</sup> 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 scantiness<sup>15</sup>, this research has provided some

<sup>15</sup> 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 GNAM<sup>16</sup>.

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

<sup>16</sup> 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.

## Holger Höge

### *Visiting Museums: Some Do and Some Do Not*

#### ABSTRACT:

The number of visits in museums is remarkable, in Germany there are roughly 111 million visits per year (Institut für Museumsforschung, 2014). But they are due to only 30-40% of the 80 million inhabitants of Germany, i.e. 60-70% of the inhabitants do not visit museums. The question is: why?

Studies on non-visitors in the past (e.g. Hood, 2004; Schäfer, 1996) usually suffered from (a) being done outside Germany or (b) having used a limited number of respondents. After evaluating several North-German museums, it became obvious that most often (a) well-educated people who are (b) in an advanced age range are the typical museum visitors. Hence, it was necessary to know more about less educated and younger people who do not visit museums. Online surveys are perfectly adequate to reach such people and computer aided surveys allow for quite a lot of measures (a) to avoid biases (e.g. influence of interviewers), (b) using filter items and (c) to reduce order effects. Moreover, we successfully got data from all parts of Germany thus reducing the range of possible negative influences with respect to local peculiarities. Having achieved a sample of more than 3500 respondents the basis was given for detailed analyses. Some of the most important results concern the role of museums in their relation to the respondents. In short: young people do not have any relation to museums! Especially, those of less educated socio-economic status do not see any advantage in visiting museums. They see museums as boring, old-fashioned and being absolutely distant from their ordinary course of life, i.e. museums have a negative image among young people. Details on the results of their leisure time and motivation are given.

Worldwide museums are in the service of their societies to entertain and educate people. The number of visits in museums is remarkable, in Germany there are roughly 111 million visits per year (Institut für Museumsforschung, 2014). But these visits are due to only a minor portion of the 80 million inhabitants (roughly 30-50%; Wegner, 2010), in other words: a majority of German citizens does not visit a museum<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> As there is no general accepted definition of non-visitors they vary from one study to the other; hence the percentage of «real» non-visitors cannot be determined precisely.

Two questions arise: (a) what are the reasons for not visiting? and (b) what could be done to increase the number of visits and visitors, respectively?

There have been studies on non-visitors in the past (e.g. Schäfer, 1997a; Hood, 2004; Höge, 2008) but usually those results suffer from having used a limited number of variables or respondents. Hence, we did a new study using an online research strategy. Based on several evaluations of North-German museums (Höge, 2013 and earlier) we knew (a) that their visitors are well-educated (having received academic degrees or at least have the licence to study at a university) and (b) that they are in an advanced age range (two thirds of visitors are 40-80 years old). Hence, it was necessary to know more about younger people who do not visit museums. Having more than 3500 respondents from all parts of Germany the basis was given for detailed analyses. Some of the most important results concern the role of museums in their relation to the life-situation of respondents. In short, among young non-visitors there is only one relation to museums: that of refusal. Non-visitors do not see any advantage in visiting museums; even worse they regard museums as boring, old-fashioned and being absolutely distant from their careers and their ordinary course of life. Consequences of these results are outlined and suggestions for a new role of museums are given.

### *Introduction*

There are many reasons for not visiting museums. To complain e.g. about museum fatigue is well-known at least since 1916 when Gilman (who was a curator at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts) reported on problems of reading labels in exhibitions. He documented the «physical efforts» photographically (1916: 62-71) and he also made suggestions how to «reduce the muscular effort of good seeing to a minimum» (1916: 71; for a recent review of research on museum fatigue see Davey, 2005). Such complaints increased in number, but even the visitor-orientation-turn of museums in the 1980s did not change the situation completely. Still we find labels which are difficult to read and seats and settees which are either missing completely or are highly uncomfortable (e.g. Höge, 2013 and earlier).

Sure, the situation nowadays is not that bad as back in 1916, there are museums which really take care of visitors and their needs as human beings (Beckmann, 2014). But there may be quite a number of persons who once had bad experiences in museums and, consequently, do not go



Fig. 1 – Typical example of a well-designed museum settee that is hard to sit on (photo: Holger Höge)

for a museum visit anymore. One may suppose that this may be at least one of the reasons why many people believe museums to be environments of discomfort, why museums developed into no-go areas for a considerable part of the society. This is the more important as visiting a museum is a leisure time activity and besides all problems of defining what leisure really means (Parr & Lashua, 2004) one of the core concepts of leisure is recreation, relaxing in a comfortable atmosphere.

Another problem may be seen in the differing interests of visitors and non-visitors. Nearly all evaluations we did in different types of museums showed that visitors stated to have a general interest in culture often accompanied by a special interest in the topic of the exhibition they are visiting (Höge, 2013a, 2013b, 2012, 2007, 2002; Höge & Müller-Dohm, 2006, 2005). This kind of interest seems to be a basic personality factor that leads to a museum visit, i.e. we find visitors who are highly intrinsically motivated (= doing an activity for its own sake because it is interesting and satisfying in itself). It is reasonable to believe that those persons even then go to a museum if the conditions of presentation and the general setting of the museum are not really visitor-friendly, they stand effects of museum fatigue and museum discomfort.



One of the standard methods of increasing usage of a service or selling goods is to be seen in adding to an existing layer of intrinsic motivation that of extrinsic motivation (=doing an activity for reaching an external goal). Rackow (2008) showed in studying the audiences of three different types of museums under reference to Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination-Theory (1985) that their motivational structure is different. Also, it turned out that Deci & Ryan's basic factors (autonomy, competence and psychological relatedness) were not fully met by the results instead there was an eight factor structure in the motivation of museum visitors (1 self-enlargement, 2 competence, 3 voluntariness, 4 social relatedness, 5 change of perspective, 6 visit as obligingness, 7 understanding, 8 opportunity for explorative behavior).

As complex as this may be, if the fit of personal interests and the topic of exhibitions is able to stand an uncomfortable museum setting a lack of such an interest will at least contribute to a refusal of museum visits. Therefore we asked about what the interests of non-visitors may be and tried to find out if there might be attractors sufficient to function as extrinsic motivators.

As interest may not be the only reason for museum visits and as we do not know enough on young non-visitors, especially, it is possible that there may be several differences between the two groups that could explain the refusal of museum-going among young non-visitors. Consequently, to reduce wrong interpretations we took some control variables into consideration. As visiting museums is a leisure time activity we asked about the amount of leisure time available for visitors and non-visitors to find out if such a difference might give an explanation. The field of leisure, however, is still not well understood (even the term is under discussion and some prefer to call it free-time; Stebbins, 2003). Although it seems unquestionable that during leisure time a kind of non-work experience seems to be essential, it is up to further research to determine what kind of experience this may be and in what way it may emerge (see Neville, 2014). Moreover, during leisure (or free-time) a lot of other activities compete with the museum visit. As the leisure time orientation of visitors and non-visitors may be different we implied a measure of the general attitude towards leisure (Crandall & Slivken, 1982) to find out if such a difference could explain the preference or refusal of museums visits.

Also, we wanted to have data on the educational status of non-visitors as this might be a predictor of museums visits – the literature often reports that the higher the educational level the more likely is a museum visit (Wengner, 2010).

Another finding in studies on the audiences of museums is that their age-distribution is shifted in the direction of higher ages (see Höge, 2013 and

earlier). Usually, persons between roughly 20 and 35 years of age are the rare case among visitors. Hence, we tried to get especially young non-visitors to answer a questionnaire on museum visits. Finally, as we expected that non-visitors will not work on a «museum questionnaire» the purpose of the study was concealed by announcing it as an investigation on leisure time. However, concealing was not only a measure to reach the persons we are interested in, much more it had the advantage that we could ask about leisure time activities that may be more attractive for non-visitors than to go to a museum.

### *Method*

In an online survey (using LimeSurvey software; version 1.91 RC4; online from March 2011 to July 2012 = 17 months) we achieved to contact internet-users from all areas of Germany. Online studies generally do not give access to the full range of the population as not all households have admission to the internet and especially older people neither have admission nor are they familiar with computers. However, this was an advantage as it was intended to have young German inhabitants in the sample. Unfortunately, it was not possible to get groups of such young people involved who could be expected to have low socio-economic status: it was not possible to reach fan-clubs of football teams or youth groups of trade unions. Sure, it is questionable if they really would have participated in this survey but it would have been great to have a look into quite another section of the younger population. Also, we took advantage of a computer assisted questionnaire as it allows for quite a lot of measures to avoid biases (e.g. reducing influence of interviewers; considerable reduction of order effects by randomization, arrangement of special types of statements or questions, filtering, etc.). Moreover, some studies comparing the responses resulting from a paper and a computer version of the same questionnaires did not show differences between both versions (von Lindern, 2006; Blank, 2013).

The items (presented on 10 screen pages in total) consisted of different aspects measuring

1. the frequency of museum visits per year. According to this data Ss were divided into three groups for further analyses:
  - (a) Non-Visitors (= GNV = group of non-visitors; they go to museums «nearly never»<sup>2</sup>),

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<sup>2</sup>The term «nearly never» (instead of «never») was used, because German schools usually visit museums, i.e. nearly everybody at least once visited a museum, especially among the younger generation.

- (b) Potential Museum Visitors (= PMV = group of visitors going to museums 1-4 times per year; they were termed *potential visitors* as they potentially could go more often to museums), and
  - (c) Museum Fans (= MSF = group of visitors going to museums 5 times or more per year);
2. the general attitude towards leisure (Leisure Attitude Scale; Crandall & Slivken, 1982; 10 items translated by the author, complemented by 2 additional items according to Opaschowksi, 2006: 12-13; i.e. items No. 11 and 12: Sometimes I have no idea what to do with my leisure time/If I really have free time it is already planned by others);
  3. specified leisure activities. Respondents had to select from a list of 22 different leisure activities 5 which they ranged according to personal preference. Also, as leisure time activities are highly individual (see Stalker, 2011; Opaschowski, 2006) an open question asked about the «most liked» leisure activity in case it was different from the activities offered in the list;
  4. group-specific reasons to go/not go for museums: These analyses were done separately for GNV, PMV, MSF respondents and differ in the topics aimed at. From the group of Non-Visitors we wanted to learn (a) why they do *not* go to museums (they could select up to 5 reasons from a list of 18) and (b) what reasons they believe could make them visit yet (19 reasons to select from). PMV and MSF persons were asked about the reasons to go to a museum (they selected up to 5 from a list of 15 given reasons). Also, Potential Museum Visitors were asked to tell what reasons could increase their number of visits and the Museum Fans were asked if they had suggestions for making museums better.

Moreover, we looked for some other aspects of museums and leisure (e.g. knowledge of types of museums and amusement parks; the degree of familiarity of Oldenburg museums and leisure parks) which are omitted here for reasons of space (full details are to be found in Höge, 2013a). Finally, we asked for data on socio-economic variables like age or educational level etc.

In total we had 4296 participants; 699 questionnaires, however, were not completely finished, consequently, they were excluded from the sample, i.e. we had 3597 participants who completely filled in the questionnaire. Results reported here are based on this sample.

### *Results and discussion*

First, we should note that we were successful in getting younger people as respondents: 92.4% of them are between 14 and 30 years of age, hence, there are only a few participants who are older than 40 (see Fig. 2).

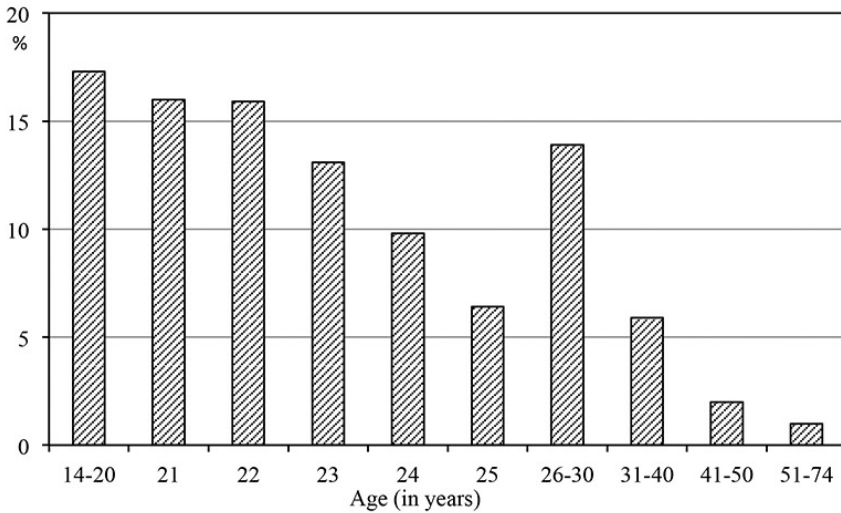


Fig. 2 – Age distribution (in %) of the sample ( $N=3597$ )

### *Frequency of visits per year*

According to the self-ratings of the yearly frequency of museum visits we found that 35.9% of the respondents belonged to the group of non-visitors (GNV as defined above), 56.2% were potential museum visitors (PMV), and 7.9% were museum fans (MSF; see Tab. 1). As bad as it is for museums that there are only very few museum fans (visiting museums more than 5 times/year) we were satisfied to have 1291 (= 35.9%) young persons who *nearly never* go to museums. The reasons why these persons do not visit museums should give some insight to their motivational basis and it should be possible to give some ideas how to make museums more attractive for this group. One may argue, however, that it is not the missing motivation that might hinder museum visits but simply the time available or the general attitude on leisure time that may be different for the groups. Hence, we asked about the amount of leisure time.

*Tab. 1 – Mean leisure time in hours (M) per week*

Groups of visit frequencies		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Non-visitors	(GNV)	28,09	17,4	1247
Potential visitors	(PMV)	25,16	15,8	1973
Museum fans	(MSF)	24,25	17,7	275
Total				3495*

Note: \*Due to omissions of respondents the number of entries at the question about leisure time did not reach 3597

An analysis of variance revealed that indeed the group of non-visitors reported to have significantly more leisure time (roughly 28 hours per week) than the other groups ( $F = 13.95$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\eta^2_{\text{part}} = 8\%$ ). Therefore it is very unlikely that a lack of time is the reason for non-visitors not to go to museums. Especially, as the MSF reported the lowest amount of leisure time (roughly 24 hours per week) one may conclude that time is no decisive reason at all to dismiss museum visits.

#### *Educational level and frequency of visits*

As we knew from different evaluations of museums that most visitors are well educated one could expect that non-visitors participating in the online survey might show a lower educational status. However, these differences are small: 93.2 % of the group of non-visitors had either a university entrance diploma (in German: Abitur) or an entrance licence for a university of applied sciences (according to the German educational system: Fachhochschulreife) or even a university degree (BA / MA; Diploma). The respective percentages for the PMV and MSF groups are 97.6% or 96.5%. Put differently, there were only a few respondents who had lower educational status. Although the highest percentage of lower educational level is to be found among non-visitors, 6.8% is not enough to give intensive interpretation to this fact. It is regrettable that all trials to reach young people of less educated status were not successful as it would have been highly interesting to find out more about this specific section of non-visitors. Anyway, based on the results it seems clear that a difference

in educational level does not account for the differences in the number of museum visits.

### *Leisure Attitude*

Another idea to explain for differences in museum visits is that the general attitude towards leisure time may be different between the three groups. Therefore, we compared the groups by using a German translation of the 10-item Leisure Attitude Scale (Crandall & Slivken, 1982; complemented by 2 further items based on Opaschowski, 2006) and found indeed that respondents do differ in this respect. A multivariate analysis of variance revealed that there are significant differences (Wilks-Lambda = 0.955;  $F = 7.01$ ;  $df_{\text{hypothesis}} = 24$ ;  $df_{\text{error}} = 7166$ ;  $p < .001$ ) but the effect ( $\eta^2_{\text{part}} = 2,3\%$ ) is not very strong. Post hoc multiple comparisons by Scheffé Tests proved differences at 5 items of the Leisure Attitude Scale (6-point scale: 0 = does not apply; 5 = does fully apply):

- Item 1: My leisure is my most enjoyable time – non-visitors (GNV) agree to this item the most ( $M = 3.59$ ), followed by the group of potential visitors ( $M = 3.41$ ), but the least agreement is found with Museum Fans (MSF;  $M = 3.21$ ; all  $p_s < .02$ ).
- Item 10 (Leisure time is great) shows a similar picture: it is significantly more liked by GNV ( $M = 4.30$ ) than by MSF persons ( $M = 4.13$ ;  $p < .01$ ; no significant difference of MSF and PMV group).
- Item 5: I would like to lead a life of complete leisure – is rejected by all groups, but significantly more by the MSF ( $M = 1.35$ ) and PMV ( $M = 1.45$ ) groups compared to the non-visitors (GNV;  $M = 1.58$ ; both  $p_s < .04$ ).
- Item 8 (People should seek as much leisure as possible in their lives) is rather rejected (GNV:  $M = 2.80$ ; PMV:  $M = 2.73$ ) but the Museum fans (MSF) reject it more intensively ( $M = 2.56$ ) than the other 2 groups (the difference between MSF and GNV:  $p < .01$ ).
- Item 12 (Sometimes I don't know what to do with my leisure time) is rejected by all groups but strongly by the MSF persons ( $M = 1.35$ ), to lesser degrees by the PMV ( $M = 1.84$ ) and GNV group ( $M = 2.10$ ) and all groups do differ significantly from each other (all  $p_s < .001$ ).

In sum, the group of non-visitors is more leisure time oriented than the other 2 groups, GNVs believe that leisure time is most enjoyable and they want more of it. Conversely, museum fans (MSF) seem to be more work-oriented, they possibly regard learning and education in general as more attractive. It might be possible that they enjoy serious leisure more than

casual leisure (see Shen & Yarnal, 2010 for a discussion of these concepts; Orr, 2006). But things are more complicated.

Opaschowski (2006: 12-13) called attention to the taboos of leisure time attitudes, i.e. people in fact spend time for doing nothing or watching TV but do not tell about this as it is a kind of relative inactivity (so-called sedentary leisure activities; but Rhodes & Dean, 2009, report that such behaviors are planned as well as e.g. health behaviors). And if they tell about not having full control on their leisure time it might diminish their feeling of personal independence (the voluntariness factor; Rackow, 2008). Usually, leisure time receives highly positive values – it is an ideal that distorts reports on leisure time (Opaschowski, 2006: 21). To have more insight into such processes we confronted Ss with item 12 (Sometimes I don't know what to do with my leisure time) and item 2 (If I really have time for leisure it is planned by others) to get some indicator for (a) a possibly boring undecidedness in leisure time (item 12) and (b) on influences on leisure time that may come from other persons (item 2). While item 12 was more often agreed upon by the non-visitors (i.e. they are more often undecided) this was not the case for MSF persons (see above). With respect to the influences from other persons (i.e. others decide what to do during leisure time) all groups reject strongly to suffer from such an effect (no significant differences between the groups; grand  $M = 1.87$ ). Hence, the picture we broadly get from these data on non-visitors is that they are longing for more leisure time – and this time is not influenced by other persons –, but they have not always an idea what to do with it. This may result in boredom which may have rather negative consequences (see Stebbins, 2003).

### *Specified leisure activities*

The survey provided 22 randomly presented leisure activities (see [Tab. 2](#)) in part based on activities reported in the literature (see e.g. Carius & Gernig, 2010; Rhodes & Dean, 2009; Opaschowski, 2006; Hartel, 2003) out of which Ss should select 5 and range them according to their personal preference (rank 1 = most preferred). This allows to identify how frequently which activities are given to range 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5. As the literature reports that leisure time activities can be highly different (see e.g. Shen & Yarnal, 2010; Carius & Gernig, 2010; Opaschowski, 2006) one of the 22 items was *to pursue another hobby* to give room for specific personal leisure-activities (and Ss could specify later what kind of hobby this is).

The analyses of the responses to the 22 leisure activities resulted in 11 tables which cannot be given here for reasons of space (full details are to be



found in Höge, 2013a: 599-610). Instead we present (a) a table listing the 22 activities which were selected for the first two ranks by the total sample of respondents (see Tab. 2) and give (b) three summary reports describing main results for each of the visitor groups (GNV, PMV, MSF; see below).

*Tab. 2 – Most liked leisure time activities of the total sample (N = 3597), which were selected for the first two ranks. Pos = position within rank; f = absolute frequencies; % = relative frequencies*

Pos	Items at rank 1	f	%	Items at rank 2	f	%
1	Spending time with friends	1043	29,1	Spending time with friends	736	20,5
2	Spending time with my family	627	17,5	Spending time with my family	497	13,9
3	Sports	485	13,5	Sports	354	9,9
4	Trips/travelling	199	5,6	Spending time in the garden/nature	230	6,4
5	Relaxing	173	4,8	Trips/travelling	227	6,3
6	Spending time in the garden/nature	153	4,3	Reading	221	6,2
7	Reading	145	4,0	Relaxing	178	5,0
8	Plying parlor/card/ computer games	118	3,3	Surfing in the internet	174	4,9
9	Making music/singing	110	3,1	Watching TV/Video/ DVD	164	4,6
10	Pursuing another hobby	102	2,8	Listening to music	155	4,3
11	Surfing in the internet	90	2,5	Plying parlor/card/ computer games	152	4,2
12	Listening to music	86	2,4	Making music/singing	94	2,6
13	Watching TV/Video/DVD	80	2,2	Volunteering	76	2,1
14	Volunteering	50	1,4	Shopping	59	1,6
15	Shopping	32	0,9	Being active manually	54	1,5

Tab. 2 – Most liked leisure time activities of the total sample ( $N = 3597$ ), which were selected for the first two ranks. Pos = position within rank; f = absolute frequencies; % = relative frequencies

16	Being active manually	29	0,8	Pursuing another hobby	49	1,4
17	Photographing	21	0,6	Going to concerts	47	1,3
18	Continuing education	16	0,4	Going to the cinema	40	1,1
19	Going to the cinema	12	0,3	Continuing education	29	0,8
20	Going to concerts	10	0,3	Photographing	28	0,8
21	Going to the theater	2	0,1	Going to the theater	16	0,4
22	Visiting an exhibition	2	0,1	Visiting an exhibition	5	0,1
	Subtotal	3585	100,0	Subtotal	3585	100,0
	Missing	12		Missing	12	
	Total	3597		Total	3597	

As is shown in Tab. 2 the most impressive frequencies of the whole sample are given to 3 activities: *spending time with friends*, *spending time with my family*, and *sports*. At rank 1 these variables sum up to 60.1% of responses. Rank 2 shows 44.3% of responses for the same variables, so one may conclude that leisure time activities have their center in the sociability function of leisure. Also, it is obvious that activities like *continuing education*, *going to cinemas/concerts/theaters* or *photographing*, *visiting an exhibition* are the least liked ones and sum up to only 1.2% (rank 1) and to 3.2% at rank 2. So, it is clear that activities like these have no chance to reach any greater importance in the leisure time of younger people. This picture does not change very much if we look at the results of the three groups (GNV, PMV, MSF) separately (for all five ranks). Especially, even the Museum Fans do not put *visiting an exhibition* on more prominent positions.

1. The results for the full sample surely determine the general picture in leisure time activities but to discriminate between the three groups of visitors we give a summary report on their responses:
2. Non-visitors (GNV): The activity receiving highest frequencies (= position 1) at rank 1-4 is *spending time with friends* which is

followed (= position 2) by *spending time with my family* (at ranks 1 and 2; position 3 at rank 3). At rank 5 the first position is different: *Watching TV/Video/DVD*. This means that none of the ‘cultural’<sup>3</sup> activities reaches a first place, indeed *going to the theater* or *visiting an exhibition* are given the last position possible (22) at all ranks (1-5). However, *continuing education* is placed better (position 18) than *visiting an exhibition*.

3. Potential Museum Visitors (PMV): The activity receiving highest frequencies (position 1) at rank 1 is *spending time with friends* and this continues at ranks 2 and 3. It is followed by *spending time with my family* (position 2 at ranks 1 and 2). Ranks 4 and 5 show a different picture; rank 4, position 1: *spending time in the garden/nature*; rank 5, position 1: *reading*. Similar to the GNV the PMV group places *going to the theater* or *visiting an exhibition* at last positions (21 and 22) at rank 1-4. Only a minor change is to be found at rank 5: *visiting an exhibition* is at position 22 and position 21 is *photographing*. *Continuing education* does not reach a much better position (18-20) at all ranks compared to the GNV respondents.

Museum Fans (MSF) do not differ strongly from the other two groups. First, the activities *spending time with friends* (position 1 at ranks 1-3) is followed by *spending time with my family* (position 2 in ranks 1 and 2). Ranks 4 and 5, however, differ in position 1: at rank 4 it is occupied by *reading* and at rank 5 by *trips/travelling*. *Continuing education* as well as *visiting an exhibition* are placed differently compared to the other 2 groups. At rank 1 *continuing education* is listed at position 17 and *visiting an exhibition* at position 18. At rank 2 *continuing education* moves up to position 14 while *visiting an exhibition* is placed at position 20. This picture continues at ranks 3-5, i.e. both activities reach higher positions (12 and 13 at rank 5).

Seen in context it seems clear that leisure time is mainly occupied by contacts to friends and families – for all three groups and very much in line with the life conditions of human beings between 14 and 30 years of age (see Tab. 2). Remarkably, ‘cultural’ activities do not reach first positions, i.e. they are not among the most liked leisure activities although the respondents belong to the well-educated part of the society. Even *Sports* (position 3 in Tab. 2) ranges better than *reading* (position 7 and 6 in Tab. 2) and *volunteering* as well as *working manually* range better than *going to*

<sup>3</sup> This term is questionable as there is no generally accepted definition of culture. We use it here to discriminate some activities like *reading* or *going to a theater* from the group of recreational variables like «relaxing» or activities that imply bodily movements like *sports*. For a discussion of the problems in doing research on culture see Chick, 2009.

*concerts, theaters or exhibitions* (not to speak of *shopping* or *watching TV*; see Tab. 2). As the Museum Fans (MSF) do go more often to museums than the PMVs or non-visitors it is still obvious that even among the MFS this activity does not receive one of the first positions. Hence, the term *Museum Fans* is not really descriptive – it does make sense only with respect to the definition applied here, i.e. they show more museum visits than the other groups.

### *Group-specific reasons to go/not go to museums*

(a) Non-visitors (GNV). They were asked to select up to 5 reasons they believed to apply from a list of 18 reasons that could be expected to be relevant for *not going* to museums (see Tab. 3 and Fig. 3).

Tab. 3 – List of 18 reasons not to go to a museum. Ss of the group of non-visitors could select up to 5 reasons. *f* = absolute frequencies; % = relative frequencies

No.	Reasons, not to go to a museum	Abbreviation (as given in Fig. 3)	Responses		% of cases
			<i>F</i>	%	
1	There are more exciting things	more exciting	790	14,6	62,2
2	The interesting museums are far away	far away	754	13,9	59,3
3	It is boring	boring	557	10,3	43,8
4	I don't have time for it	no time	449	8,3	35,3
5	None of my friends goes to a museum	no friends	440	8,1	34,6
6	The admission charge is too expensive	too expensive	435	8,0	34,2
7	There is nothing to act on (except looking at things)	nothing to act on	388	7,2	30,5
8	It has no meaning to me	insignificant	303	5,6	23,8
9	What is interesting to me is not shown in any museum	no reference	233	4,3	18,3
10	I don't like those intellectual affectations	affectation	205	3,8	16,1

Tab. 3 – List of 18 reasons not to go to a museum. Ss of the group of non-visitors could select up to 5 reasons. *f* = absolute frequencies; % = relative frequencies

No.	Reasons, not to go to a museum	Abbreviation (as given in Fig. 3)	Responses		% of cases
			<i>F</i>	%	
11	Museums have no importance to me	no importance	183	3,4	14,4
12	It doesn't tell me anything	tells nothing	162	3,0	12,7
13	There is stale air	stale air	136	2,5	10,7
14	I feel queasy there	unwell	130	2,4	10,2
15	I don't have interest in old things	no interest	93	1,7	7,3
16	Museums are outmoded	outmoded	86	1,6	6,8
17	I don't want to be taught	not taught	37	0,7	2,9
18	It's nothing for my children	not for children	27	0,5	2,1
Total			5408	100,0	425,5

The most often chosen reason by GNV respondents is that there are more exciting things than going to a museum (*more exciting* in Fig. 3), i.e. for 62.2% of all persons this is the most important reason not to go there (see Tab. 3). Also, GNV persons believe that the really interesting museums are *far away*. They do not go into museums because it is *boring* and they tell that they have *no time* to go there (which is rather unlikely as they report to have a greater amount of leisure time than PMV and MSF persons; see Tab. 1). Moreover, they miss their friends as none of them is going to a museum (*no friends*) – these five reasons (= 27.8% of the 18 reasons offered in the list) sum up to 55.2% of all responses, thus indicating a net of reasons that seems to give a strong functional basis for the refusal of museum-going (see also the % of cases in Tab. 3). And it is in line with this picture that they think that the admission fee is *too expensive*. We do not go to the details of the remaining reasons (see Fig. 3 and Tab. 3) but we should note that several of them show that GNV persons feel that museums have absolutely no relation to their life (*insignificant, no reference, no importance, tells nothing*).

All this ends up in calling museums *outmoded*, thus making the members of the GNV feel queasy there (*unwell*), they don't like those intellectual *affectations*. Sure, the latter reasons are of minor frequencies but they certainly contribute to the negative image of museums at least for the GNV persons and this is roughly one third of the respondents in this study (on the negative image of museums cf. Höge, 2010, 2008).

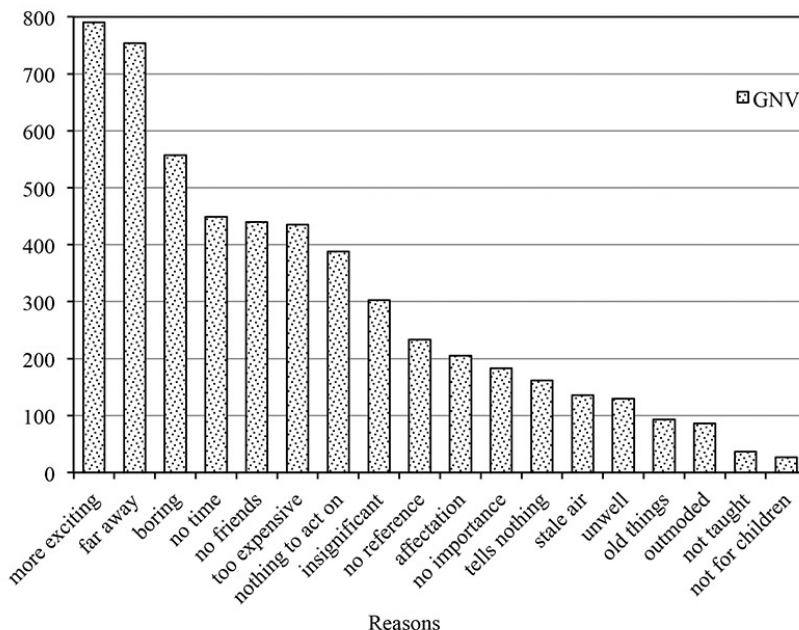


Fig. 3 – Absolute frequencies of non-visitors' responses (GNV; in %) to an 18 item list of reasons not to go to a museum (multiple choice; 4.3 responses per S;  $N_{\text{total}} = 5408$ ; the full text of reasons is given in Tab. 3)

(b) Reasons to *none the less* go (GNV) or *go more often* to museums (PMV)

To get a detailed picture of the reasons that might be able to give (a) GNV persons an incentive still to go to a museum in spite of their general refusal and (b) what could prompt PMV respondents to go more often to museums both groups received 19 reasons to select from. Both groups could select from the list as many alternatives as they liked. On the average the GNV produced 5.6 responses, the PMV 6.1 – not very different but it may reflect the greater interest of the PMVs in museums.

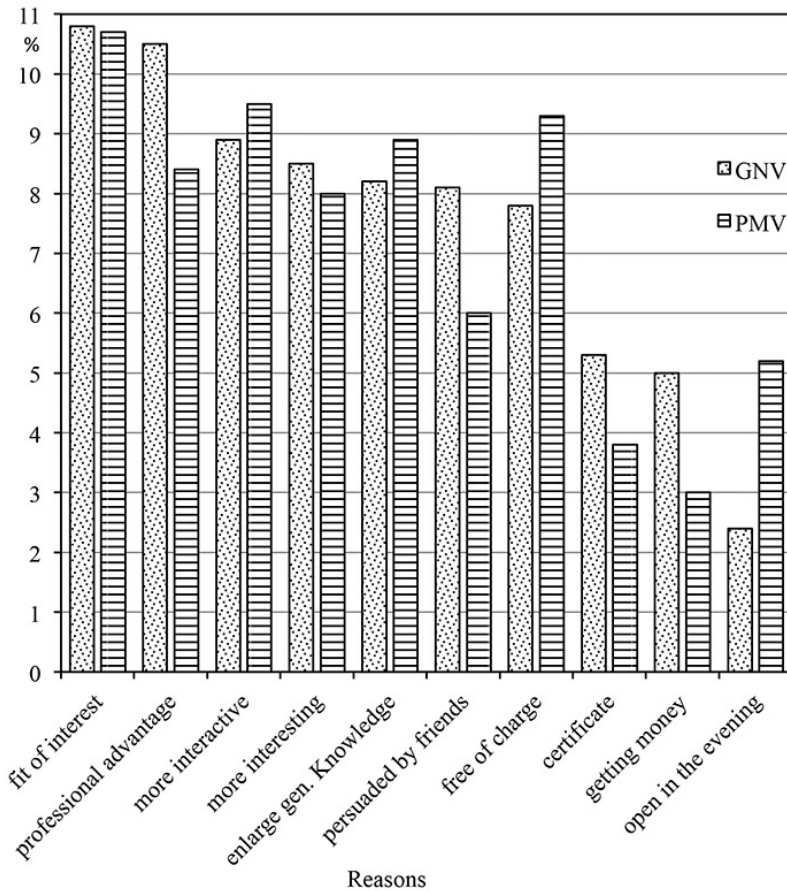


Fig. 4 – Relative frequencies (in %) of selected responses (rank ordered according to GNV values). Non-visitors answered with respect to 19 reasons that could make them *none the less to go* to museums and potential museum visitors (PMV) judged with respect to *go more often* to museums (for reasons of space data for only 10 of the 19 reasons are given)

It is noticeable that the reason receiving most responses is a *fit of interest*. For the non-visitors it means that they would go to a museum if there were a fit of their own interests and the topic a museum presents; for the potential visitors (PMV) it means that they would go more often in case this condition would be fulfilled. At any rate the fit of interest seems to be the central concept that might help to increase the number of visits in a



museum. Secondly, GNVs indicate that they would go if the visit would provide a *professional advantage* and this is slightly more the case for the GNVs compared to the PMVs. Both groups think that *more interactive* and *more interesting* exhibits would be favorable. But GNVs may need a *persuasion by friends* more than the PMVs, while an *admission free of charge* is more important for the PMVs than for the GNV persons. But although *getting money* for a visit seems to be more liked by non-visitors than by potential visitors this aspect did not reach a leading position in frequency – i.e. even offering money to them should not have the same effect as compared to the *fit of interest* and a *professional advantage*. Also, to get a certificate for visiting seems to make more sense for the GNVs than for the PMVs who are fond of *longer opening times* in the evening. As both groups indicate that an *enlargement of their general knowledge* may enhance museum visits it does not seem that they know what museums at least intend to do: namely, making contributions to general knowledge. But as this is in the upper part of frequencies (8% to 9%) museums do not seem to be successful in communicating this aspect of their general task, especially as it is given in the ICOM definition of museums (see e.g. International Council of Museums, 2006).

### *Conclusions*

Since the beginnings of psychological museum studies in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fechner, 1872) and the visitor-oriented approaches in the 1920s (Robinson, 1928; Melton, 1933, 1935) there have been measures to increase the number of museum visits (currently the free entry or the pay-what-you-want methods are popular but lack empirical control; see Artamis, 2001). This trend is even enforced since politicians and other stakeholders of museums take the number of visits as a central aspect of measuring museum success. And although there is an increase in watching visitors with respect to audience development, it seems that museum professionals still do not know what kinds of human beings are visiting their exhibitions and galleries. Even worse, despite the fact that there is quite a number of studies on general level and also many specific projects and evaluations on local museums and galleries, there is still ignorance on the value of visitor studies, as the results of evaluations are often not implemented into new strategies of making a museum visit attractive and comfortable (but see e.g. Beckmann, 2014; Schäfer, 1996; reporting on clear empirically based restructurings of museums and exhibitions). Even

the «Visitor Bill of Rights» (Rand, 1997; cf. Schäfer, 1997b; Noschka-Roos, 2004) seems to lack acknowledgement by museum professionals.

Although these thoughts became more popular in the 1980s and 1990s especially among members of the museum educational services there is no real reception and implementation of these aspects by museum professionals who are well-educated in history, art history, ethnology and other relevant academic fields that dominate the daily work in museums. Even if there are marketing divisions in the museums their area of operation is limited to analyses of visitor's place of residency (by simply asking for the postal code) and asking about the sources of information visitors use to get information on the museums, exhibitions etc. before they go to the museum. At best this is used to plan for the next newspaper campaign while concepts like visitor satisfaction or service convenience remain disregarded (cf. Berry, Seiders & Grewal, 2002). It seems as if they would not know what kind of cultural, intellectual and emotional experiences museums offer. But if this is the very kind of educational service museums should provide then it deserves much more attention and measures to check if the service achieves what it is said to do.

Similarly, in many cases the museum educational service is regarded as the «children service» that is not relevant for projecting exhibitions or long term strategies for audience development. Moreover, as the official governmental institutions reduce money and positions in public museums the chief executives of museums tend to cancel educational positions and give more room for the scientists (historians, biologists, ethnologists, etc.). In the long run this will result in a less effective educational system, i.e. in a loss of general education offered by museums or more directly: in a neglect of the service on society (see ICOM statutes, 2006).

The results we presented above, however, point to quite another direction. Currently, the socio-economic structure of museum visitors is obviously limited: great parts of the audience are above 40 years of age. Hence, the very task is to get younger human beings involved in the museum sphere, especially young non-visitors. More precisely, the goal of audience development is to turn GNVs into potential museum visitors and, finally, into Museum Fans (MSF). Data clearly indicate that those respondents going to museums do so because there is a greater fit of museum topics and personal interests. They are (a) intrinsically motivated, (b) try to enlarge their general knowledge and (c) have learnt to learn and regard knowledge as a basis for personal growth (self-enlargement; Rackow, 2008). By far the most often given answer in our earlier evaluative studies in several museums is that visitors have a *general interest* in cultural affairs,

often combined by a *special interest* in the exhibits of the museum in question (Höge, 2013 and earlier). Hence, all those who are *not* intrinsically motivated have no reason to go to museums they do not even regard them to be areas of entertainment. Museums are viewed as boring, outmoded and they have nothing to do with one's life. As it is very unlikely that the GNVs will develop an intrinsic motivation just by themselves, it is worth trying to make them extrinsically motivated, i.e. it is necessary to offer a benefit for visiting. Based on their answers one can expect that offering a *professional advantage* by visiting museums may work, especially as young people between 14 and 30 years of age are in the phase of life that is determined to a large extent by getting education and vocational training (on different levels, not only in the academic field). As museum visits require physical, cognitive and emotional efforts a benefit could outweigh the energy-sapping activities.

Seen from a theoretical perspective, according to the theory of self-determination an external motivation can be transformed into an intrinsic one by internalization. Currently, we do not know of any initiative to try this approach in the field of museums. And in context with the most liked leisure time activities (*spending time with friends/family*; see [Tab. 2](#)) it becomes obvious (a) that museums will have to struggle to get the chance of being selected as a possible destination of leisure time activity. However, (b) if the Deci & Ryan theory is correct in postulating psychological relatedness as an innate psychological need it can be predicted that the effect of an external motivator together with fulfilling the need for personal relatedness will be able to increase the likelihood of going to museums – if the museum is a comfortable area and gives a benefit for the visit. If this were successful, i.e. extrinsic motivation will change into an intrinsic one, then a museum visit will be established as a permanent kind of behavior even for the current Group of Non-Visitors (GNV). This cannot be reached in 14 days indeed it needs a longer time to establish a system that can work as external motivation.

As the young non-visitors indicated that museums have nothing to do with their career (*no professional advantage*; see [Fig. 3](#)) it follows that museums should offer attractive verifications of the knowledge acquisition resulting from a museum visit. Consequently, this will strengthen the role of the museum educational service and will open a fully new role for the museums, i.e. entering into the field of continued education (certified life-long learning). Currently, we are working on a project, installing a more effective system of validated education according to the ideas of life-long learning and related political intentions of the European Union (cf. EFQ,

2008 and DQR, 2011; The Copenhagen Declaration, 2002). The pilot project should find out if such a system will be accepted by the audience in general and of the younger generation, especially.

On the other hand, results show that among the sample there are more than 60% being intrinsically motivated people (PMV+MSF respondents). This is good for museums and the general educational level of the society as these persons will continue to go to museums (*continued education*). Also, it may be much easier to persuade them to go more often into museums and exhibitions and it should be possible to enlarge even this percentage of intrinsically motivated persons by help of additional extrinsic motivators.

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*Art Museum Attendance: The Influence of Personality.  
Comparison of Two Surveys Conducted in France (2005-2013)*

ABSTRACT:

This paper aims to compare two different studies carried out in France, 10 years apart, regarding the visiting practice of art museums by young adults. We wanted to determine if the variables highlighted during the first study would also be relevant in the second one.

In the first survey, specifically focused on young adults' access to contemporary art (Vilatte & Gottesdiener, 2006), a large set of sociological and psychological variables were selected (school artistic instruction or extra-curricular and current artistic practice; visiting modalities during childhood or adolescence; influence of family, friends or other recognized by the subject; aesthetic tastes; personality (NEO PI-R); demographic or socio-professional features of subjects and their families) in order to compare their respective weights. To study the factors' specificity which determine access to contemporary art, we carried out a factors comparison which determine the practice of visiting contemporary art museums and those which determine the practice of visiting fine art museums. All analyses that we carried out confirmed the dominant influence of personality and taste in order to establish and structure the art museums' visit.

In the context of a cross-country study both on museum experience of young adults and on factors which lead or prevent them to visit museums, we obtained new data in France which we can compare with the results of the first study. We identified that the weight of the explanatory variables of art museums' attendance is different in the two surveys. We particularly noticed that, although the role of personality is lower in this second study, the influence of this variable remains significant. An interpretation of the observed differences is proposed.

*1. Introduction*

As early as the 1930s, American museums were concerned with knowing their audiences, understanding visitors' interests and what they were looking for in the museum experience. This type of research has subsequently been developed and refined, giving rise to a considerable number of publications

devoted to museum visitors and involving different epistemological and methodological approaches.

Within this body of research, we find a sociological orientation which has outlined a limited number of socio-demographic factors which appear to be powerful determinants of museum attendance. This focus has been strongly influenced by the work of Bourdieu, and in particular one of his earliest investigations devoted to museums in France: *L'amour de l'art* (1969), which demonstrates statistically that museum attendance is the privilege of the cultured classes, but which was especially influential through its interpretive framework of the inequalities in access to museums. These studies, while carried out in different countries, tend to converge on a consensus that museum visitors are relatively young, educated or currently enrolled as students, usually urban, and with higher than average incomes (see for illustration: Bourdieu & Darbel, 1969; Dixon, Courtney, & Bailey 1974; DiMaggio, Useem, & Brown, 1978; Ganzeboom & Haanstra, 1989; Schuster, 1993; Donnat, 1994; Hill Stratégies Recherche, 2003; Garon, 2005). Furthermore, level of education appears to be the most reliable indicator for predicting attendance at art museums. One of the characteristic features of these studies is a country-level focus and repetition of similar results over time; data from these studies tend to show the socio-demographic profile of museum visitors as stable overall, apart from a few variations. Museum attendance remains unequal and strongly stratified according to indicators such as income, employment or education levels (DiMaggio, 1991). More recent studies confirm this general tendency, such as that carried out in 2011 in France by the CRÉDOC (Research Centre for Study and Observation of Conditions of Life) (Bigot, Daudey, Hoibian & Müller, 2012). Thus, regarding for instance the level of studies and taking into account museums and exhibitions of fine arts, modern and contemporary art, and photography, 29% of the respondents (a representative sample of the French population aged 18 years and older) had visited such a type of museum or exhibition by these criteria. While 63% of those with a university-level education ("Bac+3") and higher had visited an "Arts" exhibition or museum, this percentage is only 34% for those with a high school ("Bac") level and 19% for those with a Secondary School level.

In response to this demographic approach to museum attendance, criticism has gradually arisen concerning the relevance and use of these indicators. These studies are still too often limited to counting attendance (Evrard, 2002). The theories called on to explain museum-going practices are often very general and aim at a universal explanation based on normative

considerations rather than on empirical validation (Gold, 1980). The demographic categories used in the studies are considered too rudimentary (Pronovost, 2002). The idea that these socio-demographic indicators can describe homogeneous groups of visitors is also challenged, requiring reconsideration of the ways in which the observed findings are generalized. Any categorization relating to visitors of cultural facilities is both porous and arbitrary (Donnat & Octobre, 2001). There are significant individual differences in practices within the same socio-demographic class.

Seeking to go beyond the simple set of socio-demographic variables, Gottesdiener (1992) focuses specifically on individuals who become regular visitors despite having the least favorable socio-demographic characteristics for access to such cultural outings, as well as those who do not necessarily choose to visit art museums despite having more favorable socio-demographic characteristics. The author compares visitors and non-visitors with equivalent socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., executives vs. employees) and identifies a number of obstacles which vary according to the social group considered. These include feelings of not belonging to the world of art, unfamiliarity, and intimidation (for employees), and a fear of not being able to experience emotions or being confronted with a constructed knowledge (for executives). Additionally, various social facilitators were identified, such as family for the executives, or friends, companions, and passionate teachers for the employees.

Furthermore, it should be noted that cultural practices are unstable and variable in time, the 'careers' of visitors are sometimes continuous, sometimes discontinuous, and that a person is a different visitor at various times in the same life (Eidelman & Roustan, 2007).

For museums, studies focused on the socio-demographic structure of the museum-going public mirror marketing studies which aim to identify their audiences to better meet their expectations, rather than to identify the causes of a loss of interest in those who rarely or never visit, or to learn more about the relationship of the visitor to the museum (Bourdaleix-Manin, 2005).

A parallel line of research has developed very quickly, in which the focus is more on understanding the establishment of a cultural practice than to measure it. This category of research aims to understand the characteristics of those who frequent museums as well as those who do not, and refines the description of visitors by admitting more complexity into what Donnat (2001) calls their social identity. Beyond the socio-demographic characteristics of visitors and non-visitors, this research focuses on more subtle questions related to educational variables, experience,

sociability, attitudes, and representations that can lead to new methods in order to gain a better understanding of the experience of museum visits. For this line of research, it is not so much a question of abandoning the socio-demographic approach, but rather going further, and having a richer and more complex model.

Here we will present some of the directions so far explored in this current – without any pretensions of exhaustiveness – to show how the focus of studies on visitors has inevitably shifted from previous studies.

Some work deals with the collective construction of museum practices and tastes, which vary greatly according to different modes of sociability and socialization, thus contributing an accumulation of data and responses that make the modalities involved in museum practices more intelligible. Researchers were interested in primary forms of socialization (those transmitted by the family and the school for example), but also in secondary forms of socialization that function as an aptitude for creating new practices from life experiences and sociability patterns arising from relational environments (family, siblings, peers, neighbors, spouse, groups of friends, colleagues, etc.) and the nature of such exchanges (regularity, density, temporal situation, etc.). The goal is to identify and understand the ability of some individuals to shift towards practices and tastes, liberating them from determining factors of their social universe through the training of various sociability patterns. The social circle is a resource because so many cultural discoveries operate in contact with others and consolidate certain leisure practices (Pasquier, 2014). One study shows more specifically how, within a couple, the influence of the other person plays out in a predictive way on cultural practices (Upright, 2004). The museum visit is an outing shared by a couple, or a social visit with family or friends, rarely a solitary venture (Octobre, 2001).

Another group of studies focuses on the reasons, motivations or expectations that lead people to visit museums, showing that they are quite diverse. Visitors go to the museum for: a desire to learn, grow, expand their knowledge, for fun, entertainment, enjoyment, for the reputation of the museum or exhibition, to feel emotions, share an experience with loved ones, or orient themselves within a story of humanity and society, out of a need for personal accomplishment, among other reasons. Recognizing these reasons and experiences in visits can help explain the establishment (or not) of more regular visits, and to grasp what allows the visitor to move from a single experience to a cumulative experience and to a long-term cultural practice.

In this approach, some researchers are particularly interested in the

values held by those who visit museums and those who don't, trying to identify which values can motivate someone to visit an art museum. This is how DiMaggio (1996) looks at the relationship between museum attendance or non-attendance and social, cultural, and political values along with taste in different forms of art. This research shows that there are significant differences in values and tastes between those who visit museums and those who do not. Those who go to museums exhibit greater tolerance and trust in relation to others, a greater openness to intellectual culture, a 'modern' disposition which is based on faith in progress, scientific and artistic authority, and a cosmopolitan interest in people and cultures. While recognizing that these attitudes characterize a large part of the educated middle and upper classes, the author rejects a static vision and favors the idea of social fluidity. This is supported by showing how individuals can apply strategies to acquire the cultural capital necessary for museum attendance through participation in networks, attraction for cultural forms, and visiting cultural institutions and more specifically museums, and how all of these dimensions feed on and reinforce each other. Luckerhoff (2008) relies on the Schwartz scale of values – the values studied being autonomy, aesthetics, spirituality, benevolence, stimulation and tradition – and shows that the values grouped under «transcendence of self» and «openness to change» were associated with museum visits, while those that are grouped under «tradition» are correlated negatively with visits to art museums. Further, the author shows that these values are weakly correlated with demographic data.

Finally, in their survey of the last 20 years of research in museum studies on visitors (Eidelman, Gottesdiener & Le Marec, 2013), the authors note the increasing attention given to visitors' emotional states. The experience of visiting exhibitions, museums or other heritage sites reflects social, cognitive and emotional dimensions.

Inspired by the various research on museum attendance, we carried out a study in 2005 on young adults' access to contemporary art (museum practices and tastes) in which we pursued several goals: to introduce the dimension of personality traits into the explanation of the establishment (or not) of regular visits; to bring sociological and psychological approaches into dialog; to study the variability of this establishment of a museum-visiting practice in a relatively homogeneous group of students in terms of the variables of education level and age; and finally, to focus on the respective weight of the various sociological and psychological variables (Gottesdiener & Vilatte, 2006). Taking into account the dimension of personality traits leads to observing that a museum visit involves the



person more deeply we usually think or say. In addition to the personality, evaluated by the NEO-PIR (Costa & McCrae, 1998), the following variables are retained: arts education at school or out of school and current artistic practice; conditions of museum visits during childhood or adolescence; influences from family, friends or others; aesthetic tastes; a lasting memory left by a past visit and the influence attributed to the artwork viewed; demographic or socio-professional characteristics of the respondent or his family. In order to study the distinguishing factors that determine access to contemporary art, a comparison was made between the factors determining visits to contemporary art museums and museums of fine art. All analyses confirm the dominant influence of personality and taste. Among the sociological and psychological variables introduced in this study, personality plays the dominant role in explaining individual differences in art museum attendance. Personality traits differ according to whether young adults visit a museum of fine arts or a museum of modern or contemporary art. A young adult was more likely to have visited a museum of fine arts during the past year with a high score in «openness to fantasy»; similarly, a visit to a museum of modern and contemporary art was associated with higher scores in «openness to actions».

It should be noted that the previously cited work on values showed that the value of openness to change differentiates practices; the approach in terms of the value of openness seems related to the «openness» personality trait measured by the NEO-PIR.

The importance of the dimension «openness» can be discussed in the light of the results of the research conducted by Mastandrea, Bartoli & Bove (2009). While the authors seek to demonstrate that people who prefer abstract art score higher in the dimension of «openness» than those who prefer classical art, they do not see any difference for this dimension when comparing the visitors average of an ancient art museum to the average of a modern and contemporary art museum. The difference in the results between this study and ours can be explained through various factors: differences in respondent's age, conditions of use, the measure of the dimension «openness» is not based on the same number of items and analysis methods are not the same.

The study on young adults' access to contemporary art allowed us to better understand the museum visitor and how certain elements can either favor access or make it more difficult. In this context, the international project led by the Department of Education Sciences at the University of Rome 3 on the role of museums in the education of young adults – especially students – provided an opportunity to pursue our study on the role

of personality as a determinant of art museum attendance, to analyze the relationship of personality with other variables than those we had already taken into account, and to compare some of our results nearly a decade later.

In the first part of this article, we will present our comparison between the two studies, noting that we could only retain those variables that were present in both questionnaires, and keeping in mind that some of the questions could be reformulated and even measured differently, and that there are also some differences between the two samples.

The second part deals with the 2013 study. In the international survey, there are questions we did not have in our first questionnaire, for example: reasons for the visit, feelings during the visit, anticipating next visits. We shall focus on the correlations of these variables with personality compared to the relation between personality and the museum attendance variables we studied in our first survey.

## *2. Personality, family, school and art museum attendance. Comparison of two studies, 2005 and 2013*

The international project led by Roma 3 offered us the chance to make comparisons with results got nearly 10 years after our first study.

The differences between the constructions of the two questionnaires are important but still a comparison is possible taking into account the variables present in the two cases. Some differences also exist between both samples. In 2005, the sample consisted of 422 students aged 20 to 29 and registered in their third university year (L3) and in their first year of a masters in psychology in two universities in Paris (Paris X, Paris VIII). In 2013, the sample consisted of 762 students aged 17 to 69 years (with an average age of 20.52, a mode of 18 and a median of 19), enrolled in the first year of university (L1) in psychology at Paris X, or the first and third years (L1 and L3) in psychology, education sciences, and linguistics, and the masters level in education sciences and teaching sciences in Nancy. The 2013 sample is thus much more heterogeneous as to the age, level of studies and study areas than that of 2005.

To study the effects of different variables on attendance, a variable was created for museum attendance. This variable allowed subjects to be sorted into two groups: those who do not visit either fine arts museums or museums of modern and contemporary art and those who visit at least one of these two types of museums.

Group belonging being the predictable variable, based on the independent variables held, discriminant analysis was used in order to assess

the degree of belonging to one of these two groups. With this method, a score was calculated from which the software sorted each respondent into one of the two groups. The dependent variable thus obtained was called the «classifying score», as it allowed each person to be classified into one of the groups studied. Then the quality of classification was assessed by comparing the original classification (done on the basis of answers to the questionnaire) to the classification carried out using discriminant analysis. With regards to the influence of different variables upon classification, the discriminant analysis method supplied the weight of variables allowing respondents to be classified into groups. The higher the weight, the more the variable influenced the classification.

We find that the weight of the explanatory variables is different in the two surveys (Tab. 1). For the eight variables present in the two questionnaires and for which predictive power is investigated, we performed two analyses in 2013: one on the full sample, the other on the sample of the 20 to 29 age group, since this is the age range of the 2005 sample. The results for these two samples are very close, so the large presence of first-year (L1) students aged 18 and 19 would not explain the differences between 2005 and 2013.

*Tab. 1 – Comparison of the discriminant analysis results in 2005 and 2013*

2005	Ages 20-29 N=409	2013	Full sample N=654	Ages 20-29 N=296
Openness	.941	Visit with parents	.819	.854
Mother education	.358	Art education out of school	.631	.686
Visit with parents	.267	Visit with school	.607	.514
Art education out of school	.213	Mother education	.535	.496
Father education	.194	Father education	.333	.395
Extraversion	.170	Openness	.235	.169
Art education at school	.040	Art education at school	.309	.163
Visit with school	-.014	Extraversion	.216	.129

There are differences not only in the samples but also in the questionnaires. In 2013 the question «How much artistic education have you

received at school?» (Response from «None» to «Extensive») corresponds in 2005 to the question «While at school, have you been a member of an arts club or workshop?» (Dance, theater, sculpture), with a «yes»/«no» answer only.

The question «How much artistic education have you received out of school?» with for example: drawing, music, theatre, photography classes, etc. (Response from «None» to «Extensive») corresponds in 2005 to the question «out of school, have you had any artistic education?» with a 0 to 4 coding (for any type of workshop the answer is «yes» or «no» and the total of types of workshops and lessons taken is given).

The question dealing with visits with parents or with teachers leads to different temporalities: in 2005 it was in the past (as a child or teenager, did you visit museums or exhibitions? With your family, teachers, etc.) In 2013, practice included all visits made until the day of the survey (Up until now, how often have you visited museums, exhibitions, archaeological sites, etc and in which way? With school, parents?). Besides, the rating scales are also different.

There are also differences in the measure of personality. In 2005, the students answer the complete NEO PI-R but in our questionnaire they have only to put their results for each of the 6 facets and the total score for the two dimensions: extraversion and openness to experience. In NEO PI-R there are 48 items for each of the dimensions. In 2013, a short version for the Big Five (2 items for each dimension) was used. Are we measuring exactly the same trait and with the same validity?

We see here how it is difficult to study evolution when the questionnaires and samples are not the same. Number and content of visits in museums with schools may also have changed (different types of mediation) and their impact may be different for predicting visits.

Given this set of elements that could cause the differences in observed results, as far as the role of the personality is concerned, rather than be surprised by the lower weight of the personality dimensions, we may be surprised that their influence remains significant.

### *3. Personality, family, school – but also motivations, emotions and satisfaction at play in establishing a museum visiting habit*

In the 2013 survey, next to the influence of the family, the school, personality, there is also a role for satisfaction, motivation and emotions experienced during visits. («Which of the following reasons motivated you

to visit museums or exhibitions in the past 12 months?») We will see how all of these variables can play into attendance or plans for future visits.

We can adopt the hypothesis that the nature of motives or emotions experienced during visits will either dampen or promote the desire to seek out this type of environment.

The satisfaction experienced during previous visits may also play into the decision to visit a museum or exhibition. Its importance is emphasized in the study *À l'écoute des visiteurs (Listening to visitors) - 2010* (cited in Eidelman, Gottesdiener, & Le Marec, 2013) which is the first French national survey of satisfaction in museum visitors. This survey reveals distinct categories of visitors when comparing relationships among factors of satisfaction, cultural familiarity and age classes.

### *3.1 The determinants of visit frequency over the past 12 months*

Of all of the people (N = 762) interviewed on question Q7: «How often have you visited a museum, exhibition, etc. in the past 12 months?» 31% reported not having visited any museum or exhibition during this period. Conducted 1 visit: 19.6%; 2-3 visits: 29.9%; 4-5 visits: 11.5%; and more than 5 visits: 8%. The percentage for 'no visit' is similar to that given in the CRÉDOC study (2012) conducted on a representative sample of the French population aged 18 years and older: among students, the results include 29% who did not visit any museums.

To study the determinants of art museum visits, we first performed a multiple regression analysis, taking as independent variables the 8 variables used in the discriminant analysis (see [Tab. 1](#)), and comparing their effects on the two dependent variables found in [Tab. 2](#): in the first column the variable represents the «number of visits to museums or exhibitions in the past 12 months» for the entire sample, and in the second column the variable is the frequency of visits for people with at least one visit to an art museum.

The values of the coefficient of determination ( $R = .530$  and  $R = .439$ ) demonstrate a significant effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Museum visit frequency is best predicted by the frequency of visits with parents, school or teachers, and the «openness» personality trait.

It should be noted that «openness» has a stronger predictive value on the frequency of visits during the past year within the group of those who have visited at least one art museum: The higher their score in openness, the greater the frequency of their visits.

*Tab. 2 – Multiple regression analysis of educational and personality trait variables on the frequency of museum visits*

	Number of visits for the whole sample, all museums included (N=648)	Number of visits for those who made one art museum visit at least (N=304)
Model	standardized coefficients	standardized coefficients
	Beta	Beta
Q2. Artistic Education at School	.001ns	-.030ns
Q3. Artistic Education out of School	.149***	.086ns
Q4. Visit with School/Teacher	.199***	.199**
Q4. Visit with Parents	.325***	.277***
Q28. Father Education	-.060ns	-.081ns
Q29. Mother Education	.026ns	-.036ns
Extraversion	.025ns	.007ns
Openness	.085*	.166**

Legend: Significance level \*\*\* < .001, \*\* < .01, \* < .10, ns not significant

This is consistent with the results we obtained in our study in 2005. It should also be noted that certain sociological variables (e.g., parents' level of education) are non-significant, as their effect is negated by the presence of variables related to visits with family or teachers.

In addition to the 8 variables presented, we have then introduced the motivations measured by question 11: «Which of the following reasons motivated you to visit museums or exhibitions in the past 12 months?»

*Tab. 3 – The multiple regression analysis of the educational variables and personality trait variables on the frequency of museum visits, combined with motivation-related variables*

	Number of visits for those who made one art museum visit at least (N = 298)
Model	standardized coefficients
	Beta
Q2. Artistic Education at School	-.085ns
Q3. Artistic Education out of School	.094*
Q4. Visit with School/Teacher	.174**
Q4. Visit with Parents	.225***
Q28. Father Education	-.099ns
Q29. Mother Education	.032ns
Extraversion	.012ns
Openness	.112*
Q11. Motivation : pleasure during the visit	.058ns
Q11. Motivation : interest for the artist/scientist/exhibition	.138*
Q11. Motivation : emotional responses	.177**

Legend: Significance level \*\*\* <.001, \*\* <.01, \* <.10, ns not significant

The introduction of the motivational variable increases the explanatory power of the model: the value of the coefficient of determination increases  $R = .513$  (compared to  $R = .439$ ). Next to the frequency of visits with teachers or parents, the best predictors are interest in the artist, scientist or exhibition or reported emotions experienced (Tab. 3). One might expect motivation to be related to the anticipation of what has already been experienced during previous visits. Strong correlations have been observed between question 11 dealing with the reasons that motivate the visit and question 12 dealing with what the visitor felt, which sets correlation between the well-being experienced and the emotion as the reason to visit at .50.

It should also be noted that the «openness» trait retains a real predictive power even when motivations are introduced.



### 3.2 Determinants of the intention to visit a museum over the next 6 months

The intention to visit a museum, as measured by question 15 («How eager are you to visit a museum in the next 6 months?»), is predicted by the same variables as those predicting the frequency of visits: the frequency of visits with teachers or parents, together with personality traits. The coefficients of determination are  $R = .464$  and  $R = .408$  (Tab. 4).

Tab. 4 – Multiple regression analysis of educational and personality trait variables on intention to visit museums

	Intention to visit for the whole sample N = 642	Intention to visit for those who made one art museum visit at least N = 300
Model	standardized coefficients	standardized coefficients
	Beta	Beta
Q2. Artistic Education at School	.056ns	.034ns
Q3. Artistic Education out of School	.098*	.045ns
Q4. Visit with School/Teacher	.155***	.126*
Q4. Visit with Parents	.282***	.294**
Q28. Father Education	-.010ns	.018ns
Q29. Mother Education	-.007ns	-.014ns
Extraversion	.049ns	.009ns
Openness	.104**	.099*

Legend: Significance level \*\*\* <.001, \*\* <.01, \* <.10, ns not significant

The introduction of emotions (Q12 «Which of the following did you feel during any visits to museums or exhibitions in the past 12 months?») and satisfaction (Q9 «In general, how satisfied have you been with your visit(s) to these, over the past 12 months?») significantly increases the explanatory power of the model: the value of the coefficient of determination rises from  $R = .408$  to  $R = .582$  (Tab. 5). These last variables take precedence besides the visit with parents, which seems coherent as they reflect visiting experiences.

*Tab. 5 – Multiple regression analysis of educational, personality trait variables, and feelings on intention to visit museums*

	Intention of visit for those who made one art museum visit at least N = 286
Model	standardized coefficients
	Beta
Q2. Artistic Education at School	-.017ns
Q3. Artistic Education out of School	.012ns
Q4. Visit with School/Teacher	.081ns
Q4. Visit with Parents	.209**
Q28. Father Education	.031ns
Q29. Mother Education	.046ns
Extraversion	.017ns
Openness	.034ns
Q9. Satisfaction of visits, over the past 12 months	.105*
Q12. Feelings which motivated the visits: Pleasure	.050ns
Q12. Feelings which motivated the visits: Well Being	.120*
Q12. Feelings which motivated the visits: Fun	-.051ns
Q12. Feelings which motivated the visit: Interest	.296***

Legend: Significance level \*\*\* <.001, \*\* <.01, \* <.10, ns not significant

However, while the addition of variables has a positive impact on the total variance explained by the model, it poses a drawback as it lowers the impact of some variables because of the existing correlations between these variables and the newly introduced variables.

The reduction or disappearance (in terms of significance test) of the impact of one or several variables is a well known property, often considered as a limit of multiple regression models.

This property clearly appears through the regression analysis with the introduction of the four modes of Q12, causing a strong reduction of the openness impact on Q15, thus losing its significance.

The reduction of impact can be generally explained by the fact that the variance between the dependent variable (i.e. Q15) and an independent variable (openness) gets distributed between a direct effect and indirect effects passing through other variables (i.e. Q12). The impact is said to be mediated.

To assess this phenomenon, a path analysis was led using the AMOS 19.0 software. The openness standardized direct effect on Q15 without taking into account other variables is estimated to be at .145. With the introduction of the four modes of Q12, the standardized direct effect is estimated at .052 and the indirect effect at .093 (it should be noted that the total effect remains at the same level). While the effect of openness does not consequently disappear, it is distributed between a direct part and an indirect part mediated by the various experienced feelings during a museum visit.

For comparison purposes, the same type of analysis was conducted on the model explaining the relations between «openness» and Q7 with and without Q11. The standardized direct effect of Q7 without Q11 is estimated at .196; with the three modes of Q11, the direct effect changes to .137 and the indirect effect via Q11 changes to .059. It should be noted that in this case too, the total effect is at the same level although the direct effect is less impacted by the mediating variables than in the case of the «openness» effect on Q15.

It may then be concluded that there does exist an openness effect on past (Q7) or future (Q15) museum visits and that these effects may be direct or indirect. Here, the indirect effects are the reasons for visiting (Q11) and feelings experienced (Q12).

#### *4. Conclusion*

We had the opportunity in this research to compare the visiting practice at ten years intervals and to see if the clear evidence in a first survey of the influence of some variables on this practice could be observed again in the second survey, but we can see how difficult it is to interpret it when questionnaires and samples are not strictly the same. However, when looking at the results from a personality point of view, we see that this variable, in both cases, plays a significant role in explaining art museums

attendance. We can find a confirmation of the interest of going on with this type of study if we want to keep facilitating the access to art museums.

Understanding how visiting practice is established requires a deeper analysis of what is at stake in the visiting experience and the interactions between visitor and museum, and a more effective recognition of the elements fostering or deterring access to these sites. Our results show that what makes sense for visitors during their visit stems from their history, more especially from what they inherited in the course of their social or educational horizons. This is also due to specific personal characteristics such as personality, motivations, experienced emotions, interest (more particularly for the artist, the scientist or the exhibition), satisfaction and well-being obtained during visits. We considered here one age group – young adults – and it would therefore be interesting to analyze how these various characteristics impact the visit from a generational perspective, known for its important role in the differences in museum attendance.

Like for surveys previously mentioned, it is difficult to claim the generalization of results obtained. The visiting experience cannot be reduced to the only social horizons and personal characteristics that have been singled out here. Thus, in the first survey (Gottesdiener & Vilatte, 2006), the role of friends in childhood or adolescence, the acquaintance with an artist or with someone having an artistic practice, up to the influence of taste in art museums attendance have been highlighted. In another survey, by referring to the self-concept (i.e. how the individual perceives himself/herself, the behaviors, beliefs and feelings he/she has of himself/herself, his/her way of living, structuring and developing his internal experience and behavior), we have been able to bring to light the predictive role of this psychological variable on the art museums attendance (Gottesdiener, Vilatte & Vrignaud, 2008; Gottesdiener & Vilatte, 2012). The objective was to link the respondents' self-image with the representation they have of museum visitors. The comparison between the visitor's image and the respondents' own self-image has highlighted the existing relation with the museum practice. Other personal variables such as the learning or cognitive styles, other personality models could also be taken into consideration.

The presentation of these results shows the importance of further developing other approaches and the need to identify relevant descriptors of the visiting experience, aiming at better understanding the interactions between visitors and museums.

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*Psychological Aspects of Museum Visits for Undergraduate  
Italian Students*

ABSTRACT:

This chapter presents two studies on museums attendance by young adult participants. The aims of the first study were to explore the representation of the museum and the relationship between the students' major areas of study and the typology of museum visited. The first study also examines whether art training received during the school curriculum (before university) can be related to museum attendance. The second study was carried out to investigate the psychological factors involved in the museum attendance. Personality traits, motivations, emotions, intentions and past museum experiences were considered. The aims were to investigate personality antecedents of past experience about museum, and motivations of museum visits in the last year, and to individuate the best psychological predictors of future visits to museums.

*Introduction*

Within museology research there is a growing interest in the segment of the population that do not visit museums. This so-called «non-public» includes those people who do not consider museums interesting places to spend their time (Bollo & Gariboldi, 2008; DiMaggio, 1996; Smith & Smith, 2001). Several studies in the field of museology have focused on the differences between people who visit and those who do not visit museums. The sociologist Bourdieu stated that love for the arts has a strong social component; only people with cultural capital can appreciate visiting museums (Bourdieu, 1979). People who visit museums have been shown to have a higher socio-economic status (in education and by profession) than those who do not visit them and that the museum has the potential to emphasize for this group the feeling of belonging, while for people without cultural capital the feeling of exclusion (Bourdieu & Darbel,

1969). From a psychological point of view, Mason and McCarthy (2008) reported two main reasons that prevent people from attending museum: the threshold fear (Fleming, 1999; Prince & Schadla-Hall, 1985), that consists in a «psychological barrier, which dissuades people from entering spaces where they feel uncomfortable» (Mason & McCarthy, 2008: 22), and the personal and social identity related to a sort of dissonance between the cultural meaning represented by the museum and the individual and cultural identity of young people (Bartlett & Kelly, 2000; Kelly, 2009).

Museums are often described as an informal means of learning and with the potential to offer different kinds of knowledge, from art to history, from science to technology (Bartels & Hein, 2003; Nardi, 2004). University students, during their academic career, can gain important benefits from the museum visit experience; in addition to knowledge, it can provide different perspectives of the world useful to enrich their mental openness.

The literature concerning museum visitor studies has shown that there may not be much of an attraction in these temples of culture for adolescents and young adults. In the USA in 2008, a large-scale survey on public participation to different cultural events reported that only the 12.9% of Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 years visited at least one museum during the previous year (Williams & Keen, 2009). In Germany, about the 23% of young people between 15 and 25 years reported visiting at least one museum of art, science, or history during the previous 12 months of the survey (Kirchberg, 1996). These findings have been confirmed by other data around the world: in France, people between 15 and 24 years corresponded to about 15% of visitors (Lemerise, 1999); in Australia and New Zealand, art museum visitors between 20 and 29 years formed 26% of the population (Mason & McCarthy, 2006). These results suggest that in different parts of the world, museums do not attract very many young people.

There are a number of reasons that may explain this lack of interest. Young adults often see museums as a place for old people, more focused on the past, while their interests and needs are more oriented to the present and the future (Shrapnel, 2012). What often leads this group to attend a museum is not real interest, but a mere curiosity or «duty» that forces them to take part in an experience. Without being accompanied by a genuine desire, attendance is related to attitudes of indifference (Bartlett & Kelly, 2000). Many young people made the equation museum = school; both are places to acquire knowledge regarding a great number of subjects (art, science, history, anthropology, etc.). Regarding the learning process, it might be difficult for them to distinguish museum from university; the risk is that museums

are seen as an addition to their learning workload and therefore look very unattractive and boring. Most young adults are students or people at the beginning of their careers, both with limited budgets for entertainment and leisure-time activities. Museums are quite expensive and may lose out to other cultural activities, like going to the cinema or concerts.

Bearing in mind all of these explanations, it is important to understand the low interest manifested by young adults towards museums. Therefore, with the intention to study perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of a sample of university students (seen as a group with intellectual curiosity and motivation for knowledge) towards museum and museum visits, two studies were carried out and here presented.

The aims of the first study were to explore the representation of the museum and if there is a relationship between the students' major areas of study and the typology of museum attendance. The first study also examines whether art training received during the school curriculum (before university) can be related to museum attendance. Bourdieu (1979), as stated, talked about the feeling of exclusion for those without family cultural capital; we want to explore if the art training received at school can be related to museum attendance, i.e., if higher level secondary school art training corresponds to an increased number of museum visits. This study also investigates whether Bourdieu's notion of *family cultural capital* can be integrated with the concept of *school cultural capital*.

The second study was carried out to investigate the psychological factors involved in the choice of museum fruition. In the study, personality aspects, motivations, emotions, intentions and past museum experiences were considered. The aims were to investigate personality antecedents of past experience about museum, and motivations of museum visits in the last year (out of the school), and to individuate the best psychological predictors of future visits to museums.

Our final aim of the present contribution is to offer some suggestions to improve communication among students, universities, and museums.

## *Study 1*

### *Method*

*Participants.* The sample numbered 522 undergraduate students from four Faculties of the University of Rome (Roma Tre, Italy): Education ( $n = 148$ ), Law ( $n = 106$ ), Literature ( $n = 127$ ), and Engineering ( $n = 141$ ). In

terms of gender,  $n = 297$  were women and  $n = 225$  men; the mean age was 23.2 and the median 22 ( $SD = 4.1$ ). Students volunteered to participate in the research and there was no compensation offered.

*Measures.* A questionnaire with different item formats (closed and open-ended questions) was prepared. The first part concerned socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, type of education received, the level of art training, and two questions regarding museum visits (the number and the type of museums visited in the last 12 months). The second part consisted of four open-ended questions regarding: 1) a general definition of museum; 2) the motivation for visiting or not visiting museums; 3) the usefulness of visiting a museum; 4) suggestions to improve museum visits for young people. Participants were asked to write their answers on three lines, just under each question.

*Procedure.* The questionnaire was administered to the students after the end of a class. The administration of the questionnaire was conducted during 3 weeks' time, across morning and afternoon on all the days of the week except Saturday and Sunday. Completing the questionnaire took an average of about 15 minutes. Roughly 80% of the potential respondents participated; the primary reason for refusal was lack of time.

## *Results*

### *Closed questions*

About the 70% of the students from the faculties of education, law, and literature had received an education in the humanities in secondary school, while about 80% of the engineering students had received a secondary school scientific education. Regarding the amount of artistic education in secondary schools (on a 7 point Likert-type scale), the total sample had an average score of 4.1 ( $SD$  1.6). By faculty, literature students had a mean of 4.4 ( $SD$  1.6); law students had a mean of 4.3 ( $SD$  1.5); education students had a mean of 4.1 ( $SD$  1.5); and, engineering had the lowest rating with a mean of 3.6 ( $SD$  1.5). A significant correlation between the artistic training received and the number of museum visits in the last 12 months was found ( $r = .24$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The more artistic education was received by the students, the more likely they were to have visited museums during the last year.

*Museum or gallery visits in the last 12 months.* Concerning the question of museum visits during the last 12 months, 24.5% of the whole sample did not visit any museum. There are some differences among the faculties

(see Tab. 1): 34.5% of education students, 26.8% from engineering, 18.1% from literature, and 15.2% of law students did not visit any museum in the previous 12 months to the questionnaire. It is quite considerable that a large number of students (one quarter) had not visited any museum or gallery in the last year in the city of Rome; moreover, students from the education faculty reported the maximum of non visits (34.5%).

*Tab. 1 – Percentage of museum or gallery visits in the last 12 months by students of the four different faculties*

N. of visits	Zero	1	2-3	4-6	7-9	10 or more
Faculties						
Law	15.2%	20.0%	35.2%	22.9%	3.8%	2.9%
Literature	18.1%	22.8%	29.9%	21.3%	5.5%	2.4%
Engineering	26.8%	21.1%	29.6%	13.4%	4.9%	4.2%
Education	34.5%	26.9%	22.1%	12.4%	3.4%	.7%

Law and literature students visited museums and galleries much more frequently than students of other faculties; about 40% of these students had visited more than three museums in the last 12 months.

Another question asked respondents to choose up to two of the most visited museums, according to a typology, in the last 12 months. The museum of modern and contemporary art was the most visited by the whole sample ( $n = 171$ ), followed by ancient art ( $n = 77$ ), archeological site/museum ( $n = 68$ ), science museums ( $n = 45$ ), history ( $n = 34$ ) and other museums ( $n = 14$ ). These differences were statistically significant ( $\chi^2 (5) = 373.5, p < .001$ ). In general, the majority of the students from all the faculties preferred visiting museums of modern and contemporary art, followed by ancient art and archaeological sites. Interesting to note is that engineering students had visited a major number of science museums, as compared to students from other faculties; out of 45 students who visited science museums, more than the half ( $n = 24$ ) were from engineering. The type of faculty and the interest towards the major area of study seemed to orient the type of museum to visit.

#### *Data analysis of the open-ended questions*

For each open-ended question, a written response of three lines was

requested. To analyse the resulting data, it was first needed to establish the shared semantic concepts in order to make them appropriate for the later content analysis. Two external judges have made this task. Similar words and synonyms were unified in the same semantic category. The first open-ended question consisted of 266 lexical units; through the process of aggregation and unification for similarity this was reduced to a set of 74 words/concepts. The second question consisted of 400 lexical units and was reduced to 86 words/concepts. The final two questions, combined, had 1143 lexical units, which were reduced to 96 words/concepts.

At the end of this process the textual material was subjected to content analysis through the use of the software Spad-T (Système Portable Pour l'Analyse des Données Textuelles, version 5.6). SPAD is a statistical software program used for the exploratory analysis of large amounts of textual data. A multi-dimensional analysis called Lexical Correspondence Analysis (LCA) was conducted. This technique allows synthesis of all textual material collected in a reduced number of factorial dimensions or factorial axes (Ercolani, Mannetti, & Areni, 1999). Each factorial axis comprises two semi-axes belonging to the positive and negative quadrants. The factorial axes extracted are defined by the contribution of each word/concept present in the textual material and its association with all the other words. Each factor, therefore, is interpreted and described on the basis of the positive and negative semi-axes of which it is composed. It should be also specified that words and phrases given in the tables follow a descending order with respect to a statistical coefficient called absolute contribution (a.c.). The absolute contribution indicates the proportion of variance explained by the element to the principal axis; it allows a weighted evaluation, in terms of importance, of each word/variable in determining the factor. It is therefore clear that the words/variables with a higher absolute contribution are those that characterize and specify better the size factor, as a dimension of meaning.

*First open-ended question.* The first Lexical Correspondence Analysis (LCA) was conducted on the first open-ended question regarding the definition of the museum: «What is a museum for you?» Two factors were extracted that accounted for about the 25.7% of total variance.

The first factor (13.8% of variance explained) was characterized by a semantic dimension (positive semi-axis) that can be called *Place for critical thinking and learning*. This answer suggests a definition of museum as a representation of a cultural space for the development of critical thinking useful for learning processes. The negative semi-axis, called *Building for collecting objects*, defines the museum as a cold building mainly for objects



conservation. The positive semi-axis was characterized by words like critical thinking, place of cultural training; the negative semi axis had terms like building, keeping object, but also a boring place (see [Tab. 2](#)).

*Tab. 2 – First factor with positive and negative semi axis of the LCA to the question regarding the definition of museum*

Positive semi-axis		Negative semi-axis	
Textual variables	a.c.	Textual variables	a.c.
Critical thinking	4.	Building	5.6
Place of cultural training	3.4	Collecting objects	5.4
Learning	2.7	Boring place	3.7
Education	2.3	Storage	3.5
Experience	2.1	Container of history	3.2
Artistic expression	2.1	Exhibition place	1.1

The second factor explained 11.9% of the variance. The positive semi-axis was interpreted as, *Place for education, culture, and creativity*; this factor focused on the education, creativity, and admiration for the objects exhibited. The negative semi axis-focused mainly on the future, the interest and the transmission of culture and it was called *Cultural heritage transmission* (see [Tab. 3](#)).

*Tab. 3 – Second factor with positive and negative semi axis of the LCA to the question regarding the definition of museum*

Positive semi-axis		Negative semi-axis	
Textual variables	a.c.	Textual variables	a.c.
Place of cultural education	5.1	Future	4.6
Place of value	4.2	Place of interest	4.5
Place of admiration	3.5	Civilization	4.2
Place of discovery	3.5	Transmitting	3.3
Human creativity	2.0	Artistic attraction	3.0
Education	1.6	Diffusion of Culture	2.3
Learning	1.6	Underestimated place	2.2

*Second open-ended question.* The second open question concerned the motivation for visiting or not a museum: *What is your main motivation*

*when you decide, or not, to visit a museum?* Results of the LCA conducted to one-factor solution, accounting for about the 28.5% of the variance. The two semi-axis can be called *Intrinsic motivations vs. Motives for not visiting museums*. In the positive semi-axis were items like *interest* and *curiosity* that drive the visit to museum; on the contrary, the explanations for not visiting museums were a lack of time, or interest, little information about exhibitions, the cost of the tickets. The positive semi-axis showed the personal interest of the respondent. The most used word was «interest»: participants wrote sentences like «particular interest to the artist» or «*interest in art in general*» or «personal interest to get in touch with the work» (see Tab. 4).

Tab. 4 – First and single factor with positive and negative semi axis of the LCA to the question regarding the motivations for visiting or not museums

Positive semi-axis		Negative semi-axis	
Textual variables	a.c.	Textual variables	a.c.
Interest	5.8	Lack of time	26.6
Curiosity	4.2	Lack of interest	22.0
Personal passion	1.6	Lack of chances	12.9
		Commitments	2.0
		Lack of information	1.9
		High price	1.8

On the negative semi-axis, the most frequent reason why people had not visited a museum was lack of time. This was followed by: little interest on the topic, little chance to share this experience with a friend, and the high price for the tickets.

*Third and fourth open-ended questions.* The analysis of the third (*Do you think that visiting a museum could be useful for your education?*) and the fourth open ended questions (*What could be done for the promotion of visits in museums among young people?*) were combined because they were interrelated. Results of the LCA yielded two main factors. The first factor (10.9% of the variance) was articulated in two positive and negative semi-axes. The first semi-axis can be called *Aesthetic approach*; the content of the concepts expressed by participants dealt with the opportunity to see beautiful objects that can be approached with passion. It referred also to the pleasure and the emotional arousing potential of the artworks and that the experience can give the opportunity to the stimuli encountered to create an open mind. The negative semi-axis can be defined *Educational*

*approach*: artworks, objects displayed in an exhibition are extremely important for a cultural enrichment. Museum visits can extend the cultural education received at school and in some cases can supply the lack of arts education that is not received at school. In some cases museums are not useful to personal education, according to a group of participants, because they are experienced as boring places (see [Tab. 5](#)).

*Tab. 5 – First factor with positive and negative semi axis of the LCA to the questions regarding the usefulness and promotion of museum visits*

Positive semi-axis		Negative semi-axis	
Textual variables	a.c.	Textual variables	a.c.
Beautiful	5.4	Exhibition	3.8
Passion	4.8	Civilization	3.5
Transmission	4.0	Education	3.4
Experiencing art works	3.6	Visual	3.1
Arousing	2.1	Knowledge	2.1
Pleasure	1.7	Boring	1.5
Openness	1.0		

The second factor (8.8% of the variance explained) was also articulated in two positive and negative axes. The first semi-axis can be called *Promotion*; it refers to the importance of promoting the knowledge of museums to attract more young people, because they can be useful experiences for the learning process. The second semi-axis, *Artworks appreciation*, can be explained by as museums should be places open to different kinds of people in the public, to allow them to appreciate artworks (see [Tab. 6](#)).

*Tab. 6 – Second factor with positive and negative semi axis of the LCA to the questions regarding the usefulness and promotion of museum visits*

Positive semi-axis		Negative semi-axis	
Textual variables	a.c.	Textual variables	a.c.
Promoting	6.8	Artworks	3.3
Integrate	4.5	People	2.5
Learning	3.9	Appreciation	2.4
Useful	3.2	Openness	1.9
Arousing	2.4		
Transmit	2.3		
Youth	2.1		

## Discussion

The representation of the museum that emerged can be classified into three categories: 1) *Warm definition*, in which the museum is seen as an «on-going laboratory» in which artworks are displayed and where there is a strong interaction with the public, with the opportunity to allow visitors to understand the meaning of the arts through explanation. 2) *Cold definition*, in which the museum is seen as a place where artworks are kept and exhibited. As one participant said, «Museum gave me the idea to collect the past». This definition supports the idea of a museum as a place of conservation. Some others defined museums as boring places. 3) *The museum as a cultural system of learning*, in which a focus of the answer for this category was dedicated to the learning processes that can take place in the museum as a place that offers an opportunity for informal education through the visual experience of artworks and other human products and/or a place where the creativity can be developed. People who perceive the museum in the warm and learning process representations are most likely more willing to make the experience of a visit, as they feel more comfortable compared to people that selected the cold representation and see a museum as a distant and uncomfortable place.

These findings confirm previous research regarding museum visits (Kirchberg, 1996; Lemerise, 1999; Mason & McCarthy, 2008; Williams & Keen, 2009) that show that a great number of students do not go to museums. About 25% of the total sample had not visited any museum in the 12 months preceding the survey, and for one group of students the percentage of non-visits reached 34%. The motives that dissuade participants from museum attendance, according to the responses given, were mainly lack of time, lack of interest, lack of information, lack of chances and the high price of the ticket. Most of these reasons can be related to what was said at the beginning: museums are more focused on the past and are often perceived as a continuation of school duties (Bartlett & Kelly, 2000; Shrapnel, 2012). But what arises from the open questions is that beyond these reasons there is an emerging favorable disposition and a potential interest towards the museum experience. A good number of students who had not gone to a museum in the previous 12 months would be willing to conduct a visit, but they indicated that they need a help to realize this. What is surprising in analysing the participants' responses was the fact that many do not go to the museum for lack of opportunities and information; several participants responded, «Because I had no chance but I would like doing it». In this case, it would be interesting to know whether

more opportunities would lead to greater appreciation of museum visits.

On the contrary, many other participants expressed no interest because they consider museums as boring places that do not attract the attention and the interest of young people, because they use a language for the initiated that did not allow interactions.

Despite all these matters, there was a general agreement among participants (from their responses to the open-ended questions) that visiting museums can give several opportunities. Museums can be useful to «create an open mind» and be «useful to form a critical consciousness». The visits to art museums can give some notions of art history that many students did not receive at school because of the lack of importance given to this discipline. Moreover, seeing beautiful artworks can provide possibilities for experiencing emotions and pleasure.

The findings showed also that art education training received at the secondary school produced an interest that drive people to enjoy museum visits (a positive significant correlation was found). This is interesting because in some ways it gives more hope for museum attendance, contradicting or going beyond the Bourdieu cultural capital transmitted by the family from one generation to the other. The school curriculum, where there is the discipline of art, can provide useful tools of knowledge about art that can lead students to visit museums. Related to this, the choice of the museum typology for this sample was related to the subject studied at the university; engineering students attended more science museums as compared to other students.

An overall finding is that participants preferred visiting museums of modern and contemporary art; probably because this type of museum is perceived as very different from a formal educational institution (Mastandrea, Bartoli & Bove, 2007). Contemporary languages, close to their life experience, can tell them something about the present and the future.

In conclusion, it can be said that museums have difficulties in reaching and engaging young people. The university can be an intermediary institution that can develop some strategies to create links between young adults and museums through specific activities in which students are guided and encouraged to conduct visits. The visit experience should aim not only to enrich knowledge, but also to provide enjoyment in different personal ways, and to give the possibility of sharing experiences with other people. It is very well known that the phenomenon of aggregation in young people is relevant for the development of their identity (Brown 2000); the social dimension and the sharing of the visit experience with peers may be important components to improve the motivation for museum attendance.

## *Study 2*

This study is part of a larger international project with 9 countries from Asia, Europe, and North America, Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Taiwan, and the USA. The title of the project is, *The role of the museum in the education of attitudes, motivations, emotions and learning processes in the young adults*. The study has been funded by and is based at the University of Roma Tre, Italy.

The major goals of the study regarded the investigation of the museum visit experiences of undergraduate students, with particular relevance to personality, motivation, emotional experience and learning processes, with the aim to compare all these issues among the samples from the 9 countries. The questionnaire created consists of closed questions of different formats (multiple choice, Likert scale, etc.) obtained, in part, from the open-ended questions of the present study.

In particular in this contribution we report the data of Italian sample. The aims of the present study about psychological aspects are to investigate: (1) past experience about museum; (2) personality factors of museum visits; (3) motivational and emotional aspects of last museum visits; and (4) the best psychological predictors of future visits to museums.

### *Method*

*Participants.* 665 (93% F) Italian University students, age 19-30 ( $m = 21$ ;  $SD = 2$ ), from the second year of Educational courses of the University of Roma Tre (Rome, Italy). Students volunteered to participate in the research and there was no compensation offered.

*Measures.* A questionnaire with different item formats (closed and open-ended questions) was prepared. Participant were asked about:

Museum Experience; modalities of past visits (with school, parents, friends, alone; scale: never, 1-2 times, 3-5 times, 5-10 times, 11-20 times, more than 20 times); amount of visit in the last year (scale: never, 1 time, 2-3 times, 4-5 times, more than 5 times); museum types visited in the last year (modern art, ancient art, house museum, archaeological, ethnographic, science, architecture; yes/no scale: 1-0);

Psychological aspects: Personality - 10 pairs of adjectives (TIPI 2 items for each of Big Five); Motives - 9 items (3 for each cultural, emotional, and extrinsic motive); Emotions felt during museum past visits - 10 items (7 positive - interest and pleasure, and 3 negative emotions);

Future visit intentions - 1 item (1-5 likert).

*Procedure.* The questionnaire was administered to the students during a class. The administration of the questionnaire was conducted during 3 weeks' time, across morning and afternoon on all the days of the week except Saturday and Sunday. Completing the questionnaire took an average of about 20 minutes.

*Data analysis.* To explore museum past experience of the participants, frequencies distribution analyses were carried out. With the aim of verifying the relationship of psychological, motivational, and emotional aspects with visit experiences and future visit intentions, correlations and regression analyses were carried out.

## Results

### *Museum experiences*

A first question asked to the participants about their museum experience, was «How much they had visited a museum in their life in the following modalities: alone, with friend/s, with parent/s, with teacher (school)». For each modality, the options of answer were: never, 1-2 times, 3-5 times, 6-10 times, 11-20 times, more than 20 times. Frequencies distribution (see Fig. 1) showed that most participants visited museums many times with the teacher/school (about 30% of respondents visited museum with school between 6 and 20 times), only few times with parents or friends (about 30% one or two times), and never alone (about 77% of respondents never visited museum alone).

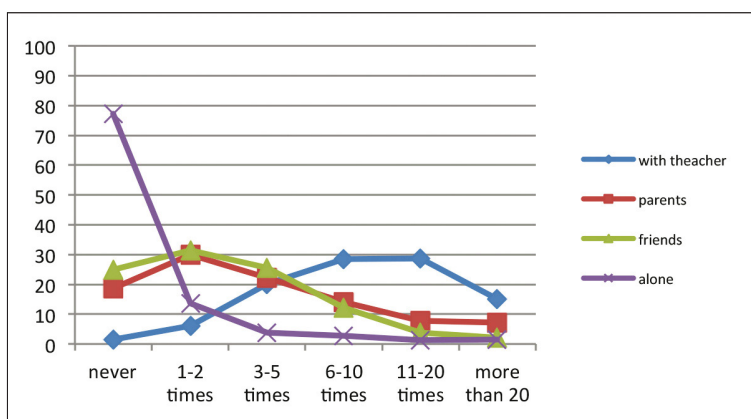


Fig. 1 – Percentage frequencies of answers about modalities of visits to museum



About the question on the amount of museum visits in the past 12 months, frequencies distribution (Fig. 2) showed that more than 30% of participants never visited a museum during the past year and almost 60% visited museum between 1 and 3 times. Only the 6% visited museums more than 5 times.

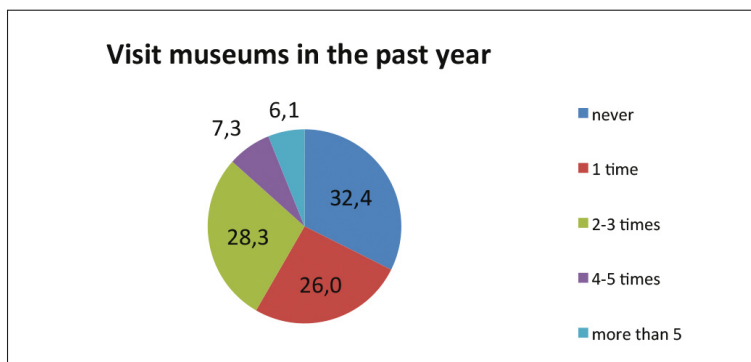


Fig. 2 – Percentage frequencies of answers about amount of museum visit in the last year

Regarding the types of museum visited by the participants during the last years only the about 70% of respondents who answered almost 1 time to the previous question (on the amount of museum visits in the last year) were considered as respondents. Descriptive analyses (Fig. 3) showed that museums of modern art were the most visited (31.1%), then museums of ancient art (22,6%), whereas architectural museums were visited by only 8,9% of the respondents.

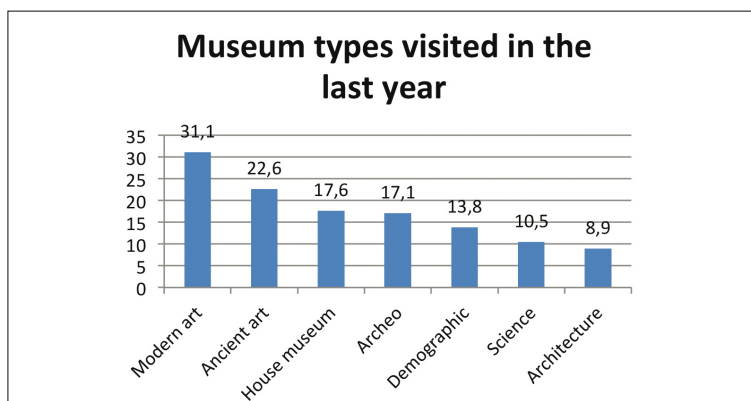


Fig. 3 – Percentage frequencies of answers about the types of museums visited during the last years

### *Personality correlates to museum visits*

From the personality scale were extracted the Big Five traits, to individuate the relationship between personality and museum experiences of the participants. A correlational analyses between personality aspects and modality of visits of museum in the past was carried out. The [Tab. 7](#) shows the significant correlations, which outline a unsurprising situation.

*Tab. 7 – Significant correlations between BF traits and modality of museum visits:  $r(p)$*

	Extraversion	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness to experiences	Agreeableness
Visit with Teacher		,094 <sup>*(.015)</sup>			
Visit with Parents				,125 <sup>**(.001)</sup>	
Visit with Friends	,096 <sup>*(.013)</sup>			,238 <sup>**(.000)</sup>	
Visit Alone			,147 <sup>**(.000)</sup>	,151 <sup>**(.000)</sup>	

Openness to experiences is the trait which most significantly correlates with the museum visits, except for visit with teacher. Extraversion trait correlates with visit museum with friends. Conscientiousness is related to visit with school and Emotional stability is significantly correlated with the visit museum alone.

This result is confirmed in the successive regression analysis, carried out with the aim to understand which BF trait most predicts museum visit in the last year. How it was predictable, only openness to the experience significantly predicts ( $\beta = .141$ ;  $p = .000$ ) museum visits in the past 12 months (for other BF traits, excluded from equation,  $\beta < |.064|$ ,  $p > .101$ ).

In the prediction of visit in the last year there are also a mediation of other variables, regarding the modalities of visiting museum in the past. As shown in [Fig. 4](#), mediation analyses demonstrate that Openness to experiences predicts museum visit in the last year through visit with parents, friends, or alone.

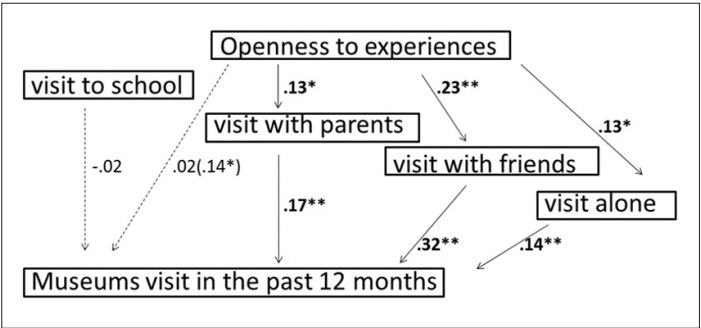


Fig. 4 – Mediated predictions ( $\beta$  values; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ ) of Openness amount of visits to museums in the last year

Personality also can predict the types of museum participants visited in the last 12 months. We conducted seven logistic regression with each type of museum visited (0-1 scale) as criterion (dependent variable) and the bf traits as predictors.

Tab. 8 shows significant prediction of personality traits on different types of museum visited in the last year. Again here we can see that openness predicts many types of museum visited, i.e. Modern art, Architecture, and Science museum, confirming the willing to know new things of open individuals. Emotional stability predicts Science museum and Ancient art museum. Conscientiousness and Agreeableness predict only one type o museum visited, respectively House museum and Science museum. Whereas, Extraversion trait does not predict particular type of museum. Note that visits to Archeological and Demo-Ethnographic museums are not significantly predicted by particular personality traits.

Tab. 8 – Significant predictors of type of museum visited in the last year  
( $B$ , \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ )

	Extraversion	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness	Agreeableness
Modern art				.30**	
Ancient art			.15*		
House museum		.18*			
Archeo					
Ethnographic					
Science			.18*	.34**	.27*
Architecture				.34**	

### *Motivational and emotional aspects*

Regarding the motives which had induced students to visit museums in the last year («How each motives was important for your museum visits in the last year»; 1-5 likert scale), we individuate three general dimensions of motivation that we have synthetized as in the graph, which shows the averages. Among intrinsic motivations, the first dimension, which we called Cultural motives, is composed by: view original works, cultural enrichment, and art experience; the second dimension we labelled Emotional motivations like: interest for artwork, willing to feel pleasure, and to feel emotions. A last dimension we called Extrinsic motivations regarding mainly contextual motives (public events, learning science, use of multimedia). As shown in the graph (Fig. 5), cultural motivation had higher means than emotional or extrinsic ones.

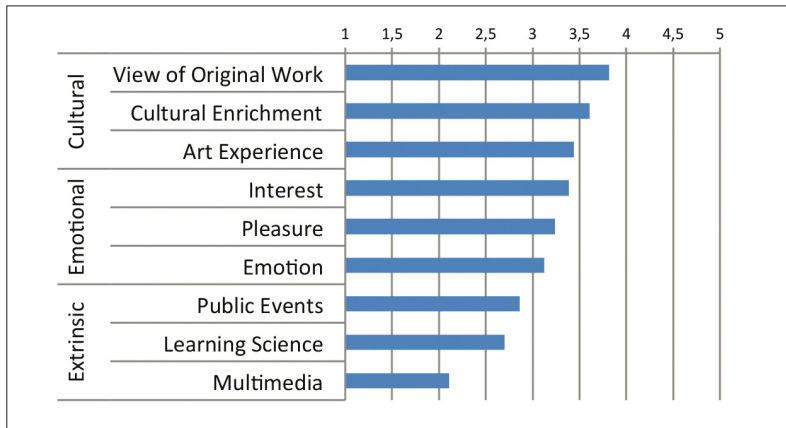


Fig. 5 – Means of motives to visit museum in the past years grouped in three dimensions

We carried out a linear regression analysis to verify which dimension about motives more predicts the museum visits during the past 12 months, using the average score among items of each dimension, and we found that the dimension of emotional motivations was the best predictor ( $\beta = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of the criterion (past visits) and then cultural motives ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ ); extrinsic motivations do not predict ( $\beta = -.06$ , n.s.) the last visits.

Regarding the emotion felt during the last visits, also here we individuate three general dimensions of emotions, divided into positive and negative emotions. We called the first dimension emotions related to Interest,

such as curiosity, interest, wonder; we called the second dimension emotions related to Pleasure such as pleasure, aesthetic enjoyment, wellbeing and fun. The third dimension was composed by Negative emotions like boredom, distress, melancholy. As shown in the graph in Fig. 6, emotions more felt during the last visits were those related to Interest, in particular, curiosity ( $m = 4.1$ ), as well as interest ( $m = 3.8$ ) and pleasure ( $m = 3.6$ ). The negative ones were less felt ( $m < 1.5$ ).

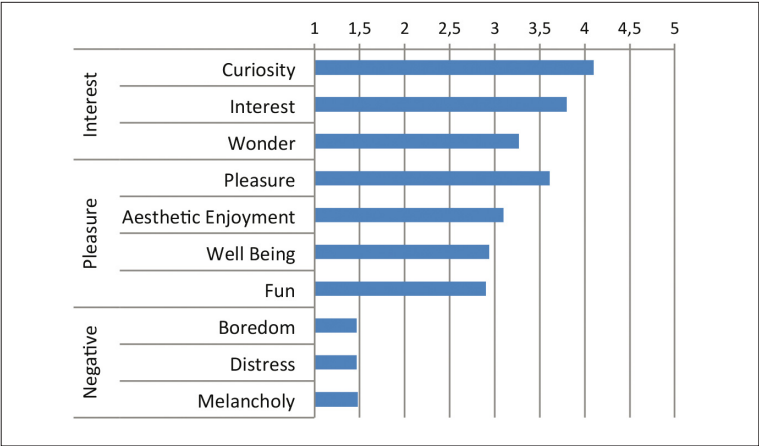


Fig. 6 – Means referred to the emotions felt during the museum visits in the past years grouped in three dimensions

*Intention of future visits*

The intention to visit museums in the future 6 months also was measured in the questionnaire. We compared the answers regarding past visits (no visits, 1 time, 2-3 times, 4-5 times, more than 5 times) with this last question (intention to visit in the future 6 months: not at all, little, sometimes, much, very much), through a contingent tables of standardized residual ( $z$ ) of answer frequencies, and Chi square.

The association between the answers resulted significant ( $\chi^2 = 201.49$ ,  $df = 16$ ;  $p < .001$ ). The graph (Fig. 7) shows the standardized residual of the answers association.

If we consider the significant standardized residual ( $z > 1.9$ ), it is possible to note that participants who answered «No» to the question about visit in the past year would have little intention to visit museum in the future 6 months ( $z = 6$ ). Participants that visited museum only 1 time

would have intention to visit sometimes in the future ( $z = 3.1$ ). Those who visited 2-3 times and 4-5 times in the past year will probably have much intention to visit museums (respectively,  $z = 5.3$ ,  $z = 4.1$ ); people who visited museums more than 5 times in the past year is highly probable to have very much intention to visit in the future 6 months ( $z = 9.1$ ).

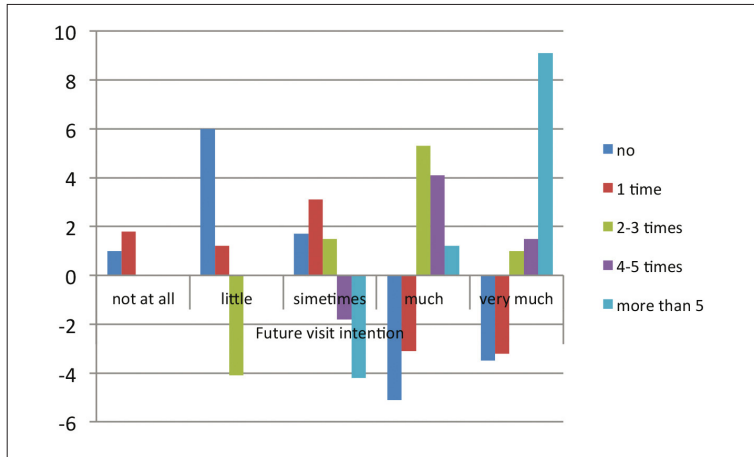


Fig. 7 – Standardized residual of the associations between the answers of the questions about past museum visits and future intention to visit museums (significant standardized residual:  $z > 1.9$ )

Through a linear regression we tested the prediction of the emotional dimensions (by the aggregate scores) on the intention of museum visits in the next six months. We found that emotions related to the Pleasure were the better predictor ( $\beta = .34$ ;  $p < .001$ ) of intentions to visit in the future, followed by the emotions related to Interest ( $\beta = .24$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Negative emotions do not predict future museum visits.

## Discussion

In this second study we intended to investigate the museum experience of Italian young adults (university students), in terms of amount, modalities, and type of museums visited and the role of psychological variables, such as personality, motivational, and emotional factors. As far as past museum experiences, results have highlighted that most of the participants had visited museum mainly with school, few times with parents or friends, and hardly ever (or never) alone. Such a result seems to be not very encouraging

and demonstrates that, amongst Italian young people, the modality to visit museums mainly with school is the most carried out. Furthermore, more than one-third of our sample never visited a museum in the last year, that is after to have finished his/her high school program, confirming the study 1. Amongst the participants who visited museums in the last years, more than one-third preferred modern art museums. This result seems to be in line with previous research (Mason & McCarthy, 2006), confirming that young people prefer modern artistic works (abstract, contemporary art, etc.) which they perceive closer to themselves respect to the ancient art (which also are well frequented) or other (non-artistic) types of museums.

Regarding the role of personality in the museum experience, we investigated if personality has a decisive role in the museum visits (Mastandrea, Bartoli & Bove, 2009). People with an openness to the experiences personality are those that mostly frequent museums out of the school programs, but with friends or alone, that is in an autonomous and active way. Mental open people would be those individuals ready to know and to learn also out of the school. Extroverted people, thanks to their sociable temperament, prefer to visit museum in company, especially with friends. Conscientious person, which is responsible and faithful to commitments and duties, mostly visits museum with teacher and school. People with high emotional stability are more comfortable to visit museums alone.

Openness is the only personality trait that predicts museum visits during the last 12 months. The relationship between personality and recent museum visit is mediated by the modalities of visit. In particular, visiting with parents, friends and alone mediated the effect of openness on museum visits in the last year. Visiting museum with school or teacher does not predict the last visits. This would demonstrate that visits made during the school program do not have effect on or not influence the interest and the choice on visiting museums after or out of school.

We investigated which traits predict the type of museum visited by the students in the last year. Results show that openness predicts the visit to most types of museum, that is modern art museum, science, and museum of architecture, design and fashion. While emotional stability predicts the visit to ancient art and science museum; conscientiousness predicts visit to house museum and agreeableness predicts visits to science museum. These results show that the visitors of different museums can be different from personality point of view.

In this study we investigated which motives drove participants to visit museum in the last years. We found that, amongst the motives proposed to the respondents in the questionnaire (from the open question of the



first study), three general dimensions: cultural, emotional, and extrinsic motives. The most indicated motives were cultural and emotional ones, confirming that intrinsic motives are more influential than the extrinsic ones. Furthermore, motives related to emotional states (interest in the artworks, to fill pleasure and emotions) are more predictive of museum visits in the last years than the cultural motives, whereas extrinsic motives do not predict recent museum frequentation. The desire to fill emotions would be therefore the primary driver to the visit of museums out of school.

As far as emotional aspects concerns, from the participants answers we individuate three dimension: pleasure, interest, and negative emotions. The first two emotions were the most indicated by the respondents and the ones that predict intentions of future visits. Comparing the participants' intention to visit museums in the future 6 months with the amount of museum visits in the last year, we found that at least they do not change their behavioural choices. People who visited only few museums in the past showed to have little intention to visit museums in the future. Those that answered to had visited many museums seem to have much intention to frequent museums in the future. Since Intrinsic (emotional and cultural) motivations are more important than extrinsic ones (public events, multimedia) for the museum visits, it is hypothesizable that people who usually go to museum is driven by these types of motives. Furthermore, the emotions related to pleasure more than interest influence the willing to visit museums.

It is possible to individuate some points of reflection regarding the applicative spill over. From an educational point of view, it is needed to focus on intrinsic motivation, i.e. interest, emotion, pleasure, culture, for stimulating the willing of visit and for incensing the fruition of museums from young people. Educational system should stimulate a desire to knowledge and research that is the basis of an openness trait of personality.

Regarding possible museum activities in order to improve the museum fruition from young people, it is needed a focus on positive emotions related to the museum experiences, i.e. pleasure, wellbeing, aesthetic enjoyment, fun, that is those affective state which drive to intention of visiting museums.

These objectives can be achieved also through the analysis of other psychological and educational aspects investigated by our research that are not presented here.

## *Conclusion*

The first study investigated the visions of museums from young people through open questions with the aim to know how they consider museum experience and why they visit museum very little. The second study investigated the role of psychological factors in the museum experience through a questionnaire with different scales. It is emerged that on the one hand young people see museum as a place far from them and difficult to be fruited, indicting most extrinsic motives (lack of information, time, etc.), on the other hand intrinsic motives and emotional drivers are more predictive of visits and intention to visit. Furthermore, openness to experience induce people to visit museums also out of school program, with friend or alone, is more predictive of museum visit and leads people to experience different type of museum, not only classic art museum, but also modern, architectural science and so on. A negative datum is emerged regarding the non-predictive role of museum visits made with school on the museum experience after the end of school program (during university program). Both the studies suggest that it is crucial the intervention of school and university in stimulating interest for new, openness to knowledge, desire to experience and education of personal and internal motivation to improve cultural curiosity. From the other hand, museum system too, beyond focusing on extrinsic factors such as giving more information and opportunities, should create non-boring setting suitable in arousing affective states related to pleasure, enjoyment, wellbeing on the young visitors, as well as in inspiring attention, openness, and curiosity about art and culture, avoiding to scare, depress, or bore the young visitors.

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Jo Chiung Hua Chen

## *Taiwanese Young Adults' Attitudes Toward Museum Visiting*

### ABSTRACT:

This study uses «past conditioned experience» as a stimulus to understand young Taiwanese adults' attitudes toward museum visiting regarding their habits, feelings and values about museums. A total of 348 university students were investigated by a structured questionnaire. 62.6% were female and 37.4% were male.

The findings indicate how attitude formation is related to conditioned experiences. Taiwanese young adults' attitudes toward museum visiting show a positively circulating cycle between self-identity, habits, and values. On the other hand, we also find there is a discrepancy between the values of the museum experience itself and the experience in the context of teacher education. Meaningful information were uncovered for museum education to be enhanced in Taiwan.

Keywords: museum; virtual museum; school museum; school sky museum.

### *Introduction*

Museums play a big role in preserving, gathering, displaying, communicating and interpreting knowledge materials on artifacts that have historical values for the purpose of learning and public view (Thyne, 2001). More importantly, museum is viewed as meaningful places for public dialogues and informal learning institutes. Today, museums are not just reaching out to larger audiences and building demand among new groups. They are also designing proactively the arrangements, services and offerings which will generate satisfaction and positive outcomes for their visitors. Therefore, how to bridge the learning connection between school and museum becomes a contemporary issue in art education.

### *Background*

Art education is a required discipline across elementary, junior high and senior high grade levels. For elementary and junior high school, student has

to take at least three arts class per week except 1G and 2G students. Arts education falls under the learning domain called «Arts and Humanities» and is divided into visual arts, music and performing arts (including dance and theatre). Each class at elementary school level has 40minutes and 45 minutes for junior high. It means that all students have one class of visual arts learning per week at different grade levels. On the other hand, teaching methodology and textbooks are based on the National Curriculum Standards. The first National Curriculum Standards was written in 1912 (Chen, 2011). After ten decades, we found that the National Curriculum Standards consistently highlight the importance of teaching appreciation and making works of art.

At university level, except art majors, students have arts learning from general education. Usually, different kinds of arts class might be offered based on each university educational goals and its specific curriculum design. In general, each university values students' arts competency, and uses it as a key index to symbolize school characters. Under this concern, how to cultivate aesthetic citizen challenges academic affairs in each university. Museum visiting is popularly used as course assignments or part of teaching and learning requirement.

In National Taiwan Normal University, «Arts and Aesthetics» is required at least 2 credits (two hours per week) for each students. But how does students look museum visiting? How are museum visiting related to their leanings?

### *Literature review*

In 1999, Fleming suggests a psychological barrier preventing young adults attending museums, claiming that it is caused by the notion of «threshold fear», which dissuades people from entering spaces where they feel uncomfortable. Following, Mokhtar & Kasim (2011) used a questionnaire survey to understand young adults' motivations for visiting and not visiting museums. The findings indicate that youth within the study context has higher predisposition to visit museums and could be a potential sub segment to target when marketing museums to young adults. In addition, a majority of them has an overall positive image of museums, thereby contrasting the theory that young adults tend to see museums as boring, didactic and unapproachable. They also highlight that among respondents who have never visited museums in the last three years, the main reason for not visiting was the lack of time, followed by lack of interest in museum, and lack of information about the museum offerings. Other reasons for not visiting museum include the preference for other

activities, difficulties in getting required information about museums and the tendency to put off visiting until a later date and the perception that museum admission fees are too pricy. A very small percentage of the respondents simply indicated that they do not like to visit museum.

Except these findings, past experiences of museum visiting from childhood also have been identified as a significant preventative of museum attendance among young adults. Negative memories of museums such as having to fill out boring worksheets at enforced school visits may cause them to associate museums strictly with education, not entertainment (Kelly, 2009). Another significant barrier preventing young adults attending museums as identified by a variety of scholars is the lack of relevance to their needs and wants (Shrapnel, 2012).

In all, knowing young adults' museum visiting habit, feeling and value become important issues in museum studies.

### *Research questions and purposes*

This research project is intended to study perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of a sample of university students towards museum and museum visits. Our aim is to offer some suggestions to improve communication among students, universities, and museums.

### *Research method and subjects*

Attitude research is an important issue for social psychology. How people form their evaluation of an attitude object becomes an important topic in attitude formation field. While a vast amount of empirical work and a high degree of theoretical elaboration have been devoted to the topic of attitude concept, attitude functions, attitude measurement, and attitude-behavior relationship, etc., social psychology is comparatively silent on the question of where likes and dislikes of (Chang, 2008).

A total of 348 National Taiwan Normal University students were investigated based on a 5 scales questionnaire with 31 questions<sup>1</sup>. 62.6% were female and 37.4% were male. Data collected from general education classes with a variety of majors in 2013.

<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire was developed by Prof. Stefano Mastandrea's museum project team from Tre University Italy. The data collected here also joining the discussion with this cross-cultural investigation project.

*Tab. 1 – Students' Majors and Size*

Major type	Size
Education (Psy/Social)	67
Literature	159
Art	15
Others(Business etc.)	107
N	348

The questionnaire covers three parts. The first one is about past experiences in museum. The second one is about recent visit and future visiting plans. The last part is about basic information of the interviewees.

The inquired questions as: I see my self as...; How much artistic education have you received at school? How much artistic education have you received out of school? Up until now, how often have you visited museums, exhibitions, archaeological sites, etc. and in which way? Indicate up to 3 of the museums (or exhibitions, archaeological sites, etc.) that you remember best among those you've visited, and indicate briefly why these were so memorable. During your visits to museums or to exhibitions, how often have you participated in the following activities? How often have you visited a museum, exhibition, etc. in the past 12 months? What kind of museum, exhibition, etc. was it? In general, how satisfied have you been with your visit(s) to these, over the past 12 months? How much have you learned from the visit(s) taken over the past 12 months? Which of the following reasons motivated you to visit museums or exhibitions in the past 12 months? Which of the following did you feel during any visits to museums or exhibitions in the past 12 months? If you have not visited any museum or exhibition in the past 12 months, what were the reasons? For each of the following statements about the museum visits, please indicate how much you agree or disagree, using the scale below; How eager are you to visit a museum in the next 6 months? If yes, what kind of museum or exhibition would you like to visit? If you were to visit a museum or an exhibition in the next 6 months, which of the following emotions do you expect to feel? Do you think that, in the education of a teacher, the museum visit is useful?

Except visiting information, the interviewee's and his/her parent's education background, occupation status, study majors, working experiences were asked to respond.



For data analysis, these questions were categorized into three sects as «Habits», «Feeling» and «Value» to interpret their perceptions, attitudes and behaviours when encountering museum setting. Habitual behavior that goes unnoticed in persons exhibiting it. Habit sect examines students' museum visiting frequency, the types of museum and what they usually do when visiting. Feeling here is reserved for the subjective experience of emotion. Value is about subject belief. Here we check how students think about museum existence, functions or what museum 'ought' to be.

## *Results*

### *Subjects description*

These interviewed students self-identify as «open to new experiences, complex» (78.2% combining agree little, agree moderately, and strongly), «sympathetic, warm» (71.9%), «dependable, self-disciplined» (67.8%), «reserved, quiet» (63.5%) and «anxious, easily upset» (58.7%), but also «extroverted, enthusiastic» (58.5%).

Even though arts courses are required for each student from primary to high school, when asking how much artistic education have you received at school, 35.4% of the students responded «a little bit», 35.4% said «some», 20.7% with «moderate» and 7.8% as «extensive». On the other hand, when it comes to artistic education out of school, 15.2% of the students responded that they had no experience, and the others said they had some experiences.

### *Habits*

In the past 12 months, 70% of the students visited museums or exhibitions at least 2-3 times. 46.7% of arts major students visited more than 5 times that was significantly more often than other majors. On the other hand, when asking why they did not going to museum, more than 70% of the students responds they are lacking of time. When visiting museum, exhibitions, archaeological sites, they usually went with schoolteachers, friends, or parents. The most important reasons that motivated students to visit museums or exhibitions were «the pleasure I feel during the visit», «the interest for the artist, the scientist, the exhibition», and «the desire for cultural enrichment», respectively. They sometimes participated in «multimedia activities» (44.4%), «guided tours» (41.1%), «responding to

questionnaires» (37.2%), and more often likely to «graphic and pictorial activities» (with 31.8%). When asking why they did not going to museum, more than 80% of the responses are lacking of time.

### *Feelings*

During the visits, students feel «fun» (89.5%), «well being» (85.2%), and less commonly, «distress» (2.45) and «boredom» (3.2%). Students tend to have positive felling with museum settings or related activities. In general, 61.3% of the students were satisfied with their visiting experiences. During the visit, most of the students experienced positive feelings such as «aesthetic enjoyment» (65.7%), «pleasure» (60.0%), «curiosity» (58.2%), «well being» (51.3%), and «wonder» (49.1%). They also expressed that they do learn from the visiting, 37.2% said they learned some, 29.3% said much, and 4.4% said very much.

### *Values*

When asking about the value of the museums, more than 50% of the students agree with «as a place of learning, museums provide a valuable contribution to knowledge», «attending museums can develop an open mind», «my faculty should encourage more the attendance at museums», and «admiring what is exhibited in a museum produces a feeling of well-being». As to the future visiting, 34.2% of the students somewhat eager to visit a museum, and 45.5% of the students would like to go. The types of museums that students would like to visit most are «modern and contemporary», «archaeological site or archaeological museum», «architecture, design, and fashion», and «ancient art». When asking why they did not going to museum, More than 80% of the students think museum visits are somewhat useful to teacher education, but only 29.7% of the students think it is very useful, and 10.6% express that it is very useful. Their values about museum visiting and teacher education is not as positive as other countries in this respect (24.6% of Italy students, 27.7% of Austria students, 29.5% Hungry students and 45.2% of Portugal students said it was very useful).

### *Conclusion*

These findings indicate how attitude formation is related to conditioned experiences. Taiwanese young adults' attitudes toward museum

visiting show a positively circulating cycle between self-identity, habits, and values.

The results of the survey have shown that young adults students average aged 20 years old think that museums visiting are full of fun, aesthetic enjoyment and learning experiences. However, from the survey results, we found there are several reasons stopping them from attending museums. One of the reasons is lacking of time. The other one is to do with the type of the museum. They like to see and experience something new, modern and contemporary. As Shrapnel (2012) indicates Young adults want to see and experience something new, unique and entertaining. Therefore, museum type should take into concerns when organizing a museum trip for class teaching. The results also shows that when students attend museum, most often with school teachers. It means museum visiting is for schooling instead of their social life. If we expect students to be a life long learner and best using museum as rich learning sites in the future, then there are still ways to work on.

On the other hand, we also find there is a discrepancy between the values of the museum experience itself and the experience in the context of teacher education. All in all, this study uncovers meaningful information for museum education to be enhanced in Taiwan.

### *Acknowledgments*

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Lisa F. Smith, Jeffrey K. Smith, Stefano Mastandrea

*Attitudes, Motivations, and Emotions Toward Museum Visits for Undergraduate University Students in New Zealand*

ABSTRACT:

This research explored attitudes, motivations, and emotions toward visiting museums for undergraduate university students in New Zealand. It was part of an international grant on factors affecting museum visitation funded by and based at the University of Roma Tre, under the direction of Professor Stefano Mastandrea. Nine countries were represented. The primary research question for the New Zealand study was: What are the perceptions of students in a college of education regarding museum experiences? We explored this by asking: What is the relationship between personality traits and type of museum visited? What is the relationship between art education and museum visits? What motivations and emotions are associated with visiting museums? Participants were  $n = 78$  undergraduate students, who completed an online survey that was created for the grant. Results yielded significant correlations between the number of museum visits in the previous 12 months and (a) whether the participant had had art education outside of a school setting, (b) whether the participant had visited the museum alone or had been accompanied by parents or friends, and (c) the level of interest in the artist/scientist/exhibit; The intentions to visit a museum in the next 6 months was predicted by the number of museum visits during the previous year, wanting to have fun, and a pursuit of emotional wellbeing. A factor analysis of emotional reactions to museum visitation loaded on 2 factors that explained 60.49% of the variance. The first factor comprised items concerning wonder, pleasure, aesthetic enjoyment, fun, interest, wellbeing, and curiosity. The second factor involved items related to melancholy, distress, and boredom. Results are discussed in terms encouraging museum attendance for this age group.

This research explored attitudes, motivations, and emotions toward visiting museums for undergraduate university students in a college of education in New Zealand. It was part of an international grant on factors affecting museum visitation for young adults. The grant was funded by and based at the University of Roma Tre, under the direction of Professor Stefano Mastandrea, with 9 countries represented (in alphabetical order):

Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Taiwan, and the USA. An underlying premise for this research was that undergraduate university students, as a group, should have intellectual curiosity and motivation for knowledge, and therefore have interest in museums and toward museum visits. An objective for the study was also to offer suggestions on how to improve communication among students, universities, and museums, to enhance visitation, enjoyment, and learning – whether formal or incidental – on the part of the students.

### *Background*

In the past 10-15 years, little research has been conducted on *why* young adults choose not to visit museums. There is a popular perception that young adults find museums boring, that they do not «speak» to the interests of young people but rather that they engage in didactic presentations about the past (Bartlett & Kelly, 2000). In a study in Auckland, New Zealand, Mason and McCarthy (2006) found that those aged 16 to 26 did not visit art galleries in the same numbers as the general (older) population. They argued that correcting this situation will require more than museums presenting exhibitions that appeal to young adult audiences, concluding that at the base of the issue was a lack of fit between cultures, that those who present art in museums are not in touch with those who might view it, at least for the age group in question.

In contrast, Mokhtar and Kasim (2011) reported that in Malaysia, a large sample of university-aged students held positive attitudes toward museums. Reasons given for not visiting museums included a lack of time, followed by lack of interest in a given museum, not being familiar with what the museum had to offer, other activities being more attractive, and admission fees being too high. They advocated for more information being disseminated to young adults through brochures, the web, and by in-museum guides. They also suggested lowering admission prices and being attentive to how museum collections are displayed, to entice visitors in this demographic.

Similarly, Shrapnel (2012) surveyed young adults aged 18-26 in Australia and concluded that although 74% of respondents reported that museums are fun and exciting places, to actually encourage visitation some changes directed at this age group need to be introduced. Suggestions included night-time museum events; special exhibitions, especially about cultures other than their own, that are presented in new, unique, and

entertaining ways (the descriptors «edgy» and «underground» were used; Shrapnel [2012]: 29); lower admission prices; and, opportunities for social gatherings that included alcohol, musicians, and comedy acts. Clearly, for the sample in that study, it seemed that «museum as night club» would increase attendance.

### *New Zealand context*

It is important to note that in New Zealand, there is no entrance fee for museums or galleries. Certain special exhibitions may have an admission price, which is usually nominal and is used to support any extraordinary installation costs or maintenance associated with that exhibition. In addition, many rural towns throughout New Zealand have small local history museums with eclectic artefacts related to the founding of the particular town and its history. Given that New Zealand was officially founded in 1840, the history can be thought of as recent, when compared to Europe or even the United States. Nevertheless, these museums often comprise fascinating objects, pictures, and stories that are treasured by those who care for them and those who visit them.

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa), the national museum of New Zealand, was opened in 1998. Demographic profiles for Te Papa are different from what is considered the norm at other museums. A wide range of education levels, professions, and cultural groups visit. The 2014 Annual Report (Museum of New Zealand) showed that 21% of the visitors were between the ages of 16 and 24. This contrasts with other findings that young adults do not attend museums.

Putting together the objectives of the grant, the background from the literature, and New Zealand's somewhat unique context, the primary research question for this study was: What are the perceptions of students in a college of education in New Zealand, regarding museum experiences? To explore this, we posed three research questions, which were:

1. What is the relationship between personality traits and type of museum visited?
2. What is the relationship between art education and museum visits?
3. What motivations and emotions are associated with visiting museums?

## *Method*

### *Participants*

A total of  $n = 78$  undergraduate students completed an online survey that was created for the grant. All students were from a college of education on the South Island of New Zealand, and were in three-year programmes for initial teacher education. There were  $n = 61$  female and  $n = 17$  male participants, who had a mean age of 21.16 ( $SD = 6.62$ ), ranging from 18 to 48 years. This ratio of female to male students is common in teacher education programmes in New Zealand. None of the students worked full time;  $n = 29$  reported working part time. Only 12 of the participants had not attended at least one museum in the past 12 months.

### *Materials*

The materials for this research were an online survey developed for the grant, which went through extensive editing across the languages of the countries involved to assure comparability of the findings while attending to aspects of individual items, especially with regard to demographics, that might be idiosyncratic to any individual country. A set of hypotheses were supplied by the team at the University of Roma Tre by way of guidance for analysing the data; however, these hypotheses were not required to be used by the other participating countries.

There were 27 items on the survey, comprising:

- A short version of the Big Five personality inventory;
- Items regarding prior museum experiences;
- Items exploring expectations for future museum visits;
- Items probing affective reactions toward various types of museums and museum experiences;
- Demographic Items.

### *Procedure*

Ethical permission was obtained by the University under Departmental Review. Māori Consultation also was completed in accordance with University requirements. Participants were solicited in all three year levels, with one class each at the first, second, and third years of study. The students were given information sheets that explained the study and provided the URL for participation. Once online, the introductory survey



instructions indicated that submission of the completed protocol constituted agreement for participation.

Completed surveys were collated centrally in Rome for the study. Data for the New Zealand participants were provided in a format compatible with SPSS Version 20 for purposes of analysis.

### *Results*

The first research question was, What is the relationship between personality traits and type of museum visited? To explore this question, we used the items from the short version of the Big Five. Following the hypotheses suggested from the grant, we expected that openness would predict museum visitation in the past 12 months and that extroverts would report significantly more visits to modern, contemporary art/architecture, and design museums, as compared to other types of museums. Using linear regression, the Big Five items were entered as independent variables with the number of museum visits in the past 12 months, and type of museum visited in the past 12 months (Ancient Art, Modern/Contemporary Art, Science and Technology, Archaeological Site/Museum, History/Culture/Art/Popular Traditions, Architecture/Design/Fashion, and House Museum) used in turn as the dependent variables. Only four significant predictors were obtained:

1. Ancient Art Museum visitation and Calm/Emotionally Stable ( $p < .05$ );
2. History/Culture/Art/Popular Traditions Museum visitation and Anxious/Easily Upset ( $p < .05$ );
3. Archaeological Site/Museum visitation and Sympathetic/Warm ( $p < .01$ ); and,
4. Archaeological Site/Museum visitation and Calm/Emotionally Stable ( $p < .05$ ).

The second research question asked, What is the relationship between art education and museum visits? Using correlation, the data showed that Art education in school was not significantly correlated with museum visits over the past 12 months; however, having engaged in art education outside of school was significant at  $p < .01$ . Given that art education at school was not significantly correlated with museum visitation over the past 12 months, we decided to examine this question further by exploring whether it mattered with whom the museum visit occurred. For this, using linear regression, museum visitation over the past 12 months was

used as the dependent variable. The independent variables were: visited with a school/teachers, visited with parents, visited with friends, visited with an association, visited with one's partner, visited with children, and visited alone. Visiting with parents, with friends, or alone predicted museum visits over past 12 months, all at  $p < .01$ . Visiting with a school/teachers, visiting with an association, and visiting with a partner or children were not significant predictors.

The last research question examined, What motivations and emotions are associated with visiting museums? In terms of which motivators predicted past museum visitation, linear regression was again used to analyse the data. Museum visitation over the past 12 months was the dependent variable. The independent variables were: interest in the artist/scientist/exhibit, pleasure, cultural enrichment, emotional responses/experiences/critical reflection, desire to see original works, learning through practical demonstrations, experiencing multimedia, participating in public events, and opportunity to learn through a close experience. Only interest in the artist/scientist/exhibit predicted past museum visitation ( $p < .05$ ).

This analysis was repeated, this time using the variable, «How eager are you to visit a museum in the next 6 months» as the dependent variable. This time, the significant motivators were cultural enrichment ( $p < .01$ ) and for emotional responses/experiences/critical reflection ( $p < .05$ ). Participants were also asked a series of questions directly related to what emotions they would expect to feel during a visit to a museum/exhibition in the next 6 months. Using linear regression, with eagerness to visit a museum in the next 6 months as the dependent variable, and fun, distress, boredom, and well-being as the independent variables, fun and well-being were significant, both at  $p < .01$ ; distress and boredom were not significant predictors.

Also related to emotional responses to museum visits, participants were asked, «Which of the following did you feel during any visits to museums or exhibitions in the past 12 months? Participants used a 5-point Likert-type scale to rate the following: wonder, pleasure, melancholy, well-being, aesthetic enjoyment, boredom, fun, interest, distress, and curiosity. These emotional reactions to museum visitation were entered in a principal components factor analysis using a direct oblimin rotation. The items loaded on 2 factors that explained 60.49% of the variance. The first factor comprised the following items: wonder, pleasure, aesthetic enjoyment, fun, interest, well-being, and curiosity. This factor had an eigenvalue of 4.48. The second factor was made up of the items: melancholy, distress, and boredom and had an eigenvalue of 1.57. The correlation for the two factors was not significant ( $r = .07$ , *ns*). These factors showed a clear delineation between what would

be considered positive and negative emotional reactions.

In terms of predicted future museum visitation based on past visitation, a correlation was computed between the number of museum visits in the past year and intention to visit in the next 6 months. As might be expected, the correlation was significant and positive ( $r = .43, p < .001$ ).

Although not part of the research questions or suggested hypotheses, some additional items on the survey yielded interesting results and merit presentation. To begin, participants were asked how often they engage in various types of activities when visiting a museum. It was disappointing to find that 62% of the sample responded «never» or «not much» to participating in guided tours. Similarly, 69% reported that they do not take part when asked to complete a questionnaire. More positive responses (much and very much) were obtained for participating with simulation games (33%), graphic and pictorial activities (30%), scientific activities (28%), and multimedia activities (23%). Despite these less than encouraging percentages, 65% of the sample indicated a high level of satisfaction and 35% reported that they have learned a large amount on their visits to museums in the past 12 months.

Participants were also asked to rate possible reasons given for not attending museums. As noted, entrance costs are not an issue in New Zealand. In order, the students responded «much» or «very much» to the following reasons:

- Lack of time - 89%
- Lack of opportunity - 78%
- Lack of others to attend with - 78%
- Lack of information - 44%
- Lack of interest - 44%
- Prefer other cultural activities - 41%
- Limited opening hours - 11%

On a positive note, the majority of the students agreed or strongly agreed that:

- Museums contribute to knowledge - 91%
- Museums develop open minds - 76%
- Museum visits are important in teacher education - 64%
- Faculty should encourage museum attendance - 52%
- Museum visits produce feelings of well-being - 47%.

And, the majority disagreed/strongly disagreed that:

- Museum websites suffice - 80%
- Museums do not provide adequate information - 76%
- Visiting a museum is not educationally effective - 71%

- Reading about topics suffices - 69%
- Museums are boring - 61%

### *Discussion*

This study set out to examine the attitudes, motivations, and emotions of undergraduate university students when visiting museums in New Zealand. The data from this study formed one part of an international grant with 10 participating countries on factors affecting museum visitation.

- The main findings from this research were the following:
- For personality types, participants who self-described as calm and emotionally stable were most likely to visit museums related to visit ancient art or archaeological sites. Visits to archaeological sites were also appealing to those who self-described as sympathetic/warm personality types. Those who were anxious/easily upset were likely to attend museums related to history/culture/art/popular traditions.
- Art education in school and school visits to museums did not predict museum visitation as a university student. Outside experiences had more influence.
- The participants were more likely to visit a museum if they were interested in the museum/exhibition, looking for a fun experience, or wanting to promote a feeling of personal well being.
- Those participants who have gone to museums in the past 12 months are likely to intend to return in the next 6 months.
- Although the top three reasons for not visiting museums were a lack of time, opportunity, or having others with whom to attend, participants indicated that online experiences do not substitute for actually going to a museum.
- For this sample of undergraduate university students, museums evoke positive emotions and perceptions about contributing to knowledge.

Keeping the New Zealand context in mind, the data obtained from the current sample of university students only partially supported the extant literature on young adults and museum visitation. Approximately 2/3 of the sample in the current study indicated a high level of satisfaction with their museum visits over the previous year, which supports Mokhtar and Kasim's (2011) finding of positive attitudes toward museums held by university students in Malaysia. Also in keeping with Mokhtar and Kasim's

results, a lack of time was a major impediment to attending a museum for the current sample. And, similar to Shrapnel's (2012) sample, going to a museum to have fun was a clear motivator for attendance by the young adults in the current sample; however, they were also interested in attending for cultural enrichment, gaining a sense of having an emotional response or experience, and having the opportunity for critical reflection. These reasons suggest a somewhat more sophisticated or mature attitude toward the benefits of museum visitation on the part of the students in the current study.

In contrast to Mason and McCarthy's (2006) finding that older patrons were more likely to visit art galleries as compared to those in the 16 to 26 year old age group, roughly 85% of the participants in this study had attended at least one museum over the previous 12 months. This may be because museums are free to attend in New Zealand and that in Otago, which was the location of the study, there are several exciting options for museum visitation. These include a natural history/science museum with special and varying hands-on exhibitions, an art gallery, a regional history archives, an authentic Chinese garden, and a settler's museum in a very engaging setting that highlights both Māori and Pākehā (non-Māori, usually white New Zealander) origins. The evidence from this sample is also in contrast to Mason and McCarthy's (2006) and Shrapnel's (2012) contentions that museums need to appeal to young adult audiences with more edgy exhibits and «museum as nightclub» venues, as evidenced by this sample's desire to engage in critical reflection when visiting a museum.

There are, of course, limitations to the study reported here. To begin, the sample was small and was comprised of students from a university at the bottom of the Earth in a city where sheep and cows outnumber people by about 7:1. Generalising their perceptions to those of young adults in European or Asian cities would be more than a stretch. However, even with these limitations, the results from this study suggest a few practices that might help to build interest in museum attendance from a young age, and that might increase interest in museum visitation for students who are at or about to be at university now.

Given that outside experiences had more influence than school visits in terms of predicting museum visitation as a university student, it seems that parents need to be encouraged to visit museums with their children from an early age, and to provide opportunities for their children to engage in artistic experiences. Museums might provide more programming and activities for children by way of inviting them to be part of the museum and to build comfort levels and interest in museums and all they

have to offer. As the participants in this study were more likely to intend to visit a museum in the next 6 months if they had gone to a museum in the past 12 months, it would make sense that visiting early, and even often, would develop an inclination toward lifelong museum attendance.

The university students in this sample were likely to visit museums in which they had an interest. A future study might focus on exploring what those interests might be and even how university students might become involved in curating or assisting museum staff in preparing exhibitions of interest to the 18-26 year old age group.

Finally, the students reported that going to a museum had educational value and should be encouraged by faculty members. They also stated that there was no substitute for actually going to a museum. This is interesting, given the current young adults' level of attraction with technology and their facility with it. That is not to say that technology should be ignored in museums or that museum websites are not important but rather that we need to focus on how to use technology and websites to encourage young people to visit.

Clearly, for this sample, and we suspect that this would generalise, there's nothing like the real thing. Although we cannot resolve the top three reasons given for not visiting museums – lack of time, opportunity, or having others with whom to attend – we can work to ensure that when young adults do attend a museum or gallery, they feel welcomed, feel that it was a worthwhile use of their time, and they feel that there is reason to return for another visit.

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Anikó Illés, Peter Bodor

*Patterns of Museum Perception in Hungarian University Students*

ABSTRACT:

The institution called museum and the various particular museums have a leading role in sharing cultural heritage. This research concentrates primarily on the meaning of and experiences with museums by young people from the perspective of the psychology of art.

The study relied on the Hungarian data of a cross-cultural survey on young people's museum visiting habits, attitudes and beliefs, certain characteristics of their personalities and in general, their perception of museums.

Survey data were described and analysed as patterns of perception of museum visits. The types of museophobia and museophilia were suggested as two types of personal stances towards museums: refraining from museums and avoiding museum visits on the one hand, and perception of museums as a place for gathering emotional experiences and learning on the other hand.

Furthermore, qualitative techniques, interviews were also applied for complementing survey data. We have conducted semi-structured interviews among young Hungarians on the issue of 'What does a museum mean for young adults?' After having analysed the questionnaires and processed the interviews, conclusions can be drawn regarding the motivations of youth to visit museums. It became clear that frequent museumgoers think of museums as important places both for acquiring knowledge and for obtaining emotional experiences, while those avoiding museum visits do not consider museums a valid place for neither aspect.

*'There is nothing to see there.'*

(unknown student from Rome on why avoiding museums)

Cultural heritage, no doubt, is a highly important asset for a given community. However, the value of any heritage lies in its present day's presence: in its availability, attractiveness, intelligibility, in short, functionality to the members of the respective society. Of course, there are many ways

to share and circulate cultural heritage from family conversations through school readers to mass media. However, the institution called museum and the various particular museums have a leading role in this regard. Museums have various functions (ICOM, 2016), but it seems to us that the core functions of museums can be described as four major interrelating activities. Thus, the main functions of museums are (1) acquisition, (2) conservation, (3) research, and (4) interpretation (communicating and exhibiting). In this research, we concentrate primarily on the last one, i.e. the issue of interpretation. In other terms, we focus on the perspective of the individual. We apply the perspective of the psychology of art.

What kind of interpretations or for whom are relevant regarding museums? Interpretation of museums can be divided into two wide branches: professional and expert reflections on museums are provided by various intellectuals including art historians, sociologists and psychologists; lay conceptualizations, at the same time have been given much less attention in this regard. However, in our understanding, the issue of lay interpretation of museums and a set of related questions were exactly the focus in a previous study by Mastandrea *et al.* (2012).

Mastandrea and his colleagues conducted a survey on museum visiting habits of youth and a set of related questions. Their interesting findings, as it is usual for exploratory studies, provoked several further research questions. For example, the surprisingly small amount of museum visits the respondents reported needs to be further analysed. These and similar issues were the main reasons why the large-scale international research a part of which is elaborated in the present paper has started.

As part of an international group (leader: Stefano Mastandrea, Roma Tre University), a research was developed on young people's museum visiting habits, attitudes and beliefs, certain characteristics of their personalities and in general, their perception of museums.

The Hungarian part of the research group collected data on the Hungarian sample making use of the following the uniform questionnaire (for details, see Mastandrea *et al.*, present volume). Additionally, we have articulated a hypothesis on the lack of meaning of museums for youth. The hypothesis was based on some interesting and in a certain sense provocative, though casual observations on the central meaning of museums, such as one student saying that museums have the «smell of a crypt» while another mentioned that they are full of «frightening caretakers». In order to obtain a more detailed and empirically sound view on the related issues, we wanted to have a closer look and examine the background stories and memories concerning museum visits more systematically. So, we decided to

use qualitative techniques, namely interviews for complementing survey data.

In the first paragraphs of the present paper, the Hungarian sample of the questionnaire is presented and some relevant results are drawn attention to. Following these, the settings and analysis of the interviews are described. In the conclusions, the results are contextualised in the framework of empirical aesthetics.

### *The patterns of visiting museums in Hungarian youth*

#### *The Hungarian sample*

457 students of different universities (81% female, 19% male), most of them from faculties of education, psychology and social studies.

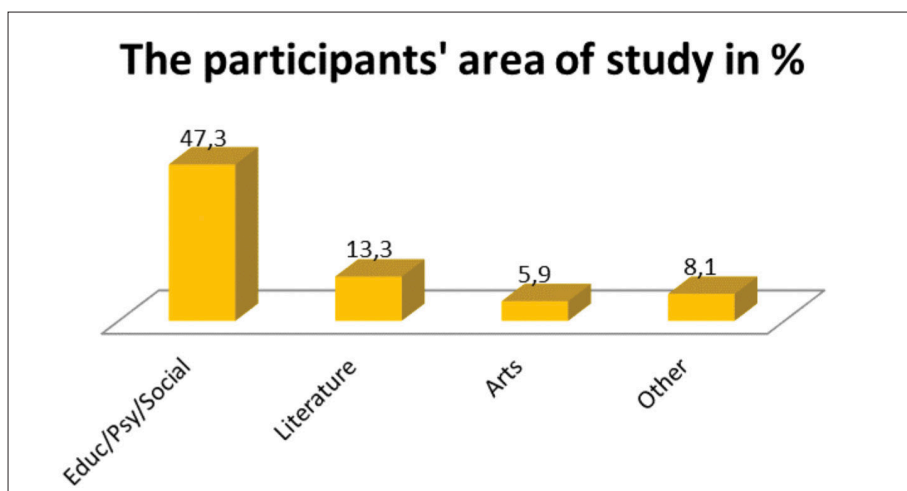


Fig. 1 – The participants' area of study in %

#### *Quantitative data analysis*

We do not undertake to present all the possible interactions of all the items on the questionnaire. For a detailed analysis of the whole database underlying the research, see Mastandrea *et al.* In the following sections, we examine the frequency of museum visits and the perceived learning and emotional effects.

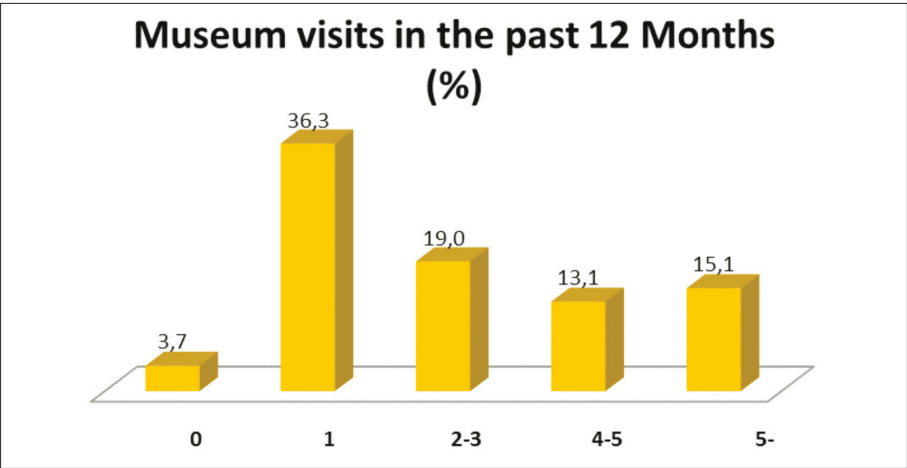


Fig. 2 – The frequency of the museum visits in the past 12 months in percentages of respondents is presented in five columns from zero visits to more than five visits

The data in the table confirm that even if it is problematic how far and in what way your memory may deceive you regarding museum visits in the past 12 months, still an interesting distribution is emerging. Most respondents (more than one third of the sample) went to a museum only once, and the least respondents belong to the group of respondents who did not go to a museum at all (less than four percent).

Similarly remarkable are the ideas about future museum visits.

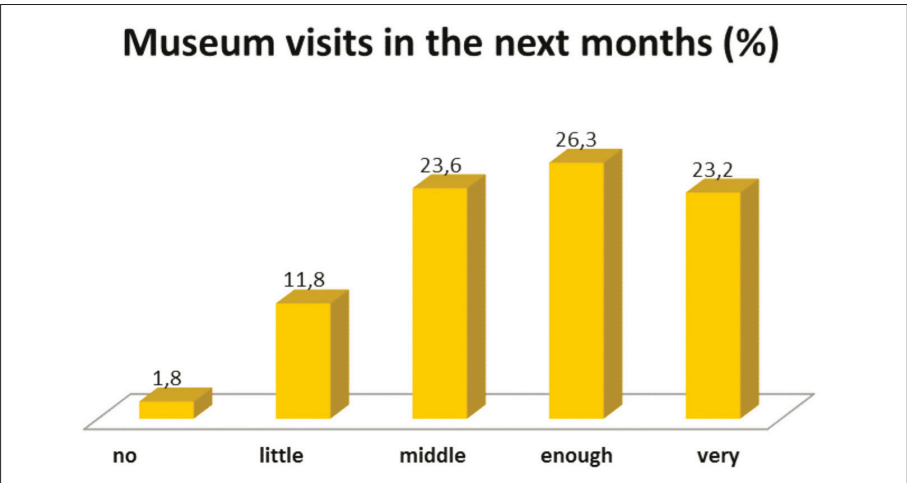


Fig. 3 – The probability of visits in the next months in percentages is presented in five columns from not at all likely to very likely

Only few people state that they will not go or are hardly likely to go to a museum (13.6 %). The majority anticipates going to a museum in the next months.

### *The perception of museum visits. Some interesting data*

#### *Correspondence with learning and emotions*

If you go to a museum, the question arises what your expectations are, or what results or rewards you get from your visit. The questionnaire tried to cover a wide range of motivations and experiences. Thus, we had the opportunity to ask about the relationship between learning and cultural learning or emotional effects, and museum visits.

In the questionnaire, we asked visitors to tell us how much he/she thinks to have learnt during the time spent in the museum. The analysis clearly shows that if you go to a museum, you learn at least a little ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). Additionally, more visits correspond to more learning, probably not surprisingly.

As far as emotional factors are concerned, there are similar correlations. If you go to a museum, you experience at least some emotional impact. Additionally, more visits correspond to more emotionality. This tendency is strong for positive emotions while it is much weaker for negative emotions.

#### *Ceiling effect*

As for museum visits, we have nevertheless found that a clear ceiling effect exists. We concluded that above some 5 visits per year, neither the knowledge gain from visits, nor the strength of the emotional factors increases as a result of undertaking any more museum visits.

#### *Type of museums*

We could not find any evidence to support the hypothesis drawn up when drafting the questionnaire to the effect that learning and emotional effects also depend on the type of the museum. As far as the perceived learning or emotion is concerned, we could not find any difference between antic *vs* contemporary museums.

### *Museophobia vs museophile*

In order to get closer to the perception of museum visits, two concepts were developed based on the data related to museum visits. These concepts denote two types of personal stances towards museums. The two concepts describe two extreme stances of museum visitors: refraining from museums and avoiding museum visits on the one hand, and perception of museums as a place for gathering emotional experiences and learning on the other hand. The two prototypes look as follows.

As museophobes have been defined those respondents whose answer to question Q7\_M1 (How many times did you go to a museum, exhibition, etc. in the past 12 months?) was «not once»; 17 respondents (after data cleaning).

As museophiles have been defined those respondents whose answer to question Q7\_M1 (How many times did you go to a museum, exhibition, etc. in the past 12 months?) was «more than 5 times»; 69 respondents (after data cleaning).

#### *Museophobes*

These persons are characterised by the weakest positive attitudes and the strongest negative attitudes towards museum visits. They usually agree that they prefer other cultural activities, and that museums are not the proper place for learning, and it is more effective to learn from books.

They disagree with the statement that museums providing important knowledge museum visits making you more open-minded, and appreciation of objects in museums being a good feeling.

#### *Museophiles*

They had the second strongest positive and the second weakest negative attitudes towards museum visits. They agree that museums provide important knowledge, museum visits make you more open-minded, and that appreciation of objects in museums is a good feeling.

They disagree with preference for other cultural activities, with museums not being the proper place for learning, and that it is more effective to learn from books.

They had the highest internal motivations (among museum visitors), while they had average external motivations.

### *Meaning of museums for young adults*

The data from the questionnaire provides us with essential information regarding museum visits. Indeed, it contributed to the development of a respective typology and the examination of its psychological background. However, survey data could be complemented by some other sources of more qualitative information. It seemed to us that some more meaning-oriented, qualitative methods could be utilized as well. From previous studies (ITEMS, 2012), we have some interesting fragments on the museum visits which are less appealing. Students' remarks on school visits are like that: it was too long and «my blood sugar level went down». Or «this exhibition is for someone who comes on his or her own decision and not because it is a must».

From the possible qualitative methods, we speculated that interviews could be a useful and somewhat more meaning-sensitive method as opposed to questionnaires relying predominantly on pre-fixed alternatives. Thus, we anticipate that personal experiences of visiting museums and the meaning of museums for the young generation could be approached through interview methods as well.

For an interest in patterns of visiting museums and its perceived psychological constituents, the question of «What does a museum mean for young adults?» it seems worth proceeding to ask the question. Exploring the answers to these and related questions seems to us an important contextualization of the previously obtained and analysed data set.

### *Interviews on the meaning of museums and museum experiences*

#### *Description of interviews*

We have conducted 18 interviews among young Hungarians. In the followings, we describe certain relevant characteristics of our respondents who were predominantly in their twenties. Specifically, our interviewees were from 18 to 29 years of age. Most of them were enrolled to various universities: 14 of them were active university students, one of them already had a university degree and the remaining three of them finished secondary school. Seven of our subjects were males and eleven were females. The length of the interviews varied from 15 minutes to more than 45 minutes.

The interviews were semi-structured ones, and a set of guiding questions was compiled to facilitate discussion. Following some general questions

on the respondent's age, education, etc., the questions focused on various aspects of visiting and experiencing museums. (For our actual interview guideline, see the Appendix of the present paper.) However, our interviewers were asked and trained to encourage free talk on the part of the interviewees instead of pushing them through all preconceived questions. The interviewers were students of sociology.

### *Analysis of the interviews*

Methodologically, our way of analysing the interviews was what is generally referred to as thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006; Charmaz, 2006), and it implied identifying some of the major issues our subjects talked about while discussing the topic of museums. In our analysis of the interviews, we will concentrate on four inter-related points.

1. What is the position of visiting museums for young adults within their activities? Is it a free-time occupation or a more serious one?
2. What are the main types of reasons for going to museums, and the reasons for not going there?
3. What is the role of the wider cultural and the actual social context in visiting museums?
4. Some cues of tacit and normative expectations for visiting museums and ways of grappling with these expectations.

Let's see the details of some of the major thematic nodes our interviews testified on conceptualizing the meaning of museums and museum going in our interviews!

1. Museum-going seems to belong primarily to leisure-time or free-time activities, as opposed to serious work-type activities. It is a type of activity people are occupied with mainly for the reason of having fun. These types of activities include simply socializing, doing sports, reading, going to movies, visiting theatre, attending music concerts and visiting museums.

Evaluation of visiting museums and museum experiences are presented frequently within the frame of reference of having fun. Indeed, considering within this framework, visiting museums is not a favourite activity for some of our subjects. As A's account testifies, museums are not really entertaining to him: *«doesn't entertain me as much as a conversation, or watching a film...»* (Relevant sections in the transcripts are in italics.) To the open question on what he thinks of museums he replied:



«It would be a perfectly good recreation, but the emphasis is on recreation, that it *doesn't entertain me as much as a conversation or watching a film*, what... what can be relaxing... relaxing enough after a hard day. If I study a lot and my head is full... *then such things relax me a lot more and they are a lot more relaxing than museums*» (A, engineering student, 25 years of age)

For those persons who are more positive towards visiting museums, the more intellectual attribute «*interesting*» is relevant regarding museums, rather than being «*fun*», «*relaxing*» or «*entertaining*». Thus, B replied to the questions «What do you do in your free time? Do you visit museums regularly?» in the following manner:

«er... well, in my free time, I like playing football, being with friends, or reading. Well, we do not really go to museums, but I just went there recently, with my father, to the Ginsberg exhibition, in the Ludwig Museum, well, it was good. ... well, he was a member of the Beat generation, Allan Ginsberg was an iconic figure of that generation, and the exhibition was about his life, well, it was strange, there weren't any real objects, but just such audio-visual things were pushed, and so, but it was *interesting*, just a bit too modern this way, or I don't know» (B, student of sociology, 21, female)

2. Now, let's have a look at the reasons for going and reasons for not going to museums and the perceived obstacles. What are the reasons for visiting museums not being so popular among the youth? It is a complex problem, and this complexity presents itself even within the interview discussion. As A argues, museums require (a) certain background knowledge, otherwise the visitor «*won't understand things*»; (b) they require «*interest*»; and (c) they require a certain amount money, because «*entrance tickets are rather expensive*». It seems to us, that these are the three most commonsensical factors which are referred to as perceived reasons for going to museums and as obstacles to going to museums:

«I think that it depends on what kinds of young people we speak, how young people we speak of, they can be primary school pupils, high-school pupils, all age groups have different interests, that is all age groups within the youth have *different interests*. I think that a kindergartener or a primary school pupil would rather go to a zoo, a fun park, a playground than to a museum, because he or she *won't understand* things. At the Bodies, they would only understand that, or they would be very much frightened, that would have a horrific effect on them, but I think there is an age limit... that wasn't a really

good example.

...

Well, *interest* in the first place, those who are not interested in arts or such things, they will not go by any means, those who would go, but aren't such heavy fans, they probably won't go *because of the prices*, because as I've experienced in some museums *entrance tickets are rather expensive*, and for example for this hospital in the rock, the ticket for students costs some 2 thousand forints or so, and I think that for such money, a student would rather go to the cinema or out, that is» (A, engineering student, 25 years of age, male)

Some people do not really consider visiting museums a reasonable free-time activity, especially since they are boring-characteristics of experience which is in opposition to fun and entertainment:

«K: and what do you do in your free time?

V: well, I'm with my friends if I can, that's about all, in fact, I'm always with them if I have the time. ... er, we go out, we go to a pub, or we just talk, but in fact we go out, or we go to the cinema, to play billiard and so on, and the like.

K: I see, and you mentioned cinema, what other cultural events do you take part in?

V: we don't take part in anything else, er, I think that's all the cultural thing that we do.

K: and what about museums?

V: well, it's been quite a long time that I went to a museum, I don't go too often.

...

K: and can I ask you, which museum did you visit for example last time?

V: my girlfriend insisted on going, it was about a year ago, or maybe more, it was the Cezanne exhibition, oh yes, yes, it was *very good* (*very ironic*)

...

K: and do you have any negative experiences with museums or exhibitions?

V: well, looking back, I can't remember the name of it, what exhibition or museum or whatever it was, what I know is that it was full of sculptures, but I know that it was *very boring*.

K: and you mentioned that you went with your girlfriend, do you often go with her together to such events?

V: no, *that was the first and I think the last occasion as well* that we went» (C, sport student, 19, male)

However, for some what is intellectually attractive, namely interesting, could be fun and entertaining at the same time. Learning and entertainment are not two mutually exclusive characteristics of museums. In the next transcript, D directly formulates that a function of museums is to entertain, and being interesting is a kind of entertainment:

«K: Do museum visits offer any benefit?

V: They are rather regarded as entertainment, self-learning. You learn a bit from what you see there, but their function is rather entertainment.

K: Do you think that museums are entertaining?

V: They can be interesting. They are a kind of entertainment, too or what» (D, waiter, prospective engineering student, 21, male)

3. The cultural and social context of visiting museums – the role of cultural milieu, school, family and friends – were reflected in the interview conversations as well. Visiting museums with school on an involuntary basis has a lasting and predominantly negative effect on the intention to go to museums according to our Hungarian subjects. Even if someone became fond of museums, it is thanks to the family rather than the school.

«K: And do you prefer to go to the museum with your family, is it more interesting that way, or with school?

V: Yes, absolutely, because my family's fields of interest better match mine, and well, we can better settle things, and we don't go to a place which isn't interesting for us, and the like, while such school trips can be very tiring. They are very artificial things...» (E, biology student, 22, female)

The school is perceived as part of a wider cultural milieu, where going to museums was considered a «*rather highbrow*» activity, which is not in favour of museums occasionally, either:

«K: If you look back at your time at primary school, what comes to your mind, did you go to museums?

V: No, because at Nyíregyháza, where I'm from, it was considered *rather highbrow to go to museums*. It was not fashionable. But I always wanted to go, I was always interested in arts, I always wanted to visit museums, but it was not at all part of our culture, I say, my first visit to a museum was about 4 years ago, my first such experience, but I said that maybe it is the most lasting because it was the first! I was longing for it very much» (F, 24, psychology and sociology student, female)

There is no optimal company for every museum types, apparently. Family and close relationships are apparently better companies for more contemplating museum visits than other possible persons such as a «*university class*», but for more interactive exhibitions, peers are better:

«K: Who did you go to the Caravaggio exhibition with?

V: With my mom (laughing), we planned to go *with my class* from the university, but well, I don't know, it would have been disturbing to watch an exhibition with some 20-30 people.

K: Why would it have been disturbing?

V: *I don't like it*, because in such way I can't... everybody wants to go, but if I still want to watch, everybody wants to go, they are talking and I don't know what, I wouldn't have been able to enter into the spirit that way, and so I could watch it as long as I wanted.

K: Who do you think it's worth going with?

V: Well, by no means with many people.

K: Let's say with peers, or was it better with your mom?

V: I don't know, to visit such *interactive museums is better with peers*, because you can have fun then, but to visit such exhibitions where you want to contemplate, it's better to go with older people»  
(G, art history student, 21, female)

4. It seems that visiting museums is a positively valued activity for some young Hungarians. Nevertheless, some Hungarian youth found museums utterly boring, and one of them, while talking about his last visit to a museum, claimed that «*that was the first and I think the last occasion as well*» – see C's interview excerpt above. However, some other interview subjects manifested more or less directly an unformulated expectation of being a regular museumgoer, implicating its positive evaluation. As our first example shows, the interviewee «*dare not even confess*» how rarely she visits museums – thus effectively talking about the lack of frequent museum visits as «*a sin*» since it is something which requires a person «*to confess*».

«K: and how often do you go to such cultural events?

V: well, to museums so rarely that I *dare not even confess* it, we mostly go when we travel abroad, and we come across some local attractions, yes, but here, in Budapest, not really often.

Perhaps to the theatre, because my father is a culture fan as I said, and perhaps with him, a bit more often, and to the cinema we don't go, because that's expensive, and the Torrent and the like. Er, I don't know other things, perhaps such festivals, but I don't go to such places like Volt or the like, perhaps to beer festivals with my friends and team members» (B, student of sociology, 21, female)

Clear signs of the preferred version of reality, of the perceived normative expectation of regularly visiting museums appear in the following example as well. Here, the modal expression «*should*», the formulaic confession of wrongdoing «*very much sorry*» and the promise of correction «*but now I would like to make up for it*» all indicate this interpretation of the speaker.

«K: can I ask you what your first experience is in connection with museums?

V: well, my first experience was when we were taken to the Museum of Transport at primary school, that's what I remember, I enjoyed it, then came the time when I should have gone to museums by myself, but I missed that in my life, for which I'm very sorry now, but I'd like to make up for it now» (H, sociology student, 20, female)

### *Conclusions*

After having analysed the information from the questionnaires and processed the interviews, conclusions can be drawn regarding the motivations of youth to visit museums. It became clear that frequent museumgoers think of museums as important places both for acquiring knowledge and for obtaining emotional experiences, while those avoiding museum visits do not consider museums a valid place for neither aspect.

Our data also make it clear that the ceiling effect linked to the frequency of museum visits manifests itself at the level of about 5 visits per year, i.e. if someone visits a museum at least once every season, he/she clearly has a good chance of gaining cognitive and emotional benefits from such visits.

The conclusion can be drawn chiefly in the theoretical context of psychology that works with empirical tools for measuring arts and their appreciation. Thus our results could be interpreted along some key concepts of empirical aesthetics. Here, in this context, the psychological examinations of the appreciation of arts are concerned with one wide topic.

The question of expertness (or literacy in the field of arts) has been in the focus of psychological studies of arts for decades (see for example Child, 1969, Silvia 2013). The fundamental question is where the difference lies in the esthetical judgements of people with a good or a lesser understanding of arts: is there a continuous dimension ranging from lays to experts, or is it conceivable that there is a dividing point the exceeding of which means that one can be considered an expert?

Since we noted a non-linear correlation between perception of museums and number of visits, the question arises whether there is a dimension from avoiding art to expertness.

As we identified a ceiling effect, it seems to be reasonable to interpret expertness as a binary code, i.e. after having reached a frequency or level of museum visits, there is no change in the attitudes, while the attitudes under such frequency or level are diverging. In consuming a certain quantity, one functions as an expert, while others function as lays. This trend is also shown by the examination of the two concepts «museophil» and «museophobe».

At the same time, expertness has two readings: understanding (knowledge and competences) on the one hand and a social role with its normatively prescribed role expectations on the other hand. This less exposed aspect of expertness is pointed out by our interviews. It seems to us that the concept of expertness which is traditionally interpreted as a cognitive resource might have a social psychological aspect as well.

### *Acknowledgement*

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## APPENDIX

### OUTLINE OF THE INTERVIEWS

Our research concerns the experiences of university students regarding museums. This interview is conducted for this research. We want to get to know experiences and opinions.

The interview is voluntary and anonym.

The conversation is recorded by dictaphone, if you don't mind. The sound recording won't be played publicly, and will be used solely for the purpose of preparing a transcript.

You can interrupt the interview any time and you can refuse to answer any questions.

Please, tell us a few words about yourself!

- When have you started your studies?
- Where do you study at present, and what field of study do you pursue?

How do you spend your free time? (areas of interest, hobbies)

Do you visit museums or exhibitions?

If yes:

- Museums and exhibitions with what subject do you visit?
- (e.g. modern and contemporary; antic arts; science and technology; archeologic sites; historical; folk arts; architecture, design, fashion; home museums [homes of painters, writers])
- How often do you go?
- Who do you go with?
- When did you visit a museum last time?
- Why do you visit exhibitions or museums? To relax, learn, etc.?

Is visiting a museum or an exhibition an everyday or rather an exceptional event for you?

- Are museums or exhibitions comfortable, casual or rather formal places in your opinion?

Would you change anything as regards the atmosphere of museums?



What is the benefit of visiting museums (if any)?  
Do you remember your first experience in a museum?  
Is there an exhibition that you expressly recall with pleasure?  
Do you have any expressly bad experiences at an exhibition?  
Who do you think visits museums most frequently? Are exhibitions designed to suite rather children or young adults?

Who is it best to go with (peers, family, school, etc.)?  
Have you ever been there with school? What was it like?  
Where do you hear of exhibitions?  
If you go often:

- Do you think it is easy to get information on exhibitions?

I mean do you hear of exhibitions without actively searching, e.g. on the website of museums?

Is there anything you expressly like or dislike with museums or exhibitions?

What would your dream exhibition/museum look like? Is there such a place/can you visit it? If no, please explain the reason.

Could museums or exhibitions change in a way that would make you like visiting them more?

What could change them in such a way? (if the respondent does not mention by himself/herself, ask about the price)

Do you think your peers visit museums or not? Why?

If he/she does not go:

Would you visit museums more often, if your friends went there?



Stefano Mastandrea, Fridanna Maricchiolo

*International Perspective on Museum Research:  
A Comparison among Countries*

ABSTRACT:

The aim of the research was to conduct a survey on a large scale, in different Countries (Austria, France, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Taiwan, USA) to investigate several psychological and pedagogical features like personality traits, motivations, emotions, attitudes and learning processes regarding the museum visit experience. The sample was composed by young adult-university students. Some findings show, among several data, that about the 25% of the whole sample did not visit any museum in the previous year and Modern art museums were the most visited types of museums.

*Introduction*

With this last paper we would like to give an overview of the research conducted in this project addressing some descriptive comparison of the data among all participating Countries.

From an educational point of view, as said at the beginning of the book, the museum is often described as an informal way of learning which covers several topics such as art, history, science, etc. We know, from several researches that museums very often are not very attractive for adolescents and young adults (Mason & McCarthy, 2008; Fleming, 1999; Prince & Schadla-Hall, 1985). As it was said before the literature on young adults participation to cultural events is not very systematic. According to different surveys (in the Australia and New Zealand, France, Germany, Italy, USA), the public between the age between 18 and 27 that visited at least one museum during the previous 12 months of the survey are not very numerous. These surveys suggest that in different parts of the world, museums do not look very attractive for many young people.

The aim of the research was to conduct a survey on a large scale, in different Countries (Austria, France, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal,

Taiwan, USA) to investigate several psychological and pedagogical features like personality traits, motivations, emotions, attitudes and learning processes regarding the museum visits experience.

## *Method*

### *Measure*

A questionnaire was designed for the research to explore socio-demographic variables (including parents education level), personality traits, art education, modalities in which participants were used to visit museums in the past (with school, family, and autonomously), numbers and typology of museum visited in the last 12 months, the experience of museum visits with particular reference to motivation, attitudes, emotional experience, and learning processes. Here we present and discuss only some of the measured variables.

*Data collection.* The questionnaire was administered either as paper and pencil or online using the LimeSurvey platform. The paper and pencil questionnaire was administered to students after the end of the classes; completing the questionnaire took an average of about 20 minutes. Regarding the administration through the LimeSurvey platform, students were invited to participate via email including the link to the online questionnaire. The collection of data started in May 2012 and finished after about 10 months.

### *Participants*

Participants were 2,352 undergraduate University students of different Faculties: Education, Psychology and Sociology. We decided to have an homogeneous sample concerning the interest towards that arts and museums, therefore the students from Art Faculties were not considered. Regarding the gender, female were 72.3% and male 27.7%; the age range was 18-31, with a mean of 21.06 (SD 2.5). The numbers of participants were different among Countries. In [Tab. 1](#) the number and percentages are reported.

*Tab. 1 – Numbers and percentages of participants for each Country*

	N	%
Austria	217	9,2
France	649	27,6
Hungary	269	11,4
Italy	652	27,7
New Zealand	71	3,0
Portugal	213	9,1
Taiwan	176	7,5
USA	105	4,5
Total	2352	100

*Results and discussion*

One of the main question was the visits to museums in the last 12 months. With this question we wanted to have information concerning participants real interest in museum attendance.

Results showed that 24.4% of all participants had not visited any museum in the previous 12 months; in [Tab. 2](#) is shown the frequency and percentage of the museum visits.

*Tab. 2 – Frequency and percentage of museum visits in the last 12 months for participants of all Countries (missings excluded)*

	Frequency	%
No Visit	572	24,4
1 Visit	549	23,5
2-3 Visits	709	30,3
4-5 Visits	270	11,5
More than 5 Visits	241	10,3
Total	2341	100

As a general data, about one fourth of the sample did not visit any museum in the previous year. But there were quite big differences among

Countries; participants from Taiwan and Austria reported the highest numbers of visits (Tab. 3).

*Tab. 3 – Percentage of museum visits (No visits, 1 visit, 2-3 visits, 4-5 visits, more than 5) in the previous 12 months by Countries*

Country	Number of Visits (%)				
	No visits	1	2-3	4-5	>5
Austria	10.1	11.1	30.9	20.7	27.2
France	31.3	19.6	29.0	12.0	8.2
Hungary	5.2	43.9	23.8	13.0	14.1
Italy	32.5	26.2	27.9	7.2	6.1
New Zealand	14.1	32.4	39.4	5.6	8.5
Portugal	32.9	16.0	32.4	9.9	8.9
Taiwan	5.4	12.6	48.5	19.2	14.4
USA	31.1	30.1	29.1	7.8	1.9

Concerning the typology of museums, Modern art museums were visited more than other types of museums (39%), followed by Demographic museum (30%), Ancient art (27%), Archeological sites (21%), House museum (20%), Science museum (17%) and Architecture (17%). These findings show that the museums of Modern/Contemporary art were the most preferred; probably because the art language of the artworks hosted in these museums are seen as more similar to the language of the young adult visitors (Mastandrea, Bartoli, & Bove, 2007; Mastandrea, Bartoli, & Bove, 2009).

Participants reported a good level of satisfaction with their museum visits in the last year (M 3.7, SD 0.8, on a 5 points scale). They reported also a good level of learning from the museum visit (M 3.2; SD 0.9).

Participants reported to have received more art training at school than out of school, even if the difference is not significant, respectively 2.86 (SD = .86) and 2.64 (SD = 1.2). The correlation between museum visit and Art education was higher for Art education received out of school ( $r = .278$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ) than at school ( $r = .181$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ). The visit satisfaction was significantly correlated both to art education received at school ( $r = .158$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ) and out of school ( $r = .125$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ).

Regarding the question whom the participants visited museums with, it is interesting to note that only 2.7% never visited museum with the school. It means that the education at school offers a good opportunity to

visit museums of different typology. We have also to highlight that quite a big percentage of participants, exactly the 15.4% have never visited a single museum with their parents; their parents did not offer them this opportunity. The 21.9% never visit museums with friends, 48% never with the partner and 66.4% never alone.

Overall, the most prevalent emotions associated with museum visit were positive emotions. Answer on several emotions (positive: curiosity, interest, pleasure, aesthetic enjoyment, wonder, fun, well-being, and negative: melancholy, boredom, distress) were asked through a 5-point Likert scale. All these emotions were entered in a principal component factor analysis using a varimax rotation. All the items were loaded in 2 factors which explained the 54.26% of the variance. The first factor (eigenvalue of 4.48) included all positive emotions (*curiosity, interest, pleasure, aesthetic enjoyment, wonder, fun, well-being*). The second factor (eigenvalue of 1.56) explains the negative emotions (*melancholy, boredom, distress*). Moreover the aggregation of positive emotions reached a quite high mean score 3.49 while negative emotions 1.68; this findings show that the museum visit experience is mainly an overall positive experience. However, emotions varied according to the kind of museum visited. Performing three logistic regression analyses, with respectively ancient, modern and science museums as the dependent variable and emotions as the independent variables, findings show that specific emotions were related to different kind of museum; for example the aesthetic enjoyment was present in ancient and modern art museum while fun with the modern art and science museum and curiosity was concerned only with science museum (Tab. 4).

Tab. 4 – Scores of the regression analyses on the type of museum and emotion experienced  
\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

	Ancient art	Modern art	Science
Aesthetic enjoyment	4.714***	7.134**	
Interest	2.197*		
Wellbeing			2.160*
Fun		2.335*	4.001***
Curiosity			2.081*
Melancholy		2.862**	
Boredom		2.890**	4.270***

A question was dedicated to those participants that did not visit any museum in the past 12 months; it was asked what were the reasons in a multiple choice question with the following answers: lack of interest, lack of opportunity, lack of time, lack of people to go with, lack of information, high price of the ticket, limited hours of opening. These motives were entered in a principal components factor analysis using a *varimax* rotation. The items loaded on 3 factors that explained 60.39% of the variance. The first factor (eigenvalue of 2.02; we call it «External reason») comprised the following items: *lack of time*, *lack of opportunity* and *lack of people to go with*. The second factor (eigenvalue 1.17; «Internal reason») included items such as *lack of information* and *lack of interest*. The third factor (eigenvalue 1.10; «Museum related reason») comprised the items *high price of the tickets* and *limited hours of opening*. Interesting to note is that participants show also a positive attitudes towards museum, but they have no opportunity in terms of people to go with.

In the last question we considered the intention to visit a museum in the next 6 months. The answer were: not at all (9.0%), a little bit (18.7%), somewhat (34.6%), much (22.2%) and very much (15.5%). Compared to the question on the museum visit in the last 12 months the data are very different. In comparison to the about 25% of the sample who did not visit any museum, if the participants were asked about their willing to go to a museum in the next months, even if it is not the same question (in the first case was the real behavior while in the second was only the intention), there is a considerable decrease: only 9.0% do not want to visit museums in the future. Therefore it is plausible that if participants would have more opportunities in terms of information and people to go with they will consider to go to museum.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion it can be said that about 75% of the total sample visited at least one museum in the last 12 months and about 40% visited between 2 and 5 museum in a year. Compared to the other data from the several surveys reported in the introduction, collected by other researchers in different countries in the past, the results obtained in our research show quite different and interesting results. Our findings show a sort of inverted direction regarding the museum visit per year compared to previous surveys: in those researches about the 75% of young adult never visited a museum in the last 12 months while from our data we can see that a 25%



of participants of the total sample never visited a museum in the last 12 months. Our sample was composed by university students, therefore people that are more interesting in cultural activities such a visiting museums. On the contrary there is still a 25% of participants that never visited a museum in the last 12 months, therefore some work from an educational point of view has still to be done. What is also surprising is that about the 15% of the total sample never visited a museum in their life with their parents. On the contrary only 2.4% never visited a museum with the school. Art training and museum visited received at school could be a good opportunity to improve the possibility to have a museum experience in the future.

In the future, in addition to descriptive data analyses, we are in mind to run analysis (for example, structural equation models) to test which predictors are more related to museum fruition in line with the three aims of the study: 1) individuate predictors of museum visit in the last year and conduct an evaluation of the visit; 2) individuate predictors of future intention to visits and the estimated usefulness of the visit; 3) individuate predictors of future intention to visits and usefulness of museum visit for the young people who did not visit a museum in the last 12 months.

We must highlight the limitations of the research, emphasizing the fact that it is a correlational study, therefore it is a bit risky to speak of true predictors. Further research should investigate the relationship between significant variables of the predictions in a field situation (e.g. in the museum) and through an experimental or semi-experimental design. The aim is to provide indications to school and other educational and social institution to incentivize young people museum visits. Furthermore, this survey was conducted collecting data from many Countries in different Continents. Further analysis of our database will be focused on the comparison of samples from different Countries in order to highlight possible differences and similarities. Preliminary analysis showed that the predictive relationships between the variables are very similar amongst the different samples, but such evidence must be tested statistically. It would then be possible to generalize both results and applicative implications.

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## Contributors

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This book is the result of an international research project funded by and based at the University of Roma Tre (coordinated by Stefano Mastandrea). The aim of the research project was to create a survey on a large scale to investigate attitudes, motivations, personality traits, emotions and learning processes regarding the museum visits experience by young adults. The research group was constituted by scholars of nine different Countries: Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Taiwan, and USA. Participants of the research (N=2,352) was made up by a sample of undergraduate university students of different non art Departments (psychology, education and sociology). Overall findings showed that about the 75% of the total sample visited at least one museum in the last 12 months and about 40% visited between 2 and 5 museums. Modern art museums were visited more than other types of museums. Participants reported a good level of satisfaction with their museum visits. Overall, the most prevalent emotions associated with museum visitation were curiosity, interest, and pleasure; however, emotions varied according to the kind of museum visited, with aesthetic enjoyment for ancient art, aesthetic enjoyment and interest for modern art, and fun and curiosity for science museums. An international congress was organized in October 2013 in Rome by the Department of Education and the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology of the University of Roma Tre. All the international partners of the project participated presenting the results of each single research unit. The data and findings presented at the congress and subsequent developments constitute the chapters of this book.