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**The Querini Stampalia Foundation and
the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation:
the role of these two institutions in contributing
to the definition and sustainability of Venice
through a youth policy.**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis intends to propose a reflection on the social weight of cultural institutions and their capacity to participate in the definition and socio-economic sustainability of a city. This reflection will be brought more specifically in the Venetian context, a city today facing a massive depopulation opposed to mass tourism in a context of climate change, seeking therefore to transform and rethink itself to ensure its sustainability. Therefore, the Querini Stampalia Foundation (QSF) and the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation (BLMF) have since their creation a close link with Venice and an important and undeniable social weight. This thesis seeks to find out whether these foundations participate in the development and necessary transformation of the city, focusing the research on the prism of youth. Each of these institutions, placing young people at the heart of their *raison d'être*, have an impact on the city and have a capacity to attract a younger population which Venice needs. By analysing the aims, the programming, the cultural policies but also the changes of orientation that these cultural institutions have undergone since their creation, this thesis will attempt to investigate on the links between youth, these two foundations and Venice, in order to understand whether cultural organisations and the youth have a role to play in the social and economic sustainability of a city.

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INTRODUCTION

In the face of Venice's depopulation, and the need to rethink the city in the context of climate change, youth seem to be vital to the sustainability and future of Venice. In this context, the Querini Stampalia Foundation (QSF) and the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation (BLMF) have specific roles and positions in the city. Both, and since their creation, through a policy focused on youth, participate in the definition and socio-economical durability of the city. The QSF's main objective is to provide a space for young students in the city. As explicitly requested by the will at the origin of the Foundation, the QSF must offer a working room open at times when the other libraries in the city are not. It is a place of knowledge with a special atmosphere and is still a favourite place for students in the city, but also for visitors to the museum and for enthusiasts who enjoy its garden or meetings in the auditorium. The BLMF promotes and finances the creation of young contemporary artists. This primary objective is also implemented by the will of its founder, who made her palace, Ca'Pesaro, available to offer workshops and exhibition space to young artists in difficulty. Even today, through various locations in the city, BLMF offers 15 residencies to contemporary artists under 30 years old, nurtures their work, exhibits them and is a key step in integrating into the current contemporary art market.

Through these two *raison d'être*, by supporting the creation and education of the youngest population, these institutions have participated in the necessary development and transformation that Venice has experienced and is undergoing today.

This thesis, taking the QSF, the BLMF, youth and Venice as particular cases, seeks to highlight the role of cultural institutions in a broader sense. This role is fundamentally social, oriented towards society and citizens, and seeks to fit into a context, and to respond to needs. This role also serves to justify the existence and legitimacy of cultural organisations. This role is sometimes undermined by financial or contextual constraints, yet it remains at the heart of their policy, and gives life to the society in which the institution is embedded. Each cultural institution positions itself in a certain way according to its own history, but also according to the city in which it is based. It is therefore necessary to analyse the role and contribution that these two Foundations have for Venice and more broadly for society in general.

The QSF and the BLMF are therefore part of this imperative and of this search for meaning through social responsibility. Both created at the end of the 19th century, in 1868 for the QSF and in 1898 for the BLMF, these two Foundations were originally conceived by two Venetian personalities who, by bequeathing their property, created a Foundation defined by their words. The first one gives a collection and a place dedicated to study and knowledge, the second one supports contemporary artistic creation. From then on, each Foundation has endeavoured to respond to these primary commitments, commitments that are fundamentally social because they are directed towards the population and, in particular, towards the youth of Venice. In addition to these founding and exceptional acts, they have marked the last century through their cultural policies and the personalities who have participated in their evolution. They have grown with the city, witnessed the changes of the citizens, adapted to them while maintaining a direction in line with their first definition. Today, both their historical weight and their continuing social importance and particularities make them very specific institutions for the city.

Their relationship with the city is diverse and has evolved over time. While the BLMF is a public institution, the QSF is private, although it depends on public funding. More broadly, anchored in the Venetian context by their history, they also need the city's economic system based on tourism to ensure their financial stability and international visibility. They also respond to the needs of the local population, a population that is declining, but still in demand of fundamental services, space, culture, which are beginning to be lacking. This link with Venice seems to be all the stronger because the city is extremely fragile: based on a monoculture, tourism, it is running to its ruin by investing more and more in this industry, which is weakening its natural ecosystem and endangering its land, which is gradually being submerged by the waters. Historical institutions, with a strong civic link, are now all the more fundamental.

In this context, youth, adults between 18 and 30 years old, is an essential part of the debate: both a population that energises the city, looking for opportunities but also a source of proposals, changes and questioning, an awake youth is crucial. Venice is also characterised by this youth drained by the important universities that the city possesses, universities that are essential in order not to have only tourists and a shrinking population. But universities are sometimes omnipresent in the city, leaving little room for other citizen initiatives. Moreover, in a context of climate change and strong political decisions to be taken to ensure the sustainability of Venice, youth occupy a special place,

and seem to need to be helped and supported by Venetian cultural organisations. However, these young people, mainly students, leave the city once they have finished university and the lack of housing and professional opportunities makes Venice a city that does not meet their expectations.

Therefore, it is necessary to highlight the existing dynamics between these three entities: each of the Foundations, youth, and the city. Synergies and dependencies exist between each entity, and these Foundations have a duty to provide support to this youth and this city, which are currently in a fragile state. These cultural institutions have tried to maintain this supportive role since their creation until today. However, they are also weakened by various elements, which can nevertheless be a vector of reflection to bring about a redefinition of these Foundations and ensure their sustainability. Both the BLMF and the QSF have an extremely rich history, and it is also necessary to understand their current mode of operation and management in order to obtain an overall vision of these institutions today, and to understand how they fit into the Venetian cultural panorama.

This thesis will therefore first seek to present the current context in Venice linked to the QSF and the BLMF, with the aim of making a first state of the art of the current situation. The aim of this first part is to understand the functioning and orientations of each of these Foundations from the point of view of youth, in order to understand how these institutions are anchored in the city and how they define themselves in relation to this population. Venice will also be analysed to highlight the different dynamics already in place, to reflect on the possibilities of transformation of this city in danger.

In a second step, a more historical analysis will be conducted on these two Foundations. The objective is to see what the place and importance of these two organisations have been since their creation: through their cultural and social weight, these institutions have attracted populations and have had an impact on the evolution of the city. Youth has been placed at the heart of their cultural policy, and it is appropriate to return to the dynamics that these entities have experienced, and the role they have had to play in the changes that Venice has undergone.

The third chapter will aim to shed light on the current challenges that each of these Foundations is facing today. The challenges are first of all economic, with a financial fragility for each of these entities, but also organisational. It is also relevant to question the support role that these two Foundations have for both youth and the city, a role that

sometimes has difficulty being fulfilled. However, although these challenges are important, they are also essential in order to maintain these two Foundations in a dynamic of evolution, and of listening to the needs of the population, in order to move towards more efficient organisations that are open to opportunities.

With this in mind, the fourth part, taking into consideration all the data previously established, will seek to propose avenues for development and improvement, bearing in mind the founding wishes of the testamentary, the centrality of youth in Venice and the climate emergency.

Finally, the last chapter will aim to present my research method and its limits from a managerial academic perspective.

In sum, based on the analysis of three actors and their interactions, youth, Venice and cultural institutions, through the case study of the QSF and the BLMF, this thesis shows that a youth-oriented policy contributes to the economic and social sustainability of Venice and to the definition of the city.

CHAPTER 1: THE QUERINI STAMPALIA AND THE BEVILACQUA LA MASA FOUNDATIONS: TWO INSTITUTIONS FOCUSED ON TODAY'S VENETIAN YOUTH

First of all, it is necessary to take stock of the contemporary situation in Venice in order to understand the context in which the two Foundations are developing today. Both Foundations are closely linked to the city by their history and by their orientation towards the inhabitants of Venice.

1. 1. In a local context: Venice a city of exodus?

The geographic, demographic and political context shapes the whole city, and its cultural institutions are no exception. Venice, regularly submerged by water, is characterised by a decrease in its population in opposition to mass tourism. This situation must be understood in order to analyse the role of two Foundations within the city.

1. 1. 1. Venice: geographical, historical and demographic presentation

Venice is absolutely unique in many ways. Venice is a city where water is the master of everything and imposes its rhythm and organisation. Yet, at the same time, this piece of land concentrates in its streets a cultural and historical wealth that is rare in the world. As a testimony, Venice is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Venice is currently celebrating its 1600th anniversary, as the foundation of Venice is supposed to have taken place in 568. The history of Venice¹ is marked by the Republic of Venice, which existed between 697 and 1797. Venice was distinguished by its incredible maritime power, which enabled it to become a key port for European maritime trade. This commercial wealth allowed it to be a rich city, and to be the home to an incredible material heritage.

Geographically and demographically, Venice is located in the north of Italy, on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. It is generally divided into two main parts: the sea part, composed of 121 islands, and the land part called *terraferma*. The term Venice is often

¹ ORTALLI, G., SCARABELLO, G., *A Short history of Venice*, Venice, Pacini Editore, 2003.

associated only with the "historic centre" or *centro storico*², which is made up of the 6 most famous *sestieri*, plus Lido, Murano and Burano, among others. The city is the capital of the Veneto region. From 2020 and until 2025, the mayor of Venice is Luigi Brugnaro, supported by the *Lega Nord* (the Northern League). The entire Venice was composed of 256,083 inhabitants in 2021³, the historical centre of Venice (Venice main island - Murano - Burano) was composed of 50,434 inhabitants in 2021⁴.

Venice is also defined by its geographical position as a city on the water, and therefore faces every year the phenomena of *aqua alta*, i. e. high water, which endangers it. In a context of climate change, Venice is becoming aware of its fragility, and in particular of the fragility of its economic model based mainly on a single industry, tourism. The city is therefore becoming aware of the need to implement changes to ensure its sustainability.

1. 1. 2. Depopulation of the historic centre from the beginning of the century

The demography of Venice is characterised by massive depopulation, which has increased over the last thirty years. This depopulation is defined as inhabitants leaving the historic centre to move to the *terraferma*, the other islands of the Lagoon, or to leave Venice. If we look at the demographic data given by the municipality of Venice⁵: in 2000 the historic centre had 66,386 inhabitants, this figure reaches 50,434 in 2021, i.e. a loss of almost a quarter of its inhabitants in 20 years, almost 800 inhabitants leaving the historic centre every year.

Clara Zanardi⁶ is one of the first researchers to have investigated this mass depopulation. According to her, all the problems that currently exist in Venice and that endanger the city are closely linked to the massive depopulation that the city has experienced in recent years. Yet, this exodus did not begin with the arrival of tourism. It can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century, due to a series of policies

² I will use the term Venice in reference to the historic centre of Venice, otherwise I will specify which Venice I am referring to.

³ ISTAT, Popolazione residente al 1° Gennaio 2021, per età, sesso e stato civile, [online], in *Demo.istat*, 2021, <https://demo.istat.it/popres/index.php?anno=2021&lingua=ita>, web page last accessed on 21/04/2022.

⁴ COMUNE DI VENEZIA, Serie storica dei quartieri, [online], in *Città di Venezia*, 21 Aprile 2021, <https://www.comune.venezia.it/it/content/serie-storica-dei-quartieri-anni-1982-2020>, web page last accessed on 21/04/2022.

⁵ COMUNE DI VENEZIA, Serie storica dei quartieri, *cit.*

⁶ ZANARDI, C., *La bonifica umana. Venezia dall'esodo al turismo*, Unicopli, 2020.

that led to the urban transformation of the city, and thus resulted in a population flow from Venice to the mainland. These policies were carried out by the *Gruppo Veneziano*⁷, mainly active between 1900 and 1940, a group of politicians led by Giuseppe Volpi (1877-1947) and Vittorio Cini (1885-1977) who shaped the organisation of Venice. In particular, they defined the roles of each geographical location in the lagoon: while historical Venice was reserved for a rich and high-class population, the lower and working classes were pushed towards the mainland, in Mestre and Marghera. The Lido was then reserved for tourism, which was rather luxury tourism. It was at the beginning of the century and under this impulse that the Biennale and the Mostra di Cinema were created. In the same way, Porto Marghera was created on the mainland to house the industrial part necessary for the economic sustainability of the island. Before this period, the historical city also had industries and factories within it. This dynamic of depopulation was linked to the explicit desire to move a productive economy to the mainland, and thus to affirm that historic Venice does not need to house all the functions necessary for an economy to function. On the contrary, this very special island should be preserved from industry. The project was to give prestige to Venice, to enhance its culture and heritage. In this plan, tourism was an important component but was not thought of as a massive one as we know it today.

This movement to bring a working and less affluent population from Venice to the mainland was clearly thought out by the government in place, and was accentuated after the Second World War, in the 1950s and 1960s. In 17 years, Venice lost 84,000 inhabitants, each year about 5,000 people moved from the island to the mainland⁸. The Venetian government thus intentionally shifted Venice, the historical centre, from a productive economy to another economy mainly oriented towards services and consumption.

In parallel to this new economic organisation, this change was also driven by the real estate issue. During the same post-war period, housing in Venice was extremely run down. Moreover, the economic boom in Italy led to a new way of life, where heating and cars were the new trend. The middle class found this new standard on the mainland, and Venice lost this part of the population.

⁷ REBERSCHAK, M., *Gli uomini capitali: il "gruppo veneziano" (Volpi, Cini e gli altri)*, in ISNENGI, M., WOOLF, S., *Storia di Venezia. L'Ottocento e il Novecento*, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2002.

⁸ ZANARDI, C., *cit.*

1966 is also an important date: after the traumatic experience of the *acqua alta*, which was a huge disaster for the city, the Special Law was introduced. This law massively financed the reconstruction of the city. Money was used to renovate flats, while expelling the poorer people who lived in these homes. These houses were then rented or sold to wealthier owners. The social composition of Venice therefore changed drastically in those years. This phenomenon intensified with the arrival of mass tourism.

1. 1. 3. A city now turned towards tourism

This depopulation was aggravated by the arrival of mass tourism, an equation that still persists today. Indeed, Venice relies mainly on a single industry, tourism.

As Clara Zanardi explained⁹, tourism developed mainly around the 1980s and 1990s. Although Venice has always been a tourist city, there used to be a coexistence between tourists and locals. In Venice there was a multiplicity of economic sectors and social classes, and tourists were part of this equation. In the 1960s, the airport was built, beach destinations were developed (e.g. Punta Sabbioni), and Venice became one of the main tourist destinations in Italy.

In the 1990s, the negative impact of tourism worsened, especially with the advent of low-cost travel, and the increase in tourism worldwide. The arrival of AirBnb, created in 2008, further accentuated this trend at the beginning of the 21st century. This platform offered the opportunity to every owner to rent an accommodation to tourists. This arrival reinforced the uniqueness of the city's economic sector, which is mainly oriented towards services, and has completely removed a productive city. This dynamic is not only regional, but Italy in its whole is moving more and more towards a tourist economy, while tourism represented 13.2% of Italian GDP¹⁰ in 2018. Venice is a good example of this shift from a diversified economy to a monoculture, an economy based almost exclusively on tourism.

According to Clara Zanardi, the Venetian and Italian government more generally has no desire to put an end to this dynamic and monoculture, on the contrary. Through its laws, notably by imposing no regulation on AirBnb rentals, and through its investments, the municipality is pushing the Venetian economy towards an increase in

⁹ ZANARDI, C., *cit.*

¹⁰ Duecentotrenta miliardi e 3,5 milioni di occupati: ma la filiera del turismo ora trema, in *La Repubblica* [online], 6 Aprile 2020, https://www.repubblica.it/viaggi/2020/04/06/news/ducentotrenta_miliardi_e_3_5_milioni_di_occupati_ma_la_filiera_del_turismo_ora_trema-253289209/, web page last accessed on 21/04/2022.

tourism. The author goes even further, and underlines that since Massiamo Cacciari (mayor of the city from 1993 to 2000, then between 2005 and 2010), the Venetian government has no political will to keep residents within historic Venice. Rather, the common will was to let the exodus continue, in order to maximise the number of tourists in the city, and thus maximise the financial windfall from this economy. The current mayor, Luigi Brugnaro (mayor since 2015), does not deny this and also takes an openly pro-tourist stance, as evidenced by his support for cruise ships.

Politically, Venice is also complex: while the population living on land voted for this mayor, Venetians living on water would not have elected him. The interests of these two groups of citizens are divergent: while the population living on land often works on the island for tourism in low-skilled jobs, the population living on the island bears the daily burden of tourism and is therefore less supportive of the development of this monoculture.¹¹

In sum, the main demographic problem in Venice is the gap between the number of tourists and the number of inhabitants. While the population will certainly fall rapidly below 50,000, before the pandemic, Venice welcomed an average of 38 million tourists a year¹². The proportions are therefore impressive. According to Clara Zanardi, this pro-mass tourism dynamic has only increased since the covid-19 crisis: this economy, which has suffered so much from the cessation of mobility, remains a huge and rapid financial manna, which Venice and Italy cannot afford to neglect.

Therefore, this mass tourism is also synonymous with a scarcity of affordable housing for the stable population in Venice. This increase in the price of housing, due in particular to the importance of short-term accommodation such as AirBnb, is a real problem. Both for a population that would like to settle and work on the island but cannot find affordable accommodation and therefore does not settle in the city, but also for the many students who have their university on the island (IUAV or Ca'Foscari for example). A large number of students are forced to live on the mainland, or in shared room solutions, which allows the price of a room to be divided.

¹¹ It is difficult to have precise statistics and demographics on this issue, and these statements are mainly based on the analyses made by Clara Zanardi and on the book of SETTIS, S., NAFFIS-SAHELY, A., *If Venice dies*, New Vessel Press, 2014.

¹² COMAN, J., Venise, emblème menacé du tourisme de masse [radio recording], in *C'est pas du vent*, RFI, 48min30, 9 December 2021, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/podcasts/c-est-pas-du-vent/20211209-venise-embl%C3%A8me-menac%C3%A9-du-tourisme-de-masse>, podcast listened on 15/03/2022.

As summarised by Salvatore Settis in his book lamenting the death of Venice, "*a tourist monoculture now dominates a city which banishes its native citizens and shackles the survival of those who remain to their willingness to serve*"¹³.

All these demographic data show that today the majority population is clearly tourists, followed by a wealthy and elderly population (over 65 years old), often income earners, and finally a young and student population, often living in the city for a temporary period.

1. 1. 4. A young population that is still present

If we analyse the demographic statistics of Venice, a large majority of the population is over 65 years old. In fact, in 2020, the over-65s represented 39.5% of the population, i.e. 19,966 inhabitants, while the people living in the historic centre aged between 20 and 30 were only 6,290, i.e. 12.5% of the population¹⁴.

These data underline the predominance of an elderly resident population in the historic centre but may not effectively reflect the demographic situation of the city with regard to young people, as they do not take into account a large proportion of the students living in the city but not residing in Venice. Indeed, Venice is home to a number of universities, including the Università Ca'Foscari, the IUAV (Università Iuav di Venezia), the VIU (Venice International University) and the Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia. For the 2020/2021 academic year, 20,888 students were enrolled at Ca'Foscari University of Venice¹⁵ and 3,944 at IUAV¹⁶, to name only the two main universities in the city. Although since the pandemic, some of the students are taking online courses and do not live in Venice, this student population remains very significant for the city.

1. 1. 5. A city with plans for the future

¹³ SETTIS, S., NAFFIS-SAHELY, A., *If Venice dies*, New Vessel Press, 2014, p. 22.

¹⁴ COMUNE DI VENEZIA, Classi d'età: anno 2021, [online], in *Città di Venezia*, 21 Aprile 2021, <https://www.comune.venezia.it/it/content/classi-det-anno-2021>, web page last accessed on 20/04/2022.

¹⁵ MINISTERO DELL'UNIVERSITA E DELLA RICERCA, Università degli studi Ca'Foscari di Venezia: Popolazione studentesca, [online], in *USTAT*, 2021, <http://ustat.miur.it/dati/didattica/italia/atenei-statali/venezias-ca-foscari>, web page last accessed on 21/04/2022.

¹⁶ MINISTERO DELL'UNIVERSITA E DELLA RICERCA, Università IUAV di Venezia: Popolazione studentesca, [online], in *USTAT*, 2021, <http://ustat.miur.it/dati/didattica/italia/atenei-statali/venezias-iuav>, web page last accessed on 21/04/2022.

Venice is aware of the changes that still need to be implemented to control the tourism that is invading the city, threatening its environmental balance and taking the place of its inhabitants. Various actors must be taken into account: the visible population, particularly through its associations, the municipality, but also the universities, which together are investing in the reflection on the city's future.

Before the pandemic, the city's preservation associations had a significant importance and weight in the debates and political decisions. One of the most important associations is *No Grandi Navi*, which fights against cruise ships in Venice. There are other associations that defend the rights of housing in Venice, for example. The associations for the protection of the lagoon are also important, including the rowing associations which have a local influence in each *sestiere* and island of the city.

From the point of view of the municipality, the discourse adopted aims to defend the idea of sustainable tourism. The deputy mayor of Venice in charge of social cohesion, tourism, economic development, work and residence, Simone Venturini, still defends a touristic Venice that controls this mass of people and also invests in its local population¹⁷. One of the solutions mentioned to regulate tourism is the will to put in place a control of short-term rentals, in particular AirBnb, or to control commercial activities more. He defends the idea of tourists spending more time in the city, and questions the arrival of tourists for a few hours. To give an example of these regulations, from 2023 onwards an entrance fee to the city of Venice will be introduced at a price between 3 and 10€. This entrance ticket will allow the municipality to know and manage the flow of visitors, notably by making certain days more expensive than others. The municipality's tourism policy also defends a certain form of cruise ship in Venice, pointing out that it concerns 5,000 jobs. These ships no longer pass through San Marco, but through the Port of Marghera. In short, although the municipality is criticised by a part of the population that is fighting against this mass tourism, reflections and solutions are being analysed to reform the city.

Universities also have a role to play in the transformation of Venice, and many projects are created in this sense. An example of a project set up in March 2022 in collaboration between Ca'Foscari University and the Fondazione Di Venezia is the Venywhere project¹⁸. This platform aims to make Venice a privileged place for "smart

¹⁷ COMAN, J., *cit.*

¹⁸ VENYWHERE, *Venywhere: work from Venice*, [website], 2022,

working", i.e. remote working, and therefore contributes to the creation of workspaces and services made available for these workers within Venice. The main target group for this programme is employees who are able and willing to work remotely over a long period of time, Venetian residents who may have a need for suitable e-work facilities, but also more broadly companies who wish to set up or relocate their headquarters on the island. This creation of a workplace is also accompanied by the provision of a variety of services, services that benefit the local population in the same way¹⁹. This type of project has a real desire to diversify the city's economy, to offer new professional opportunities, opportunities that do not rely on tourism, but use the city's attractiveness to bring people to the city in the long term.

Another project developed in collaboration between Ca'Foscari University and the Municipality of Venice aims to create a new economic dynamic within the city. This project is called VeniSia - Venice Sustainability Innovation Accelerator²⁰ and its aim is to create an innovation engine within the city based on sustainability. This project is based on the idea that Venice can become a model city in terms of environmental sustainability, and defends the idea of cooperation between researchers, students and citizens to define together the economically and environmentally sustainable Venice of the future.

In short, all of these projects are evidence of a real reflection within the city to transform Venice. From a city based solely on tourism, Venice would become a city also turned towards its inhabitants, seeking to take advantage of its heritage attractiveness and its international visibility to develop and ensure its sustainability.

To sum up, the current situation in Venice is complex and concentrates many actors with different aspirations and constraints. There seem to be several paradoxes with, on the one hand, the municipality which seeks to invest largely in tourism, and a fairly large number of Venetians or locals in love with the city militating for a change in this mass tourism. To this equation we can add the Venetians, who live on the mainland,

<https://www.venywhere.it/>, web page last accessed on 14/04/2022.

¹⁹ Venywhere: a project for living and working in Venice, [online], in *CFNews*, 21 Aprile 2022, [https://www.unive.it/pag/14024/?tx_news_pi1\[news\]=11972&tx_news_pi1\[controller\]=News&tx_news_pi1\[action\]=detail](https://www.unive.it/pag/14024/?tx_news_pi1[news]=11972&tx_news_pi1[controller]=News&tx_news_pi1[action]=detail), web page last accessed on 14/04/2022.

²⁰ Progetto VeniSia, approvato protocollo d'intesa tra Comune e Ca' Foscari, [online], in *CFNews*, 19 February 2021, https://www.unive.it/pag/14024/?tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=9995&cHash=762cde6d8fc308fe013a9bcd0ce64a39, web page last accessed on 14/04/2022.

who make their living from tourism and whose business exists only thanks to this tourism. In this complex imbrication are inserted the numerous and often dynamic cultural institutions, such as the Foundations, which try to find a balance between these data: attracting tourists on which their economic sustainability depends, but also providing services to the local population and participating in the survival of the city. I will therefore try to disentangle all these dynamics and injunctions, and to understand how the Querini Stampalia Foundation (QSF) and the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation (BLMF) position themselves in relation to a paradox inherent in today's Venice.

1. 2. Presentation of the Querini Stampalia Foundation

The QSF is characterised first of all by the versatility of its spaces and functions. It includes a museum, a temporary exhibition space, a library, a cafeteria, a shop and an extremely rich collection. This collection includes a significant number of bibliographic collections, as well as various art objects. This Foundation, anchored in the city and eager to participate in its dynamism, offers numerous events, conferences, meetings or reflections that allow the promotion of its collections and culture, and the development of the individual. It defines its objectives in these terms: the *"main objective is to support and nurture human development in an atmosphere open to confrontation and learning, where different cultures meet, and personal growth is encouraged"*²¹.

1. 2. 1. History of the Querini Stampalia Foundation

The QSF was defined and created from the wishes of Count Giovanni Stampalia, the last descendant of the Querini Stampalia family, which he expressed in his will dated 11 December 1868²². The Querini family, a patrician family with origins dating back to the 12th-13th centuries, is linked to the foundation of Venice, and actively participated in the social life of the city, in political, economic and artistic terms. Over the centuries, an important heritage has been accumulated and passed on to each generation²³.

²¹ *Bilancio di missione 2016*, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 2017, p. 7.

²² *Testamento e Codicillo del comte Giovanni Querinni Stampalia, n°5205*, Venice, made in 11 December 1868 and published at his death on 25 May 1869.

²³ Busetto, G., Gambier, M., *I querini Stampalia, un ritratto di famiglia nel settecento veneziano*, Venice, Fondazione Scientifica Querini Stampalia, 1987.

Count Giovanni Stampalia, born two years after the fall of the Venetian Republic, was a businessman. He ran various agricultural and industrial businesses and was able to build up a certain amount of economic wealth. This wealth was increased by family inheritances, including his closest family members (parents, sister). A science enthusiast, he expanded his collections and was at the forefront of scientific modernity, for example by conducting tests on electrical energy as early as 1855. He was a member of the *Istituto Veneto di Scienze e Lettere ed Arti* (the Venetian Institute of Science, Literature and Art). The Foundation was later placed under the supervision of this institute, which still exists today. In his will of December 1868, which he wrote while ill, he bequeathed to the city of Venice: the family home and its furniture, which is still the headquarters of the QSF today, his real estate, and his incredible collection of art objects (paintings, engravings, coins and of course books). This will was applied on the date of his death, 15 May 1869²⁴.

1. 2. 2. The functioning of the Querini Stampalia Foundation

The QSF is a foundation under private law and of social utility, which means that it does not depend on the public authorities for its administrative and economic management. It owns all its collections. It does not depend directly on any ministry or public body, although it may sometimes depend on their agreement or requirements²⁵. The Foundation is attached to the Venetian Institute of Sciences, Letters and Arts, which supervises it and controls the management of its financial and property assets. It acquired ONLUS (*Organizzazione Non Lucrativa di Utilità Sociale*) status in 1998.

- *Administrative functioning*

The Board of Directors of the QSF is composed of five members: two are appointed by the Venetian Institute of Science, Literature and Art, one member is elected by the Municipality of Venice, the fourth by the Province of Venice, and together they elect the last member of the Board from among the important personalities of Venice whose list is provided by the main cultural institutions of the city. The members of the Council are then responsible for electing the President of the Foundation from among themselves.

²⁴ PUTZ, D., *La Fondation Querini Stampalia : monographie muséale*, [thesis presented in view of obtaining a Master's degree in Art History, Archaeology, general orientation, specialised in Museology], Liège University, Liège, academic year 2012-2013, p. 7-13.

²⁵ PUTZ, D., *cit.*, p. 33-34.

The members of the Council as well as the President are not remunerated. Today the governance of the Foundation is ensured by:

- President: Paolo Molesini;
- Vice President: Giovanni Castellani;
- Councillors: Shaul Bassi, Renato Brunetta, Donatella Calabi, Gilberto Muraro;
- Director: Marigusta Lazzari.

The Querini team is composed of 20 people, divided into 5 main departments: museum, library, events, administration, collaborators.

According the latest data available, the Foundation is financed through²⁶:

- Self-financing (asset yield, tickets, events): €1,684,000, which represents 68.1% of its budget;
- Public subsidies: 425 000€ representing 17.2% of its total resources;
- Private funding: €365,000 representing 14.8%.

The Foundation's total budget in 2019 was €2,474,000. In sum, two thirds of its funding comes from its own funds, the remaining thirds from public or private funding.

- *Functions*

The functions of the QSF are manifold and are mainly articulated in two ways: on the one hand the library, and on the other hand the museum (including the temporary exhibition space).

The library has both the function of preserving an extremely rich collection of works, and of providing a working space for users of the library. Its bibliographic collection is certainly among the richest in the city, and even more so in the region, and includes 350,000 volumes, 120 folders from the archives of the Querini Stampalia family, 1,300 manuscripts, 100 incunabula, 1,617 books printed in the 16th century, 20,250 ancient volumes, 20,000 booklets, 5,000 journals, 3,000 engravings, 355 geographical maps and ancient maps²⁷. The subjects of these works are varied and touch on culture, commerce, politics and society.

²⁶ *Bilancio di missione 2019*, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 2020, p.101.

²⁷ FONDAZIONE QUERINI STAMPALIA, *Library collections*, [online], https://www.querinistampalia.org/eng/library/library_collections.php, web page last accessed on 18/03/2022.

On the other hand, the QSF is characterised by its museum, which exhibits and opens to the public the important and rich collection that the Querini family, and in particular its last heir, have accumulated over the centuries. The museum is a precious testimony to the noble Venetian interiors of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, through a museology following the concept of *casa-museo* (house-museum). The main objective of the museum is to take the visitor into the life of the Querini family in the 18th century. The collection is mainly focused on Venetian life and art, presenting for example the works of Pietro Longhi (1701-1785), the main representative of the daily life of the Venetian nobility of the 18th century.

On the third floor of the building, the QSF also has an exhibition space for contemporary art. These exhibitions are varied and present the work of a living artist, or a specific theme through contemporary creations. This space is also occupied for 6 months of the year every two years by a collateral exhibition of the Venice Biennale of Contemporary Art.

In addition, the Foundation is also at the origin of prizes that promote the contemporary artistic production of Italian artists. For example, the Premio Furla PER L'Arte project, in partnership with the Fondazione Furla and the Museo d'Arte Moderna in Bologna (MAMbo), which once a year offers an exhibition space to around thirty Italian artists. A temporary exhibition of the finalist's work at the QSF rewards the winner in addition to the visibility provided by the competition.

As argued by Delphine Putz in her thesis²⁸, the QSF can be defined as a museum institution, due to its functions which correspond to the ICOM definition of the word museum²⁹. The museum has a heritage function (research, acquisition and conservation of heritage) and a function of dissemination of knowledge. On the one hand, the Foundation fulfils its heritage functions well, through permanent work on its own collections in partnership with cultural institutions, researchers, academics and professionals. The results of its research are disseminated to the greatest number of people through exhibitions, conferences and publications. In addition, the Foundation

²⁸ PUTZ D., *cit.*, p. 69-98.

²⁹ "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment."

ICOM, *Museum definition*, [online], 2007,

<https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>, web page last accessed on 6/04/2022.

acquires several hundred works each year, after approval by the Venetian Institute of Sciences, Letters and Arts. In 2016, for example, 500 books were added to the library shelves, and 269 subscriptions to periodicals were made³⁰. Finally, the Foundation is fulfilling its mission of disseminating knowledge and communicating about its collections through the exhibition of its heritage, as well as organising educational activities for the general public.

- *Location*

The Foundation is today located in the former residence of the Querini Stampalia family, situated in Campo Maria Santa Formosa, in the *sestiere* Castello, a few metres from St. Mark's Square. This mediaeval-style palace dates back to the 15th century and has been modified over the centuries, with works by Carlo Scarpa (1906-1978) and Mario Botta (1943-) among others.

The QSF is therefore a prestigious institution in Venice, relying both on its museum offer and on its library open to all. It is distinguished by its history rooted in the city and by its incredible collection.

1. 3. Presentation of the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation

The BLMF has as its primary and main function to support the creation of young artists through residencies and exhibitions of their work. It uses the following words to describe itself:

"The Foundation is a place of excellence in and for the benefit of the Triveneto area, a privileged observation points for the most interesting artistic experiences, an incubator for projects involving the local artistic community, a space for mediation with national and international quality realities. The programmatic lines followed

³⁰ *Bilancio di missione 2016, cit., p. 36.*

*so far have led to successful examples; on these we intend to continue to deepen them."*³¹

1. 3. 1. History of the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation

The history of the BLMF is closely linked to its founder: Duchess Felicita Bevilacqua (1822-1899), widow of General Giuseppe La Masa. On 18 February 1898, in her will, she announced her intention to support "*young artists who are often barred from entering major exhibitions*"³² by bequeathing to the Municipality of Venice the Palazzo Ca'Pesaro, then her main residence, a palace overlooking the Grand Canal.

Felicita Bevilacqua was not, however, active in the contemporary art world during her lifetime. Indeed, Felicita was not part of the initiatives that existed at the end of the 19th century in favour of young Venetian artists. There was, for example, the *Società Veneta Promotrice di Belle Arti*, a society that existed from the middle of the 19th century until the beginning of the following century, which played an important role in defining the Venetian art of the period. Ca'Pesaro was not included in the Society's exhibition venues, unlike other emblematic Venetian palaces, such as Palazzo Pisano or Ca'Dolfin. However, this *Società Promotrice* did not function well, relying on voluntary work and already facing competition from the exhibitions presented at the Giardini. Artists were in demand for an institution that offered the possibility of contact with the public in order to sell their works. Art galleries also developed at the same time, but this system was still insufficient and inefficient. Luca Massimo Barbero points out that:

*"Since the 1880s, Venice has lacked a place that could arouse curiosity, dialogue and discourse. This is why Felicita was already an extraordinary figure at the end of the nineteenth century, and those who created the Foundation for her saw Ca'Pesaro as a real "exhibition machine""*³³.

³¹ ISTITUZIONE FONDAZIONE BEVILACQUA LA MASA, *Chi siamo : l'attività*, [online], <http://archive.bevilacqualamasa.it/attivita>, web page last accessed on 21/03/2022, (translation by the author).

³² ISTITUZIONE FONDAZIONE BEVILACQUA LA MASA, *Chi siamo : la storia*, [online], <http://archive.bevilacqualamasa.it/storia>, web page last accessed on 21/03/2022.

³³ BARBERO, L. M., Un passato così remoto: ciò che non è accaduto negli anni ottanta, in *Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa : una donna, un'istituzione, una città*, Venice, Marsilio, 2005, p. 21 (translation by the author).

Felicita Bevilacqua therefore decided in an extremely modern way to give concrete support to the youth of her time³⁴.

Therefore, in 1908, in order to respect the Duchess' wishes, the Foundation was created within Ca'Pesaro, with the primary objective of promoting young artists. The Foundation had a double function. On the one hand, its rooms allowed the selected artists to be exhibited to the general public, an exhibition that was previously complicated for them, and which thus offered them a showcase to sell their works. On the other hand, one of the floors of the palace was used as an artists' residence, with heated, lit and equipped studios.

The first exhibition in Palazzo Ca'Pesaro took place at this time, under the impetus of the young lawyer Nino Barbantini. This first exhibition respected the wishes of the founder's will and presented the *Collettiva* (Collective exhibition) of the work of the young artists, an exhibition that still exists today. From this first edition, the BLMF acquired some of the works presented for the city of Venice. These works can still be seen today and have enriched the municipal collections in an extraordinary way³⁵.

Even today, the missions defined by Felicita Bevilacqua remain almost identical to those of the Foundation's origins, although the Foundation has moved from Palazzo Ca'Pesaro, which now houses the Museum of Modern and Oriental Art in Venice. The primary objective of this Foundation and of Felicita Bevilacqua was to support young contemporary artists to enable them to achieve fame and participation in major exhibitions. This choice and this will come from the observation that young artists are often prevented by financial or technical constraints. This Foundation, by providing them with a place to work, the possibility of exhibiting their work and the publication and research of their work, ensures the promotion of young artists who were often in financial difficulty and who were then forbidden to participate in major exhibitions³⁶.

³⁴ BERTOLA, C., Con sguardo femminile. Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa, in *Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa : una donna, un'istituzione, una città*, Venice, Marsilio, 2005, p. 13-17.

³⁵ COLETTI, S., L'istinto di una Istituzione- Sulla Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa e i sintomi di una storia inquieta, in PORTINARI, S., *Gli artisti di Ca' Pesaro e le esposizioni del 1919 e del 1920*, Venice, Ca'Foscari University, Storie dell'arte contemporanea, 2018, p. 181-196.

³⁶ In the 1995 regulations, the main functions of the Foundation are again stipulated, referring to Felicita Bevilacqua's will.

Deliberazione di approvazione del Regolamento Istituzione Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa del Consiglio Comunale n.251 del 6 novembre 1995, Comune di Venezia, 6 November 1995.

1. 3. 2. The functioning of the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation

- *Administrative functioning*

The Foundation follows the Municipal Regulations for the organisation and functioning of the institutions of the Municipality of Venice dated 6 November 1995. In 2016, a resolution was adopted which amended the 1995 regulation accordingly and stated that: *"The institution is managed by a Board of Directors composed of 3 (three) effective members appointed by the Mayor of the Municipality of Venice"*³⁷. In 2016, the City Council again stressed the need to maintain the existence of the BLMF due to *"the specificity of the activities organised"*³⁸. The president and the two *consiglieri* are appointed by the Mayor of Venice. The Board of Directors of the BLMF is currently composed of:

- President : Bruno Bernardi;
- *Consiglieri*: Valentina Farolfi and Roberto Zamberlan;
- Director: Michele Casarin.

The BLMF is also characterised by its numerous links with other renowned cultural institutions around the world, such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Palacio Cristal in Madrid, with which it collaborates on a wide range of activities.

- *Functions*

The Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation defines its current activities in five main areas³⁹:

- *"The creation of exhibitions of living artists of international renown"*: the Foundation presents both monographic exhibitions on living Italian and international artists, and thematic exhibitions on broad subjects. This offer includes artists with a real international reputation, such as Yoko Ono or Louise Bourgeois, which give reliability to this institution, attract visitors through the artists or themes exhibited, and also increase the reputation of the institution. In parallel to these exhibitions of living artists, the BLMF also hosts retrospective exhibitions.

³⁷ *Deliberazione del Consiglio Comunale n.40 del 29 luglio 2016, cit.*, (translation by the author).

³⁸ *Deliberazione del Consiglio Comunale n.40 del 29 luglio 2016, cit.*

³⁹ ISTITUZIONE FONDAZIONE BEVILACQUA LA MASA, *Chi siamo : l'attività*, [online], *cit.*, <http://archive.bevilacqualamasa.it/attivita>, web page last accessed on 21/03/2022, (translation by the author).

- *"The organisation and sponsorship of congresses, conferences, publications and meetings"*: in connection with the artists in residence or exhibited, the Foundation organises various events and exchanges around broad themes. It also aims to publish catalogues on its own activities and on the exhibitions it has hosted.
- *"The promotion of activities involving young artists, and in particular those of the Triveneto"*: although this point will be developed in more detail, the Foundation from the very first lines of presentation underlines its orientation and policy towards youth, and more particularly towards young artists from the region. Through events, financial support, residencies, projects, partnerships with universities and regional institutions, the BLMF actively promotes the creation and artistic reflection of youth. The Foundation's two ways of intervening and supporting creative youth are the annual organisation of the collective exhibition *Collettiva* and the granting of 15 artists' workshops for a period of 12 months.
- *"Continued cataloguing and conservation activity"*: the Foundation has a library with a large number of works related to the history of the Foundation, including catalogues of exhibitions that it has hosted, and contains the historical archives of the Foundation from 1906 to 2002. This project to inventory the Foundation's historical archives was set up in 2005 under the impetus of the then director Elisabetta Meneghel. The aim of this inventory is to provide documents for researchers but also to participate in the conservation and cataloguing of these historical works.
- *"Reflection on the identity and image of the city of Venice"*: underlining the fact that this point has become increasingly important in recent years, and that it has been addressed in all the Foundation's activities mentioned above, the BLMF has proposed a reflection on Venice through several themes and various proposals made by artists. At the same time as proposing a reflection on the Venice of the future through reflections linked to ecology or the sustainability of the city, the Foundation also returns to historical Venice through photographic exhibitions on themes that are sometimes overlooked or unknown.

As the Foundation states, the main objective remains: "*still faithful to the original principles, the main intention remains to devote itself above all to those who are at the beginning of their research so as to grasp and encourage the new things in the bud*"⁴⁰.

- *Location*

The BLMF currently has four main venues in Venice:

- The Palazzetto Tito: the institutional headquarters, library of the Foundation, and exhibition space, located in the *sestiere* of Dorsoduro;
- The Galleria di Piazza San Marco: the main exhibition space, *sestiere* of San Marco;
- The Palazzo Carminati: it includes six studios of young artists selected by the Foundation, two guest rooms made available to artists in residence for a shorter period (less than 12 months) or curators present in the framework of training or exchange programmes, located in Santa Croce;
- The Complesso di SS. Cosma e Damiano: there are nine artists' studios, on the island of Giudecca, *sestiere* of Dorsoduro.

Like the QSF, the BLMF is distinguished from other Venetian foundations by its history and the clarity of its missions, which were defined at the time of its creation but are still respected today. Although it is a foundation of a smaller scale than the QSF, in terms of size, its collection, or the number of employees, it remains a renowned institution both locally and more widely, to which Venetians remain firmly attached.

1. 4. Close raison d'être: providing a space for Venetians

Among the primary needs of a population, having a free public space available to all is essential. This need becomes even more crucial, especially when we look at a city like Venice, where many spaces are primarily designed and reserved for tourists. In this context, the QSF, by providing free access to the local population through its library, and

⁴⁰ ISTITUZIONE FONDAZIONE BEVILACQUA LA MASA, *Chi siamo : la storia*, [online], *cit.*

the BLMF, by offering a space for artistic creation, have an essential role for the city's long-term inhabitants.

1. 4. 1. The Querini Stampalia Foundation: providing a workspace for Venetians

The QSF is first of all associated with its library for a large majority of the Venetian population. This meaningful and popular library is a key element of the Foundation and of the city of Venice in general. This library, which provides a working space for Venetians, both residents and visitors, is inscribed in the foundations of its creation.

" A Reading room shall be added to the above mentioned, on the first floor of my Palace in the rooms in which I live.

The Reading room and the Library shall be open on the days and at the visiting hours indicated by the Curators, but however and invariably on the days and at the visiting hours in which the public Libraries are closed, especially at night for the benefit of scholars. The latter shall not sit in the Library but in a near beautiful and comfortable room, provided with heaters and carpets during winter. Moreover, additional rooms shall be put at disposal for evening meetings among both national and international scholars and scientists."⁴¹

Count Giovanni Querini expressed his desire to dedicate his flats to study and research in order to develop culture and places of knowledge in the city. It is interesting to note that in this extract there is no mention of students, or the younger part of the population. In this will, he also stipulated that the bibliographic funds and collections should be opened and made accessible to the general public.

One of the specificities of the founder of the Querini Stampalia library was his wish to offer a study space in Venice, while all other places open for work were closed. This request was long implemented, the library closed at midnight or 2am, and was also open on Mondays. These hours were reduced to 10.30 pm, due to budget cuts⁴², but at present, due to the health crisis, the library has adopted more "classic" hours and only opens from 10 am to 7 pm and is closed on Mondays.

⁴¹ *Testamento e Codicillo del comte Giovanni Querinni Stampalia, cit, p. 9, (translation by the QSF).*

⁴² These budget cuts were introduced by the Italian Council of Ministers after the 2009 crisis, which decided to drastically reduce the budget allocated to cultural institutions.

Throughout the history of the Foundation, the library's collection has been enriched and has undergone various reorganisations. Guisepe Mazzariol (director of the Foundation from 1974 to 1984) played an important role in promoting the library as a cultural and civic space accessible to all. The library was also modernised, notably in 1999 when it joined forces with the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM) to create a multimedia room⁴³.

In 2020, in the context of the pandemic, the library opened 146 days and welcomed 12,661 users. 738 new people registered at the library, and 1,771 book checks were made. In comparison, 26,044 people visited the museum, more than double the number of library users⁴⁴. These figures are incomparable to the period before Covid, the QSF library welcomed 62,000 people in 2017⁴⁵ and 2018⁴⁶, and only 50,000 visitors in 2018 passed through the museum doors.

In sum, and as the current president points out in his letter published in the 2020 Annual Report, this library is of major importance to many of the Venetian population. He stresses again the importance that the library will continue to have for the generations of Venetian students to come⁴⁷.

1. 4. 2. The Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation: providing a creative space and exhibition space for young Venetian artists

The BLMF supports the creation of young artists by granting residencies but also by exhibiting young local artists in frequent exhibitions, artists who do not occupy the Foundation's premises.

- *Residencies*

In the 1995 regulations, it is stipulated that 14 painters or sculptors (today 15 creators are selected and two workshops are allocated to artists for less long programmes) under 30 years of age residing in Veneto (this geographical constraint has now been extended to Triveneto) should be chosen and assigned a studio in the

⁴³ MANZO, C., *La comunicazione nella fabbrica della cultura: il museo come metamedium : la Fondazione Querini Stampalia*, [dissertation on art history, Faculty of Education, Communication Sciences degree course], University of Trieste, Trieste, academic year 1998-1999, p. 90.

⁴⁴ *Bilancio di missione 2020*, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 2021, p. 2.

⁴⁵ *Bilancio di missione 2017*, cit., p. 2.

⁴⁶ *Bilancio di missione 2018*, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 2019, p. 2.

⁴⁷ *Bilancio di missione 2020*, cit., p. 7.

Foundation's premises⁴⁸. These young artists will be chosen based on the quality of their artistic creation but also their financial precariousness. The artists are supported by the Foundation for one year, and the contract can be renewed for up to three years. The choice of artists who have a studio, as well as the choice of young artists who are exhibited in an annual group show, is made by a commission composed of 4 members, 3 artists and a cultural professional, as well as 2 members of the Board of Directors and the President of the Foundation. For example, in 2017, the jury was composed of: Bruno Bernardi, President of the Institution, and Valentina Farolfi and Roberto Zamberlan, the two advisors of the administration. Three external juries took part in the deliberations: Gabriella Belli, Director of the Civic Museums Foundation of Venice, the renowned gallery owner Stefano Contini, and the art and culture journalist Lidia Panzeri. This commission is responsible for selecting the works to be exhibited in this annual exhibition, awarding the annual grants to the selected artists, and deciding on the possible purchase of works presented in this exhibition⁴⁹.

As stated by the Foundation:

"[...] to date, Bevilacqua La Masa is the only Italian public institution to award, for one year of training, 15 workshops for as many artists, active in the various fields of visual arts (painting, performance, video art, relational art, installations, photography, etc.). The workshops are now located in the prestigious offices of Palazzo Carminati in San Stae and in the Santi Cosma and Damiano complex on the island of Giudecca: these spaces become places of creative experimentation, of artistic and intellectual contamination, of direct confrontation with colleagues and with the critical industry."⁵⁰

There are therefore two conditions to be able to apply to the BLMF and be allocated a studio in the Foundation's premises:

- Be between 18 and 30 years old at the time of application;
- Reside in the Veneto or have their home in Venice.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Deliberazione di approvazione del Regolamento Istituzione Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa del Consiglio Comunale n.251 del 6 novembre 1995, cit., p. 1.*

⁴⁹ *Deliberazione di approvazione del Regolamento Istituzione Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa del Consiglio Comunale n.251 del 6 novembre 1995, cit., p. 1.*

⁵⁰ COMUNE DI VENEZIA, Storia della Bevilacqua La Masa, [online], in *Città di Venezia*, 24 March 2022, <https://www.comune.venezia.it/it/content/storia-0> (translation by the author).

⁵¹ ISTITUZIONE FONDAZIONE BEVILACQUA LA MASA, *Collettiva giovani artisti: Bando di concorso OPERA 2017*, [online], <http://archive.bevilacqualamasa.it/bando-di-concorso>, web page last accessed on 13/03/2022.

In addition to providing a place for artists to work, the Foundation nurtures the creation and accompanies the artist in these projects by putting the artist in touch with Venetian, Italian and international curators, designers and professionals in the field. The residents are not only provided with a place to work, but actually enter a work bubble that participates in the development of their creativity.

Finally, to exhibit the results of their research and work, the *Open Studios & ArtistsTalk* are held twice a year, giving them visibility to a large audience and access to criticism from the general public. Depending on the programme, the artists in residence may be asked to exhibit on other occasions at the BLMF. These artist residencies have been very successful and have enabled the selected artists to obtain prizes, to become part of the contemporary cultural circuit, and to acquire local, national and even international recognition⁵².

- *Supporting local creation through exhibitions and prizes*

The Foundation is still very much interested in stimulating the artistic creation of young artists, both through residencies and by stimulating local artistic creation thanks to the organisation of the Annual Collective Exhibition, the *Collettiva*. This exhibition, which is now in its 104th year, aims to stimulate and promote creativity on a regional scale⁵³. This event is not linked to the Foundation's residencies but is open to all young artists under 30 years old from the Triveneto area. As with the residencies, these artists are selected by a jury. More precisely, the Foundation supports young creators on three main levels:

- By producing a catalogue;
- Through the distribution of grants with the purchase of works by the most deserving young participants;
- Through the annual exhibition of the Scholars, i. e. through the *Collettiva*.

The publication of the artists exhibited is an essential part of the Foundation's support. Being published means that one's work is recognised, that it has been analysed by professionals in the sector and that it remains in posterity. The Foundation fulfils these

⁵² ISTITUZIONE FONDAZIONE BEVILACQUA LA MASA, *Atelier*, [online], <http://archive.bevilacqualamasa.it/atelier>, web page last accessed on 13/03/2022.

⁵³ COMUNE DI VENEZIA, *Storia della Bevilacqua La Masa*, [online], *cit.*

missions well, especially as it carefully preserves all these publications in an archive accessible to all⁵⁴.

The Foundation also provides financial support by awarding prizes to artists exhibited, sometimes followed by the purchase of certain works presented. For example, among all the exhibitors of the *Collettiva*, three artists are awarded prizes, and their works are purchased by the Foundation for a value of €3,000 for the first and €2,000 for the next two. These winners will also have the opportunity to exhibit their work in the following year's *Collettiva* exhibition⁵⁵. All in all, the Foundation allows the annual exhibition in a prestigious location, in the gallery in Piazza San Marco, to artists under construction.

In sum, these three points describe what the Foundation does during group exhibitions, but ultimately summarise the Foundation's support for young people more generally.

To conclude this first chapter, these Foundations have defined precise and humanistic missions since their creation. Each one, in its own way, chose to support a population in need, a population that was mainly young and Venetian, in a city where the services offered to them were lacking. In the more than 100 years of its existence, each of these missions has been fulfilled and has effectively contributed to the development of many generations. Venice has also evolved, having increased the weight of culture within its walls each year, and impacted by globalisation through mass tourism. Venice has sometimes failed in the support it should offer to its citizens. Today, when the population is abandoning its *calle* to make way for tourists, the QSF and the BLMF remain historical institutions, dear to the Venetian population, and offering different and valuable models for the city. It is therefore appropriate to look in more detail at the relationships and contributions that these institutions have had for Venetian youth from a historical point of view.

⁵⁴ ISTITUZIONE FONDAZIONE BEVILACQUA LA MASA, *Archivi e materiali: Archivio giovani artisti*, [online],

<http://archive.bevilacqualamasa.it/archivio-artisti>, web page last accessed on 13/03/2022.

⁵⁵ ISTITUZIONE FONDAZIONE BEVILACQUA LA MASA, *Bando di concorso 2017*, [online],

<http://archive.bevilacqualamasa.it/bando101macollettiva>, web page last accessed on 13/03/2022.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICALLY, TWO DRIVING FOUNDATIONS NURTURING VENICE'S DYNAMISM AND ATTRACTING A YOUNG POPULATION

From their origins, youth has been at the centre of the *raison d'être* of each of these foundations. Through the ambitions of these founders, and then through the contribution of the actors who have participated in both Foundations over the years, this founding element has been anchored in the cultural policies of each one, has developed, but has also been diminished. In trying to understand the needs of this population, whether financial, professional or in terms of service, each Foundation has supported this population while being marked by strong links with Venice.

2. 1. Two founders with similar ambitions

Each of these two Foundations, from their beginning, follows the same logic of supporting the society in the near future. While the QSF was created in 1868, the will establishing the BLMF took place 30 years later in 1898. They both follow a logic of giving to the community through a humanistic, if somewhat self-serving, ideology.

2. 1. 1. Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa: enhancing her name and helping society

First, we will look at the project of Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa. A woman who was rather distant from contemporary art during her lifetime, marked by her life in Venice and her palace Ca'Pesaro, explaining why her gesture has sometimes been misunderstood.

Felicita Bevilacqua belonged to one of Verona's oldest aristocratic families.⁵⁶ She received a strict aristocratic education, where she learned languages and sciences, and made various trips between Geneva and Venice. She was therefore not Venetian by birth, but her roots were in Verona and Brescia. In 1851 her brother Guglielmo acquired the

⁵⁶ SODINI, E., La "Venezia" di Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa, in *Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa : una donna, un'istituzione, una città*, Venice, Marsilio, 2005, p. 48.

Palazzo Ca'Pesaro, and they entered the circle of Venetian aristocrats. The search for fame and recognition of one's social status is already reflected in the purchase of the Ca'Pesaro Palace. Owning a palace in Venice overlooking the Grand Canal was a mark of high social status in the days of the Venetian Republic⁵⁷. Felicita Bevilacqua married the Sicilian Giuseppe La Masa in 1857, and they lived together in Ca'Pesaro.

For Flavia Scotton⁵⁸, the Duchess was not particularly interested in contemporary art during her lifetime. Her collection consisted mainly of antique works. The link with contemporary creation is therefore only partial. She certainly knew the world of Venetian craftsmanship, the art schools, the interweaving of industry and the meaning of "beauty". However, Felicita's choice does not seem to be the result of a strategic decision, of a direct interest in an artist or a movement, but the result of a combination of factors: a moral impulse, the desire to remember a gesture of public utility, the desire to be recognised by the international community.

The main purpose of the donation was to restore her family's name according to Flavia Scotton:

"The donation of the palace, according to the modalities she had foreseen (placing a plaque on the façade and the door of the ground floor, placing her bust and that of her husband on the landing staircase) and the objectives she had identified ("for the use of the family, whose quality, for purely political and economic reasons, has been unjustly ignored"), was probably part of a larger project to rebuild the family's name and honour."⁵⁹

The purpose of this donation was therefore to make her name known to posterity and to give a good image of her family and her heritage.

It is interesting to note that in the same will Felicita also bequeathed the Palazzo Bevilacqua to the Municipality of Verona, with the aim of creating: *"an institute of decoration for the city in the form of a conference room-library-art exhibition"*⁶⁰. This second donation was, however, much less specific than the donation of the Palazzo Ca'Pesaro in Venice.

⁵⁷ ZAVAGNO, M., Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa: la ragione di famiglia e il sentimento per l'arte, in *Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa : una donna, un'istituzione, una città*, Venice, Marsilio, 2005, p. 73.

⁵⁸ SCOTTON, F., "Una benemerita donna ha voluto mettere riparo". Felicita bevilacqua e la promozione delle arti a Venezia, in *Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa : una donna, un'istituzione, una città*, Venice, Marsilio, 2005, p. 41.

⁵⁹ SODINI, E., *cit*, p. 58.

⁶⁰ SCOTTON, F., *cit*, p. 41.

In spite of these self-interested reasons, Felicita's gesture was nevertheless in keeping with a humanistic perspective. In her will, Felicita had a real desire to support and develop "Venetian industry". Moreover, during her lifetime she had already been close to the artists and workers employed in the maintenance of Ca'Pesaro, and through whom she had been able to see the crisis in this sector. Following the same idea, Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa was marked by financial problems during her life. In particular, her finances were heavily burdened by the maintenance of Palazzo Ca'Pesaro. This lack of finance could justify her apparent lack of interest in contemporary art. Marco Zavagno⁶¹ defends that although she could not support this artistic creation of youth during her life for lack of financial means, she did it when she had the possibility, giving what she had, i.e. space. This willingness to give to the community and to support the creative youth can be felt all the more by her proximity to the legacy of Count Giovanni Stampalia.

2. 1. 2. Two similar approaches

First of all, the founders of the BLMF and the QSF had no direct heirs, but they did have an important cultural heritage, and in both cases a house with a rich heritage was bequeathed.

These two founders are also part of a tradition that has had other precedents, both before and after their action. Many patricians, during the nineteenth century and even after, chose to bequeath their property, the collection of a lifetime that testifies to their wealth and passion in various fields, to the Italian state. These bequests not only anchor their names in posterity, but also follow a trend that has contributed to the birth of many Italian museums. This dynamic of donations and bequests has also marked the Venetian cultural scene. As Marino Cortes (President of the QSF between 1994 and 2001 and again between 2004 and 2020) points out, others have chosen to bequeath their property to the community and the city⁶². The first gesture of donation to Venice was that of Cardinale Bessarione who, in the 15th century, donated his collection of books to the city of Venice for common use, which is the origin of the present Biblioteca Marciana in St. Mark's Square. In 1523, Cardinal Giovanni Grimani donated his collection of Greek and Roman

⁶¹ ZAVAGNO, M., *cit.*, p. 81.

⁶² CORTESE, M., *Commemorazione di Giovanni Querini Stampalia*, in **150*, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, edited by Cristina Celegon with Lara Marchese, Venice, Lineadacqua, 2021, p. 18 (translation by the author).

sculptures and objects to the Republic of Venice, which today forms part of the collection of the Archaeological Museum of Venice. Teodoro also donated his collection to the City in 1830, with the aim of opening a museum, open to all and financed by his estate, which is still visible today: the Correr Museum. Marino Cortese cites other examples of donations, particularly more recent ones, such as that of Vittorio Cini or Peggy Guggenheim, which have provided the city with a set of museums and cultural institutions of great wealth. These donations were mainly in a humanistic vision, to serve the city of Venice, while being open to all.

This gesture allows them to enhance their property and exult in their own identity transmitted through the objects or residences passed on to the public heritage. From then on, Count Giovanni Querini was part of this logic and marked by his founding act, which was: *"A gamble for the future, based on commitment to the weakest, faith in science and the dissemination of knowledge through scholarships and dowry grants to young men and women, grants to scientists and men of letters."*⁶³

More broadly, Flavia Scotton highlights the importance that Count Giovanni Stampalia's legacy may have had on Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa. A legacy that was not simply limited to a simple donation of assets to the community, but which also provided financial support for Venetian youth:

"I think there is no doubt that this precedent meant a lot to our benefactor, also because the Querini bequest initially included a clause that was very relevant to our subject: some support for artists if the available funds allowed it. This little-known aspect of the Querini Stampalia bequest deserves to be explored further because, although it had little impact on the Foundation's internal affairs, it should be taken into consideration because it objectively constitutes an important precedent. [...] Such initiatives could not fail to make a favourable impression on the fervent spirit of the Duchess Bevilacqua, so closely linked to the world of the Risorgimento⁶⁴ and the resulting expectations of societal renewal."⁶⁵

⁶³ MOLESINI, P., Presentazione, in **150*, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, edited by Cristina Celegon with Lara Marchese, Venice, Lineadacqua, 2021, p. 12 (translation by the author).

⁶⁴ The Risorgimento (1848 - 1866) refers to the political movement for Italian unity.

⁶⁵ SCOTTON, F., *cit*, p. 42-43.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the distinctions between the two donations of our founders. While the Count Giovanni Querini decided precisely on many details: how the institution should be managed, what private investments should be made, who would be art curator working within the Foundation... Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa on the contrary was much less clear and precise in her donation. She left it to the municipality to decide how the Foundation should be organised.

2. 2. A desire to support Venetian youth, then in difficulty

By recognising the problems of young people, both Count Giovanni Stampalia and Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa wanted to provide an answer to these difficulties. Through their Foundation, they wished to provide financial support to this segment of the population, to give them space in a city that lacked it, and to open the doors to a professional world that had previously been difficult for them to access.

2. 2. 1. Financial difficulties

Each in its own way, the two Foundations studied have been aware of the economic difficulties of young people from the outset and have wished to support them in various ways.

- *Selling through the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation*

Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa's gesture was initially intended to relieve young people's artistic creation from economic pressure: *"The noblewoman then pointed out what still remained a problem: freeing young people from the worry of putting the answer*

to economic hardship before their artistic research, by offering them an atelier free of charge where they could create freely. “⁶⁶

Chiara Bertola underlines that in her will, in order to remedy the economic burden that weighed down and hindered the artists of her time while ensuring a certain economic sustainability of the Foundation, the founder imagined a system of self-financing for the institution. Indeed, while the third floor of Palazzo Ca'Pesaro is dedicated to the creation of artists, the second floor is rented to finance the maintenance and upkeep of the palace. The first floor would be used for the exhibition of works of art⁶⁷.

On the other hand, before the 1970s, the works exhibited in the BLMF's exhibition spaces were saleable, and provided undeniable financial support to young artists. Enzo di Martino points out that at that time the artists who exhibited in the San Marco spaces were able to live all year round on the income from the sales of their works⁶⁸. In 1925, the artists asked to leave Ca'Pesaro and one of the reasons for this was that the works were not selling sufficiently. The exhibition space was therefore moved to the Lido, where the Mostra di Cinema is held today, a holiday resort par excellence, and a place thought to be more strategic from a commercial point of view by the Foundation's artists. In the end, this decision did not bear fruit and faced with the low number of sales, the artists decided to move closer to the city centre in 1936. It was only in 1949 that the BLMF was allocated by the Municipality of Venice the exhibition space in San Marco, which is still the exhibition space today, the Palazzo Carminati, and the top floor of the Palazzo Giustinian⁶⁹.

By providing a creative space and visibility for artists and allowing them to sell their work, the BLMF has undoubtedly supported this fragile population financially.

- *Scholarships given by the Querini Stampalia Foundation*

⁶⁶ AGOSTINI, T., Conclusioni, in *Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa : una donna, un'istituzione, una città*, Venice, Marsilio, 2005, p. 88 (translation by the author).

⁶⁷ BERTOLA, C., *cit.*, p. 13-17.

⁶⁸ DI MARTINO, E., Bevilacqua La Masa. Una fondazione da ripensare, in *Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa : una donna, un'istituzione, una città*, Venice, Marsilio, 2005, p. 30.

⁶⁹ VETTESE, A., Storia di un testamento tradito, in *Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa : una donna, un'istituzione, una città*, Venice, Marsilio, 2005, p. 23-24.

Although this aspect of Count Giovanni's will is less well known, it remains a founding element and marker of his thinking. By giving scholarships to young people, the Count was responding to a great need and poverty in Venice and its surroundings.

In the founder's will, it was originally foreseen that scholarships would be given to different profiles of young women. More precisely:

"On 13 December 1869, the promotional list of the thirty-seven young women chosen to enjoy the dowry subsidies bestowed every five years by the foundation was announced, as prescribed in the will for 'poor, legitimate young women of excellent morals, divided into three categories': a dowry of 10,000 lire 'for a noble young girl', six dowries of 2,000 lire 'for young girls of civil status', thirty dowries of 300 lire each 'for girls of vilicers and artisans'." ⁷⁰

At that time, 1,755 applications for these scholarships were received by the Querini, not only from the Municipality of Venice, but from all the regions in which the Foundation had properties (Veneto). In the letters of application for these scholarships, the young people explain and elaborate on the poor financial conditions of each one, often lacking means even for primary needs. It is also interesting to note the geographical disparities in the applications for scholarships. In 1898, only 80 residents of the historic centre of Venice applied for a scholarship, while the *terraferma* regions participated much more in the programme. For example, 215 residents of Cavarzere and 144 of Zimelle nel Veronese applied for the programme.

This system of scholarships was interrupted between 1879 and 1898, due to economic failure on the part of the Foundation. The Foundation was facing an economic crisis, and the amount donated represented a significant part of its budget. Between 1869 and 1977, these expenses were 60,500 lire, out of a total budget of 3,216,000 lire, almost 18% of the total budget. After the Great War, the amount of aid was gradually reduced. After the First World War, the conditions for receiving this financial aid changed: it was now necessary to be a war orphan. Between the two world wars, and under the presidency of Pietro Orsi, the Foundation oscillated between a Foundation with cultural and social aims. Donations were maintained, but reduced, and the Foundation was

⁷⁰ CECCHINATO, E., I sussidi dotali e la vocazione sociale della Fondazione dalla sua nascita alla Seconda guerra mondiale, in **150*, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, edited by Cristina Celegon with Lara Marchese, Venice, Lineadacqua, 2021, p. 115 (translation by the author).

divided into two entities, each with its own cultural and social purpose, each dependent on a different ministry (of education or of the interior)⁷¹.

There was a real philanthropic, charitable objective in the Count's will, which was visible through the scholarships he wanted to provide for Venetian youth. Although these scholarships had to be stopped to ensure the economic sustainability of the Foundation, the social attention towards the citizens on the part of the Querini remains fundamental.

2. 2. 2. A lack of space of one's own

As is often pointed out by the employees of the Querini and its official discourse, the Querini is seen and described as "*a room in addition to the flat*". While in the past as well as today, the difficulties of finding accommodation in Venice sometimes mean having to share a room, having to live far from one's place of study, and not having a suitable place to study, the Querini takes this place by offering a place where one is comfortable to work. One of the first words that come up to describe this place is *welcoming*. The Querini as a place of coolness in summer or warmth in winter (from its testamentary foundation, light and heating were mentioned as a condition for the opening of the library), a quiet place, more pleasant than one's own home, where the quality, the design, the atmosphere, make this place of work a place apart.

This feeling is certainly linked to the "home" aspect of the Foundation. The Library, as intended in the will, is located in the flats of the Count. The various architectural interventions that have taken place during its existence have reinforced this welcoming, pleasant aspect, a place where one feels good. For example, in 1994, the intervention of the architect Mario Botta was no exception to the rule. Placing in the street, at the very entrance of the Foundation before the bridge that leads to the Foundation, Mario Botta has added a platform surrounded by two benches. This intervention can be seen as two arms that open up and are ready to welcome any passer-by who wishes to rest for a few moments before continuing on their way. All in all, most of the architects who have intervened in the establishment have largely referred to the wishes of the legatee to perpetuate the atmosphere of the place.

⁷¹ CECCHINATO, E., *cit.*, p. 122.

Giorgio Busetto, under his direction, also understood the importance of providing a place of study for young people. To meet this need, the library closed at midnight. He even decided one year during the June exam period to open the library until 2am. Although the last hour was only very busy, the library saw a new dynamic and welcomed students back after having dinner out.

As far as the BLMF is concerned, as early as 1902, the workshops offered by the Foundation were occupied by artists⁷². This success shows the need for artists to have a creative space that they were lacking.

2. 2. 3. The Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, offering a place in the contemporary art world

Once the BLMF was created, its role was established a few years after the death of its founder. From the beginning, the exhibitions of the BLMF's *Collettiva* provided an opportunity to confront the artists with an audience that had not previously been available. In addition to providing a working space, offering an exhibition space was an integral part of the training and support for emerging artists provided by the BLMF.

*"A decisive factor in launching the activities was the appointment of Nino Barbantini as secretary of the Bevilacqua and at the same time director of the International Gallery of Modern Art, thanks to which the first collective exhibition was inaugurated on 26 July 1908 and the first Supervisory Board was elected the same year. Since then, the Opera Bevilacqua La Masa, interrupted only by the wars, has launched initiatives and activities that have attracted the participation of some of the most vivid artists and intellectuals of the time (including Umberto Boccioni, Gino Rossi, Arturo Martini and Felice Casorati), thus becoming one of the most important cultural centres for contemporary art in the city and in the whole country."*⁷³

In 1908, with this first exhibition, Nino Barbantini achieved a master stroke to meet the criteria of the donor. Indeed, one of the first objectives of Felicita's gesture was to help young artists enter the art market and have access to quality exhibitions that were previously denied them. In order to meet this criterion and to allow the artists to have

⁷² BARBERO, M., *Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa . Cent'anni di collettive*, Venice, Cicero, 1999.

⁷³ *Archivio dell'Istituzione Bevilacqua La Masa Inventario 1899-1990*, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, 2006, p. 9 (translation by the author).

this visibility which they lacked, on the one hand because of their young age, and on the other hand because the BLMF did not have the fame which today legitimises their work, this first curator decided to exhibit artists who were already established in parallel with the artists working in the Foundation's premises⁷⁴.

In short, by entering the BLMF, artists came out of the anonymity of their studios, and had access to the art market, a foot in the door that is quite valid today.

2. 3. At the centre of the city's dynamism and social life

From their origins, these Foundations had the ambition to support and help the city to develop. The creation of these institutions in the 19th century had a real desire to participate in the emancipation of the city. For the BLMF in particular, Felicita's gesture had a real ambition to be part of a forward movement towards modernity that the city was experiencing. In the climate of late nineteenth-century Venice, her gesture had the effect of propelling and stimulating a city on its way to "modernity"⁷⁵. Venice was eagerly awaiting the creation of an International Gallery of Modern Art in Venice, and with this will, Felicita responded to this request. In addition to helping to "modernise" Venice, these institutions have had a strong societal impact and social role throughout their history, a role that has been reflected in the personalities who have frequented them.

2. 3. 1. The Querini Stampalia Foundation managers and employees at the centre of the city's social life

The two Foundations have had a role to play in the city through the different actors who have worked and built each of these institutions.

- *The Querini Stampalia: a historic family*

⁷⁴ BARBERO, M., *cit.*

⁷⁵ ZAVAGNO, M., *cit.*, p. 73.

The QSF has always been closely linked to the political powers of Venice because of the political roles that the members of this family occupied. Indeed, the Stampalia family⁷⁶, one of the most important patrician families of the city was directly involved in the political functioning and decisions. Specifically, the family's representatives sat on the Great Council (*Maggior Consiglio*), then the supreme political body in the Venetian Republic, in particular in charge of electing the Doge. Although following its participation in two failed coups, in 1300 and 1310, in an attempt to depose the despotic Doge Pietro Gradenigo, the Querini family remained a member of the *Maggior Consiglio*, but its importance was greatly diminished and it was relegated to the nobility of lower rank.

Over the generations, the Querini family retained its importance in the city, and participated in the political life of the city by being part of the Government. Some members of the Querini family were particularly active in the city's political scene, such as Andrea Domenico Querini (1710 - 1795), who participated in the reform of the Church and the administration of the municipality. He was also an important actor in the enrichment of the family's collection through his proximity to Venetian artists. With the end of the Venetian Republic in 1797 and the foreign occupation of the city by the French and then the Austrians in the first decades of the 19th century, the Venetian nobility no longer had a *raison d'être* and therefore lost its political and social functions. The last four descendants of the family fled the city.

- *Place of formation of the city's ruling class*

From its beginning, at the centre of the city and its dynamics, many personalities who later played an important role for the city were linked to the Querini, and in particular to its library. It was a point of reference for the city's ruling population, the population that would later become the political class of Venice. It was a point of assembly, training and exchange for this class in *devenir*. In the same line, Paolo Melesini⁷⁷ (current president of the Foundation since 2020), emphasises in his presentation of the institution that the Foundation has been a "protagonist" in the formation of a class of the population that has subsequently played essential roles in political terms, but also in the world of art and culture.

⁷⁶ Busetto, G., Gambier, M., *cit.*

⁷⁷ Molesini, P., *cit.*, p. 12 (translation by the author).

This openness and renown were, however, part of a very specific context of the city that was different from the current situation. After about thirty years of existence, the Querini took its political place as a place of training for the ruling class. This place in the city was made possible by the context in which the Querini was inserted: a central place within Venice, a city which at that time was the leader in political, cultural and industrial terms of the Triveneto region⁷⁸. Venice was a political place of reference between Austria and Italy and was the leader of the region. Its industrial predominance was reflected in the opening of the Port of Marghera, while from a cultural point of view, the Biennale was established. From then on, in this context of growth and domination, the Querini fit in perfectly to train the ruling class that would be able to run this central place, offering a library service, an indispensable tool for this training.

- *The example of Giuseppe Mazzariol (1922-1989)*

In more contemporary times and during the existence of the Foundation, many names have marked both the Foundation and the city of Venice. Giuseppe Mazzariol is a good example of this link, and of his participation in their definition and evolution. "*Giuseppe Mazzariol is a man who made the history of Venice and Querini*"⁷⁹. A user of the Querini Library, a student and teacher at the IUAV, a well-known Venetian politician, he was director of the Foundation from 1958 to 1974

Giuseppe Mazzariol was a leading politician in the city. He left his mark on the city and the Foundation through his political involvement and, under his leadership, the Querini took on an extremely committed tone. It is interesting to note that Giuseppe Mazzariol was also the curator of the 1963 exhibition of the *Collettiva* of the BLMF.⁸⁰ This shows the importance of these two Foundations in the city, but also the links that the Foundations, through the personalities involved in their activities, had with the city.

More generally, Lucas Pes summarises the contribution that this director made to the city in three main points:

"1) The possibility that contemporary architecture can express an overall project on the city. Not as works in their own right, but as an exemplary and functional

⁷⁸ ORTALLI, G., SCARABELLO, G., *cit.*

⁷⁹ Busetto, G., *Etica, creatività, città. Giuseppe Mazzariol e l'idea di Venezia*, Milan, Silvana Editoriale, 2014, p. 3 (translation by the author).

⁸⁰ FRANZO, S., Mazzariol, la Biennale e le istituzioni veneziane, in Busetto, G., *Etica, creatività, città. Giuseppe Mazzariol e l'idea di Venezia*, Milan, Silvana Editoriale, 2014, p. 120.

intervention that restores an image of Venice as a living place and an open work, re-balancing market trends, triggering new potential, out-of-going from pure logic of conservative restoration and income;

2) The idea that the contemporary city can, through active territorial governance policies, be defined in relation to a larger area, whose central and common element is the lagoon, as a unitary urban space, itinerant city and complex economic state;

3) The idea that cultural institutions, rather than using Venice as a showcase in a private logic, can open up to the local community, listening to the city as a living cultural heritage, connecting with its international network, forming skills and intelligences that understand thoroughly the surrounding environment, acting with the moral awareness that the choices have social and urbanistic repercussions. ”⁸¹

This summary makes it possible to grasp the thinking and ambitions of the director for both the city and these cultural institutions. Art and architecture are used as a tool for the development and socialisation of the city, making the city a living, evolving space and going against a simple market logic. Mazzariol is already in opposition to a possible logic of tourism and profit, of a city seeking only economic profitability while neglecting its vitality. Architecture and cultural intervention, in his opinion, can combat this movement. In the second point, Mazzariol enlarges Venice to the lagoon, then a space composed of several islands that goes beyond the medieval city. And finally, Mazzariol stresses the importance of cultural institutions, which are not just a showcase for the city's commercial logic, but which must first and foremost provide a service to the local population, allowing for the education of a knowledgeable population, aware of its environment and able to make informed moral choices.

This positioning seems extremely modern, and also allows us to understand the objectives of the Querini under his direction, which the institution remains largely imbued with. To propose a cultural institution that enlivens the city, that changes with the times, that listens to its population in order to best respond to its needs, that denies the economic logic of a Venice turned towards profitability and using its cultural heritage in a simple logic of profit, in order to instead use its culture by placing it at the service of knowledge, the community, the public... All these elements seem to be fundamental to

⁸¹ PES, L., Mazzariol, uomo politico, in Busetto, G., *Etica, creatività, città. Giuseppe Mazzariol e l'idea di Venezia*, Milan, Silvana Editoriale, 2014, p. 24 (translation by the author).

understanding the Querini today, and also testify to the importance that Mazzariol had for the city.

Finally, Mazzariol is distinguished by his involvement in teaching. He taught at the IUAV, the Università Internzaiole dell'Arte, the Istituto Statale d'Arte di Venezia, the Ca'Foscari University⁸². This professorship bears witness to his commitment to the education of young people, specifically in the fields of architecture and art history. Defending a participative, open and innovative teaching, he proposed to his students to exchange freely, to circulate ideas on different themes, at the origin of a place where creativity was master. As an integral part of his courses, he also offered students the opportunity to meet contemporary artists who presented their work.

The QSF's close links with the city's ruling class gave it a strong social influence. However, this aspect may have sometimes penalized the democratic ambition of the QSF. It is worth noting that despite the will of its legatee, the QSF remained for a long time a place reserved for the city's elite, especially when the Foundation was under the direction of Manlio Dazzi (director of the Foundation from 1926 to 1957). Giorgio Busetto describes this period as follows: *"even the plebeian could enter provided he behaved as a patrician, with that education of manners and correctness of movements that was a guarantee of the preservation of property for the use of all"*⁸³. However, this elitism was challenged with the arrival of Giuseppe Mazzariol, when he opened the place to all, to the *"patrizi e plebei"* (patricians and plebeians).

2. 3. 2. Institutions attracting a certain population to Venice

These two Foundations, through the services they offered, helped to attract creative people to the city.

By offering a residence to young creators, defining what the art of the 20th century would be, the BLMF played a role during this century in the power of attraction that it had. Indeed, such a Foundation attracted a creative, innovative and young population to

⁸² BIANCHI, G., Mazzariol e la didattica, in Busetto, G., *Etica, creatività, città. Giuseppe Mazzariol e l'idea di Venezia*, Milan, Silvana Editoriale, 2014, p. 24 (translation by the author).

⁸³ Busetto, G., Carlo Scarpa alla Querini Stampalia: ieri, oggi, domani, in MAZZA, M., *Carlo Scarpa alla Querini Stampalia*, Venice, il Cardo, 1996, p. 11.

the city, and thus contributed to the vitality of Venice. Tizianna Agostini sums up this role perfectly:

“A century of activity has highlighted the commitment of those who have led it, making it immediately become the great force for proposing new art in the city. Palazzo Pesaro offered talented young people, who would go on to make their mark on twentieth-century art, those opportunities that the great Venice Biennale did not provide, creating a fruitful antagonism between institutions, which benefited the entire city, which became a place of artistic attraction and innovative creativity”⁸⁴.

The municipality of Venice has benefited greatly from these institutions, whether it be the BLMF or the Biennale, which throughout the previous century allowed Venice to participate in the artistic creation of tomorrow.

In sum, the attraction that the BLMF is capable of is mainly due to its unique specificity, a uniqueness that is still largely in force today. Indeed, the BLMF is a Foundation that does not exist anywhere else in Italy. Indeed, the BLMF is the only public institution to offer 15 residencies to young artists throughout Italy. Angela Vettese, President of the Foundation between 2002 and 2014, has repeatedly stressed its exceptionality in terms of the number of residencies for emerging artists and the quality of the support it provides to its professionals. Because of this exceptional character, the Foundation undoubtedly attracts a certain population to Venice, even today. Angela Vettese says: *“The BLMF might seem lost in the swarm of the great Venetian museums. But for once, it should not feel like a Cinderella: there are no other institutions of this kind in Italy that can boast such a long life and such a lively vitality”⁸⁵.*

Concerning the Querini⁸⁶, the QSF attracted many visitors to Venice, not least because of its collections. Historically, the Querini was first visited and extremely well known beyond Venice for its scientific speciality, the origin of which can be found in the tastes of its founder. The Querini's collections on scientific subjects were studied by a sometimes foreign audience. The collections were therefore part of the reason for the fame of the Querini, which also had bibliographic collections in foreign languages. Travellers would start their visit to Venice at the Biblioteca Marciana and then come to consult the Querini's collections. At the same time, the Querini was also a place that

⁸⁴ AGOSTINI, T., *cit.*, p. 89 (translation by the author).

⁸⁵ *Archivio dell'Istituzione Bevilacqua La Masa Inventario 1899-1990, cit.*, p. 5 (translation by the author).

⁸⁶ Explained in the interview conducted with an employee of the QSF library.

welcomed a large non-specialist audience, due to its uniqueness in the city. Indeed, the large universities did not yet exist, so there were not yet the university libraries that today dot the city.

Once the university libraries developed, the Querini remained a point of reference in the city, especially for the ruling class. The Querini continued to offer a broad collection and a place to gather.

It is also interesting to note that the QSF still attracts a specialised and passionate public today, perhaps less for its collections, but rather for the architectural heritage it has built up over the last century. Many architecture enthusiasts come to the Querini especially to see the work of Carlo Scarpa and others. For example, Brad Pitt came to the Querini, an unmissable stop for a former architecture student.

In short, these two Foundations have contributed to the attraction of Venice and have helped to bring in a passionate and knowledgeable population, eager for the knowledge and opportunities offered by the QSF and the BLMF.

2. 3. 3. The contribution of cultural heritage to the city

Through its policy of purchasing cultural works of art, the BLMF has made an undeniable contribution to the city's cultural heritage and today it is able to present a rich and high-quality collection in Palazzo Ca'Pesaro. Even today, through the purchase of works of art and the prizes awarded to the artists exhibited or in residence at the BLMF, the Foundation enriches the city's heritage. It acquires the works of young emerging artists and promoters through purchase prizes but also through donations from exhibited artists or artists in residence.⁸⁷ These works thus become part of the city's public collections and are subject to a strict conservation policy implemented by the Foundation.

The BLMF has made it possible to bring to the city of Venice the presence of young artists in the process of creation and has thus made it possible to have the latest contemporary creations exhibited on its soil. The BLMF made it possible to *"bring together different artists who represented the best that was happening on the artistic scene at the time, together with an ever-increasing number of those very promising young people who were growing up and forming around Barbantini"*⁸⁸, and thus to offer Venice the

⁸⁷ COLETTI, S., *cit.*

⁸⁸ BARBERO, M., *cit.*, p. iii (translation by the author).

presence of these remarkable artists. In this sense, the BLMF appears as a point of reference for the creation of the Veneto region in terms of artistic creation. The Foundation has seen the work of artists of great importance, to name but a few: Ugo Valeri, Umberto Maggioli, and Arturo Martini.

Much more than a purchase of works of art, the BLMF took the place of the public state power by the services it offered. Indeed, by giving a room to artists, the Foundation was investing in their creation, and thus considered cultural investment essential. The Municipality of Venice, which only offered such opportunities to future artists, preferred to invest in the cultural heritage it already possessed, rather than rely on its local youth. The BLMF brought culture to the city, and "*it is up to the city and the ruling class to think of the cultural dimension as a strategic asset of the present*"⁸⁹.

However, some voices question the importance of the acquisitions that the Foundation, and through it the city, has made. Angela Vettese, on the other hand, emphasises the small number of works finally purchased, and she believes that if only three works of art had been acquired each year, Venice would have the largest collection of modern art in the world.⁹⁰ In support of this argument, it is interesting to note that Maurizio Cattelan, a world-renowned contemporary artist, is from Padua and could and should have come through the BLMF but did not.

The Foundation therefore not only has a function of attracting a creative population, but by hosting artists who live and work in Venice, it is already investing in the future enrichment of Venice's cultural heritage. This investment in the young contemporary artists of tomorrow allows it to identify the young talents of tomorrow and to ensure a strong link with them. Through the Foundation, Venice no longer relies solely on its already existing and internationally recognised cultural heritage but reflects on and builds its heritage of tomorrow.

2. 4. Today, between the declared will to support youth and the city, and the sometimes less committed reality

⁸⁹ AGOSTINI, T., *cit.*, p. 89 (translation by the author).

⁹⁰ VETTESE, A., *cit.*, p. 25.

Although the importance of youth for each of the Foundations is stressed through different communication channels and obviously contains some truth, this essential character could be questioned. In the same way, both Foundations claim to be fundamentally rooted in the Venetian territory, and this aspect can be felt but seems to be nuanced.

2. 4. 1. The profile of the artists exhibited in each Foundation

Both the BLMF and the QSF have a predominantly young audience, either studying or just leaving school.

The majority of the BLMF's residents are young artists who have just graduated from art schools around the world and who know the BLMF's studios through their previous training. These young artists must live in Venice in order to apply and to comply with the guidelines, so they cannot follow the BLMF programme at a distance. The BLMF prides itself on having followed the will of its legatee and on having mainly exhibited young artists within its walls. Angela Vettese, President of the Foundation between 2002 and 2014, has carried out extensive work on the Foundation's archives. These archives now include all the documents related to the BLMF, catalogues, photos and historical documents, which are now sorted and accessible to all. These archives are an immense treasure trove for seeing the work that the Foundation has done since its creation, as Angela Vettese points out:

“There is no better material to demonstrate how Bevilacqua La Masa is continuing today to fulfil the task it set itself over a hundred years ago. Now, as then, it is mainly young people who exhibit. It is nice to glance at the names of the artists, many of whom have disappeared into thin air and others who have gone down in history, who have participated in the group exhibitions, from Emilio Vedova to Tancredi.”⁹¹

The majority of the BLMF's exhibitors are therefore emerging artists, who have sometimes succeeded in gaining artistic fame and are now part of the history of art. As she points out, not all the artists exhibited have been Venetian or Italian, the Foundation's

⁹¹ *Archivio dell'Istituzione Bevilacqua La Masa Inventario 1899-1990, cit.*, p. 5 (translation by the author).

artistic residencies are open to all nationalities, and the exhibitions have also included the work of foreigners.

Regarding the QSF, I will mainly focus on the *Conservare il Futuro* programme through which many international contemporary artists have exhibited at the Foundation. Within this framework, the programme *Conservare il Futuro*⁹² is a contemporary art programme established in 1997 and still running today. This programme, curated by Chiara Bertola, has allowed international artists to propose a work created in relation to the QSF's collection and to be inserted into the exhibition space. With this project, the Foundation wanted to take the Querini family's collections, which by their very nature are related to the past, and link them to the present and the future, using them as a basis for the creation of contemporary works. Most of the works are conceptual, involving artists with an established international reputation, such as Mona Hatoum or Kiki Smith. This programme does not seek to reflect on the future of the Foundation or of Venice in general.

An analysis of the age of all the artists exhibited during this programme shows that the QSF does not offer an exhibition policy in favour of creative youth. Indeed, the youngest artist exhibited was Haris Epamoninda⁹³ who exhibited at the age of 34. The average age of the artists presented to the Foundation through this programme is almost 54.

In sum, the BLMF fulfils the requirements of its founder by exhibiting mainly young artists. The QSF, on the other hand, exhibits contemporary artists with no age restrictions, which perhaps makes more sense because this ambition is not in the will it is to follow.

2. 4. 2. What is the audience of the Querini Stampalia Foundation?

- *In terms of numbers, young people are in the majority at the Querini Stampalia Foundation*

⁹² BERTOLA, C., SAVARIS, M., *Conservare il futuro : l'arte contemporanea alla Fondazione Querini Stampalia*, Venice, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, 2015.

⁹³ BERTOLA, C., SAVARIS, M., *cit.*

Although the contemporary artistic programming of the QSF does not reflect a youth-oriented policy, it should be emphasised that the main entity of the Foundation remains the library. In terms of audience, reputation, resources attracted to this part of the Foundation, but also in terms of the income received through the subsidies correlated to its opening. In this context, the main population of the library is young people between 19 and 28 years old, mostly students at Venetian universities⁹⁴. It is therefore possible to say that the main audience of the all QSF remains this young student population.

The QSF also seeks to promote youth access to its exhibitions through various programmes. One such programme is the Amici Young⁹⁵ which offers a membership card system to young people under 30. This €20 card is valid for 12 months and offers various advantages to its holder: exceptional meetings, guided tours, free entry to all exhibitions, discounts on the Querini's shops and services, etc. This card is proof of the Querini's interest in Venetian youth and its attempt to invest more in this population, which is above all a user of its library. This programme was not a great success, considering the number of subscribers to this membership. However, today registration in the library gives the right to a voucher that allows to visit the museum spaces of the Foundation, a voucher that works much better and allows to bring these young library users to visit the museum.

Although the QSF communicates in favour of a place open to all, and especially to students and researchers of the city, the QSF also seeks to attract a tourist population. This type of population is indeed essential to ensure its economic sustainability and therefore its survival. These links are translated into practice by various partnerships. For example, the Foundation is in contact with the Starwood Hotels Venice Area, to ensure the promotion and communication of the Foundation to the clients of these hotels.

However, the QSF officially adopts the following objective, which seems to be verified in practice: *“learning through enjoyable didactic activities that have an effect on behavior and competence and reach as wide a public as possible.”*⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Data given during an interview conducted with an employee of the QSF library.

⁹⁵ FONDAZIONE QUERINI STAMPALIA, *Attività Amici Young*, [online], https://www.querinistampalia.org/ita/sostienici/amici_della_querini_stampalia/attiv/attivit_amici_young.ph, web page last accessed on 03/05/2022.

⁹⁶ *Bilancio di missione 2015*, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 2016.

- *In fact, the young public of the library is not very involved*

Looking at its cultural offer centred around youth, the QSF mainly offers activities to a very young and underage population, i.e. school groups, college or high school, but offers very few activities for young people over 18. Indeed, educational has become an essential part of the QSF's cultural policy over the last ten years. The educational programme is aimed at young people from primary to high school and offers educational tours and visits on various themes based on the collections of the site. For example, the Querini has worked with students from Venetian high schools, the Polytechnic of Milan and Trento-Venezia, through the "*alternanza scuola lavoro*" or PCTO programme, with young migrants, with autistic Chinese... According to the employees of the QSF, the public was receptive to these activities, and showed curiosity about the museum and the services it offers is very much present.

However, the 19-28 year olds who are in the majority at the Querini library are not part of the target audience in terms of the institution's programming and cultural policy. This population seems to be the most complex to involve, as QSF employees point out⁹⁷. However, the young users now simply use the library because of its atmosphere, its welcoming character, but they do not take part in its activities, do not participate in the place. In fact, the Querini does not offer any activities aimed at the age group that uses the QSF library. The QSF library could be compared to the British Library, which some QSF employees had the opportunity to visit. The British Library has succeeded in opening up to the city and involving the public that visits the library with activities and themes that correspond to the audience that visits the library. For example, they have organised an exhibition on Harry Potter, which is a real opportunity to bring people together. Through this exhibition, the British Library has really embodied its social role in the city, and more broadly promoted reading to a young population.

In short, young people are present and involved because of their use of the library, but they seem to not participate in the life and activities proposed by the QSF.

⁹⁷ Interviews conducted with QSF employees.

2. 4. 3. A cultural programme rooted in the Venetian context

Studying or creating in Venice is not usual. Each of these institutions, in order to integrate into the logic of the city, also exploit its context and its particularities.

- *The city as a muse*

Although the residency offered by the BLMF is temporary, it seems that during this year of work with the Foundation, the emerging artists have created a strong link with the city, which allows them to remain professionally connected to Venice.

In their creative process, some artists use the city, whether in terms of architecture or materials used, are inspired by it and create from and with it. Working with glass, for example, seems obvious and an opportunity to feed the creation but also to take advantage of what the city has to offer. The *Progetto vetro* proposed by Enzo di Martino in 1976 at the BLMF follows this approach and allowed young Venetian artists to understand and work on the specificities of the city⁹⁸. Another more recent example is the exhibition *Sostanza d'acqua. I canali della Serenissima*, presented in 2018 at Palazzetto Tito. Seven artists from the Foundation proposed their creations on the theme of water, a central element in Venice, and were therefore inspired by this material in their creations. In short, the work of the residents allows the city and its materials to be valued, to use the city to propose a new artistic creation based on what the city has to offer.

From a historical point of view, and still today, the programming of the Querini includes reflection on Venice, and an exhibition that is perhaps the best example of this anchoring of the QSF in the city and in the historical reflection on the city is the exhibition *Il Veneto e l'Austria* of 1989⁹⁹. This exhibition, curated by Mazzariol, aims to explain the links between Venice, the Veneto and the wider region of Austria. Looking back at the historical links between these regions, Mazzariol seeks to understand the identity of the city formed in a specific geographical context.

⁹⁸ DI MARTINO, E., *cit.*, p. 31.

⁹⁹ MANZELLE, M., Sulla forma della città. Da De'Barbari a Le Corbusier, in Busetto, G., *Etica, creatività, città. Giuseppe Mazzariol e l'idea di Venezia*, Milan, Silvana Editoriale, 2014, p. 24.

- *In dialogue with the city's inhabitants*

Far from being isolated from the city's inhabitants, both the QSF and the BLMF seek to involve the local population in their various projects.

For example, in 2020, the BLMF set up a new programme, the *In-Edita* programme, which aims to create a dialogue between artists in the creative process and the inhabitants or visitors of Venice. For two months, artists in residence at Port Marghera developed their projects in workshops that remained open to the public. This initiative allowed visitors to witness and be part of the creative process, bringing contemporary art closer to its audience. At the same time, the artists were stimulated by various events, conferences and exchanges during these two months. Marina Bastianello, curator of the programme, says:

*"A dialogue is established between the works exhibited that has an energetic rather than conceptual value, capable of revealing the same synergies that are established during the months when In-Edita comes to life, a dialogue between individual artists and the city and between the artists themselves. In-Edita is therefore unique in the Venetian territory, destined to grow in importance and territorial involvement."*¹⁰⁰

This work concludes with an exhibition of the works in the Sala Camino on the Isola della Guidecca, a location that demonstrates a desire to enlarge the city of Venice, and to take the city as a whole. The Guidecca, with its particular isolation (accessible only by *vaporetto*) and its character still preserved from the tourist effervescence that characterises the main island of Venice, is a significant choice. This desire to widen the cultural prism of the city, to open up to simple passers-by and tourists, while trying to direct its offer and its cultural experiences to the inhabitants (residence in Marghera, exhibition at the Guidecca), testifies to this desire to go beyond tourist Venice to propose a cultural offer for all, feeding the debate and the collective creativity of the municipality: *"The In-Edita project is characterised as an important space of experimentation for the city of Venice and beyond, a point of reference for all artists looking for a place to conduct their research in complete freedom"*¹⁰¹.

¹⁰⁰ COMUNE DI VENEZIA, IN-EDITA2. Esposizione finale, [online], in *Città di Venezia*, 18 January 2022, <https://www.comune.venezia.it/content/edita2-esposizione-finale>, web page last accessed on 27/04/2022.

¹⁰¹ COMUNE DI VENEZIA, IN-EDITA2. Esposizione finale, *cit.*

- *A gateway to the international art market in Venice*

What happens to the artists after their residency at the BLMF? Some artists succeed in entering the art market and thus acquire a certain notoriety. Beyond this success, the artists continue to maintain links with the city's fundamental cultural institutions, be it the Biennale or the Venetian universities.

First of all, as far as the Venice Biennale of Contemporary Art is concerned, BLMF artists are often invited to exhibit at this important event for the contemporary art world. This is for example the case of Chiara Enzo¹⁰², presents this year (2022) at the Biennale. Born in Venice in 1989, she graduated from the city's Academy of Fine Arts in 2018. She was in residence at BLMF between 2017 and 2018 and won various awards before and after her residency. Her work is mainly oriented around the body, and she works via different mediums, including photography. In 2022, Chiara Enzo is present at the Central Pavilion of the Biennale.

Diego Marcon¹⁰³, resident at the BLMF in 2010, is also participating in this year's Biennale at the Arsenale. Born in Italy in 1985, he studied cinema in Milan and then joined the Visual Arts course at the IUAV in Venice. He is now internationally known, and exhibits all over the world, although he is based in Milan. However, he has maintained links with Venice, as evidenced by another exhibition he has made at the V-A-C Foundation in Venice in 2019.

Giorgio Andreotta Calò¹⁰⁴, born in Venice in 1979, also a graduate of the Venice Academy of Fine Arts, joined the Foundation in 2007. He was exhibited at the Biennale in 2017 in the Italian Pavilion. He proposes large-scale installations; in 2017 he worked on the Arsenale and its reflection in the water. He is now considered one of the most important contemporary artists in Italy.

These few examples show that the artists who have taken up residencies at the BLMF have also managed to be presented at the Venice Biennale, and thus to enter the art market without losing the link with the city. It should also be stressed that their

¹⁰² CHIARA ENZO, [online], 2022, <https://www.chiaraenzo.it/>, web page last accessed on 01/06/2022.

¹⁰³ DIEGO MARCON, [online], 2022, <http://www.diegomarcon.net/>, web page last accessed on 01/06/2022.

¹⁰⁴ WIKIPEDIA, Giorgio Andreotta, [online], 2022, https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giorgio_Andreotta_Cal%C3%B2, web page last accessed on 01/06/2022.

exposure in this internationally recognised event is also important for the BLMF. It shows that the choice of artists made by the Foundation is of good quality, and by gaining notoriety through the Biennale, the artists also gain notoriety for the Foundation.

The artists do not only maintain links with the Biennale but are also present in other cultural institutions of the city, including its universities. This is the case of Diego Tonus¹⁰⁵, born in 1984 in Italy. He works with different media and is particularly interested in the process of archiving. Formerly a student in the Visual Art department of the IUAV, he is now a professor in the same department. A process that allows us to highlight a cycle: benefiting from training in Venice, then discovering other cities and cultural institutions, he testifies that it is common to return to Venice, to bring to the future generation the knowledge accumulated. He was part of the 2006 graduating class of the BLMF, and has returned to exhibit there on several occasions, in 2007, 2008, 2012... It should also be pointed out that the Visual Art department of the IUAV has a special relationship with its students: often reminded to return to teach future generations of emerging artists, the department aims to remind more established artists to come and pass on their knowledge to the current students.

Through the Biennale and the universities, the former residents of the BLMF thus remain linked to Venice, and in turn help to train the next generation of artists who will pass through its *calle*.

- *Links created with Venetian companies*

The links between Venice and the BLMF are visible through the partnerships built with local businesses. In addition to contributing to the economic vitality of the city, these partnerships provide a professional outlet for the Foundation's resident artists.

Indeed, the BLMF organises numerous exchanges with the city's professionals such as specialised craftsmen, private companies, associations... This allows the residents to work with the city, with the different professions in the city. There are even events and partnerships organised to make these exchanges concrete, for example with Illy. In 2013,

¹⁰⁵ DIEGO TONUS, [online], 2022, <http://diegotonus.com/biography/group-exhibitions/>, web page last accessed on 01/06/2022.

through the illy sustainArt project¹⁰⁶ which aims to support the development of artists in emerging countries, the BLMF made three of its studios available to host artists participating in this project. In addition to maintaining links with the Italian private company, this exchange has enabled the young artists already in residence at the BLMF to exchange and learn from other artists who arrived in the studio as a result of this partnership.

Another extremely emblematic partnership is that with the company Barbari Specchi Veneziani. This company, founded in 1922 by Nicolò Barbini, is the oldest company in Murano still in operation, producing mirrors and working with the city's glass in a style that is both ancient and contemporary. As part of this collaboration, the company has joined forces with the BLMF in 2019 to present the *Materia Eterea* exhibition at Palazzetto Tito¹⁰⁷. Within this framework, through a creative process that involved the actors of two collaborators, the residents of the BLMF proposed creations on the theme of the mirror, using both their own contribution and singularity, and the know-how of this house of excellence in Venice. This partnership is a good example of the links between the Foundations, the city and the companies operating today and shows that Venice remains an inexhaustible and important field of creativity and inspiration in the training of the artist.

- *A balance to be found between local and international*

It is important to underline the ambiguity and the necessary balance that the BLMF tries to find between a cultural policy mainly turned towards the local, and a national or even international opening necessary to the quality and the development of the Foundation.

Indeed, the BLMF seeks to support local creation through various means. However, there are various risks in restricting oneself to the Venetian territory¹⁰⁸. The main risk is to create a kind of microcosm, made up of acquaintances who gravitate towards the BLMF, who exchange information about the Foundation, and who occupy the

¹⁰⁶ ILLY, [online], 2022, <https://www.illy.com/en-us/company/store-events/press/press-releases/pr-illy-sustainart-bevilacqua>, web page last accessed on 01/06/2022.

¹⁰⁷ *Materia Eterea*, [Press file], Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, September 2019.

¹⁰⁸ Pointed out by a BLMF employee.

Foundation's studios. In such a way that the Foundation's beneficiaries are enclosed in a restricted circle of people who know each other in one way or another. It is therefore important, especially when selecting the artists who will occupy the Foundation's residencies, to ensure that the local aspect is taken into account but does not override the importance of the quality of the artists' work. To counteract this risk, Angela Vettese, during her years as president, has really tried to open the Foundation to the international scene. Both in the choice of artists in residence at the Foundation, but also in the exhibitions that the Foundation presented. The balance between local and international was perhaps not respected at that time in favour of the international, but the Foundation chose to prioritise openness and the quality of the artists rather than support for the local territory. The link with the local area cannot be lost, especially as the Foundation is a public foundation and must therefore benefit its local population. However, to ensure its standing but also its national and international reputation, an opening is necessary.

In short, these Foundations use the city and are part of it. They seek to take advantage of its cultural wealth and professional opportunities. Through these collaborations and creations, a certain added value is brought to the city, and helps to justify the importance of the two Foundations studied for Venice.

This chapter has demonstrated the ins and outs of the social role of these Foundations, a role that has been given to them since their creation. With a real aim of supporting a young population in difficulty, the Foundations took on the task of helping this population. They have also left their mark on the city, and built their reputation, notably through the presence of eminent personalities within their walls. Moreover, these Foundations are mainly focused on youth, although their cultural policy can reach a wider target. The institutions also benefit from the city, and are inspired by it, and use these different elements to develop their own projects.

All in all, this chapter has demonstrated the social role that each of these Foundations has played since their creation and up to the present day. However, this importance and support for youth and the city can be questioned in various ways, and these questions will be developed in more detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: TODAY, SOME CHALLENGES FACED BY BOTH FOUNDATIONS

These Foundations have been fundamental to the city since their origins. Today, they maintain their key role, although they must respond to a number of challenges. These challenges are diverse: they are based on financial, managerial or clear definition of the overall vision of the institution. It makes it sometimes difficult for both institutions to fulfil their mission and social responsibility, particularly towards young people. In addition, these challenges are closely linked to the context of the city, which seems to prioritise tourism-related industries.

3. 1. Institutions facing several challenges

First of all, these institutions are experiencing difficulties that are rather external to their organisation. While public support has been reduced, both economic fragility and competition from other institutions are challenging their proper functioning.

3. 1. 1. A decrease in support from the Venetian public authority

Cultural foundations have a primary responsibility and social utility recognised by the public authorities. The government, by funding these institutions through public subsidies, recognises their importance. This financial support is in recognition of the social utility of the institutions and the service they offer to the population. However, it seems that the Venetian municipality has reduced its support to cultural institutions which are not directly related to tourism. This movement is particularly visible through budget cuts.

This lack of support from the public authorities is visible in the episode of questioning of the BLMF existence that took place in 2016. Indeed, the Venetian Municipality considered closing the Foundation, questioning its contribution to society. Many Venetians and Foundation actors have fought to justify the existence of the BLMF. The debate and involvement was really strong, as shown by the Facebook group *Venezia*

*c'è*¹⁰⁹, which documents the crisis of 2016 that the Foundation experienced. Numerous articles appeared in the newspapers tracing the conflicts and negotiations that took place between the Municipality and the BLMF. Young people seemed to have a special place in the defence of the Foundation, particularly present at defence events, or on the online petition for the Foundation. Elisa Strinna, for example, said in the middle of the debate:

*"The closure of the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation is a symptom of a further step towards a cultural darkness that is now spreading in Italy. Without realising it, many foundations and non-profit organisations are closing down, and the opportunities for all those working in the cultural field are shrinking considerably. It is becoming increasingly difficult for those who do not have adequate means to carry out research, but not only that, dialogue is slowly being cancelled out, exchange is being reduced, under a myopic totalitarian propaganda that reduces the value of everything to "profit", without the awareness that the human soul cannot be nourished exclusively by money and that creativity is an unquantifiable resource. I believe that this is a very, very serious sign, that the present times do not augur well, unless people start working seriously to express their disagreement. There is still hope."*¹¹⁰

The Municipality finally decided in 2016 to save the BLMF but to make major organisational changes to it. The Foundation lost a certain part of its independence. In addition to reducing the number of members of the Board of Administration to three, the members of the Board are now appointed by the City Council. The municipality allocates €400,000 to the Foundation and wishes to have control over the Foundation's expenditure and budget¹¹¹. In 2016, therefore, the Mayor of Venice appointed Bruno Bernardi as director of the Foundation.

This episode in 2016 and this restructuring of the BLMF highlights the diversity of objectives that can exist between the population, cultural organisations and the Municipality. The Venetian public authority seems to prioritise its policies towards

¹⁰⁹ *Venezia c'è*, [Facebook page], <https://www.facebook.com/Venezia-c%27A8-1023488584365951>, web page last accessed on 03/05/2022.

¹¹⁰ TESTINO, A., Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa. Parola agli artisti, in *Artribune* [online], 22 July 2016, <https://www.artribune.com/attualita/2016/07/fondazione-bevilacqua-la-masa-veneziana-artisti/>, web page last accessed on 09/06/2022.

¹¹¹ Busetto, G., Bevilacqua La Masa, ora servono nomine di spessore, in *La Nuova Venezia*, 1 August 2016.

tourism-oriented companies, which can penalise organisations with a different social role.

3. 1. 2. Economic difficulties: financial fragility of the Querini Stampalia Foundation

Another difficulty closely linked to the position of the Venetian municipality is the financial difficulty. Indeed, both the BLMF and the QSF seem to be financially fragile. It was accentuated after the financial crisis of 2008 and resulted in a reduction of public subsidies for each of them, which led to important restructuring and strategic redefinition.

As far as the QSF is concerned, one of its financial resources is the public grant. Because of its status as an ONLUS (*Organizzazione Non Lucrativa di Utilità Sociale*, i.e., Non-Profit Organisation of Social Utility), the Foundation receives important public subsidies and tax breaks every year. Between 2014 and 2019 (without taking into account the year 2020 which was special due to the covid), the amount of contributions represented a total of about 20% of the Foundation's total income. For example, in 2016, public contributions amounted to €667,000 (22% of the total budget)¹¹², 425,000 in 2019 (i.e. 20% of the total budget)¹¹³. These amounts are still important but have been reduced compared to the contributions before the financial crisis.

Another important resource is the income from ticket sales to visit the museum. However, as the QSF points out in its latest report¹¹⁴, the year 2020 has been particularly hard financially due to the pandemic. Acknowledging its dependence on tourism, which is estimated to have decreased by 60% compared to previous years, the QSF has yet to see the impact that this crisis has had on its economic sustainability. This impact has obviously called into question the Foundation's dependence on tourism, which has not yet returned to its pre-crisis level. This upheaval also highlights that the Foundation cannot rely on the local Venetian population to balance its economic balance. The Italian Ministry of Culture compensated in part for these economic losses. The Foundation received €114,000 to compensate for its losses.

¹¹² *Bilancio di missione 2016, cit.*, p. 77.

¹¹³ *Bilancio di missione 2019, cit.*, p. 102.

¹¹⁴ *Bilancio di missione 2020, cit.*, p. 85.

However, this economic fragility is not only due to the latest crises and is part of a longer trend. The QSF has struggled since its inception to achieve a balanced budget. As analysed in the second chapter, it has for example had to give up satisfying the wishes of its legatee by stopping the distribution of scholarships for the city's students.

Balancing the budget seems to be one of Querini's objectives, as evidenced by its various annual reports. However, some of its former directors point out that this search for balance could be penalising for the QSF¹¹⁵. The budget should indeed be an instrument, a decision-making tool, but it should also take into account the owned assets of the Querini, and even look at the cultural heritage of the institution, although this data is difficult to quantify. This broader consideration could allow the QSF to carry out more ambitious projects.

In short, the QSF is currently not financially stable. This economic fragility seems to penalise the Foundation, which seems to have difficulties in envisaging other objectives.

3. 1. 3. The Querini Stampalia Foundation faces competition from university libraries

In addition to financial difficulties, the QSF faces pressure from the rise of other Venetian institutions offering similar services to what it provides.

- *The omnipresence of university libraries in Venice*

Although the QSF library is highly valued by Venetian youth, it is facing increasing competition from other similar institutions in Venice. Indeed, over the last thirty years, universities have greatly expanded in the city, and with them have come libraries for their students. Ca'Foscari University in particular has a very important library network in Venice, called *Sistema Bibliotecario di Ateneo* (SBA). This network is much more important than the QSF in quantitative terms. While the Querini has only 170 workstations in its library, this network has a total of 1,272 seats. This network has 5 main libraries: BALI (Library Linguistic Area), BAS (Library Scientific Area), BAUM (library Humanistic Area), BEC (Library Economic Area) and CFZ (Cultural Flow Zone

¹¹⁵ Interview with one of the former leaders of the QSF.

Zattere). They have a collection of 1,004,206 documents¹¹⁶ (monographs or periodicals), although its historical holdings are much smaller than those of the QSF: 88,631 items compared to over 350,000 volumes for the Querini. These libraries also compete in terms of opening hours, including evenings and weekends (e.g. the CFZ closes at midnight every day except Saturday).

In terms of the QSF's bibliographic collection, the Querini also faces competition from the Venetian university libraries, which today have a very important acquisition power. Originally, the Querini's holdings were more of a scientific nature, but over time a more generalist acquisition policy has been established¹¹⁷. The university libraries have each specialised in a theme, and recently they have also adopted a policy of acquiring digital resources (online books, electronic databases, etc.). This transformation obviously responds to the changing needs of students, who have been working mainly with digital documents for the past ten years. Since the pandemic, many teaching support documents are digital and sent directly by the teaching staff. The majority of studies are therefore done via computer, so the physical collections of the QSF are much less used. Indeed, the Querini library, despite its rich collections, is mainly used as a reading room¹¹⁸.

Furthermore, the main functions of the QSF library do not seem to have changed much for about 50 years. The library offers the same services, having modified the form in which it offers them, but has not changed its missions or offerings in all these years.

Although these libraries are becoming more and more important, this competition between the QSF and university libraries could be considered in different ways¹¹⁹. Indeed, the universities provide a very high-quality library offer in the city, but the QSF also contributes to these universities. The QSF provides a significant service to the city's universities by offering a working space to its students. However, the universities do not offer any kind of compensation to the Querini. Universities could for example give access to the information resource of what universities are doing, which is not the case today. The university could agree to build exchanges in terms of service to the Querini, as the Querini provides a service to the universities.

¹¹⁶ SBA. Sistema Bibliotecario di Ateneo. Organizzazione, *Università Ca'Foscari Venezia*, [online], 9 June 2021, <https://www.unive.it/pag/10392/>, web page last accessed on 09/06/2022.

¹¹⁷ Explained in the interview conducted with an employee of the QSF library.

¹¹⁸ Result of the Querini audience study made by a consultant for the QSF.

¹¹⁹ Solution considered during an interview by a professional who has worked both at the QSF and in the city library organisation.

- *How can the Querini Stampalia Foundation distinguish itself from university libraries?*

Therefore, the QSF library seeks to position itself within this qualitatively and quantitatively important library network.

In this sense, the QSF is carrying out various studies to understand and quantify the current Venetian offer¹²⁰. In order to do this, the Querini team is holding various meetings with the heads of the city's libraries (Ca'Foscari University, IUAV), publishers, and local booksellers, in order to gather information on the existing offer in the city, and to try to define how the Querini can position itself within this panorama.

In parallel to this analysis, some differentiation options are already being put forward by the Querini staff. A first possibility could concern the bibliographic collections of the Querini¹²¹. The current acquisition policy remains a rather generalist one, trying to support all the studies of the library's users. The budget for book acquisitions is €50,000, an amount that has decreased significantly in recent years. This reduction of the budget makes it more difficult to have the bibliographic coverage that the Querini would like to have. However, the acquisition policy of the library could be exhaustive on the themes that are closely or distantly related to the place in which it is located. More specifically, the library could have an extremely substantial collection on the Querini family, on the Foundation's collections, on the architects who intervened on the site, on the context in which they intervened... In the same way, the Querini could potentially have a unique contribution and legitimacy concerning the history of Venice. Venice has passed through these walls in many ways: through the Querini family who lived in this house for over 1000 years and witnessed all the changes the city went through, through the policies carried out by the Foundation's leaders, through the place it still occupies today. This policy would make the bibliographic collections consistent with the place, and would be a way of distinguishing itself from the bibliographic offer of the city's university libraries.

Another element of distinction that lies in the original statement of the Foundation is to see the QSF first and foremost as a place. Its physical and material aspect is at the heart of its uniqueness for users and employees of the QSF. The Querini is and will remain

¹²⁰ Focused group conducted within the QSF on the theme of the QSF library and involving different actors invested in the institution (May 2022).

¹²¹ Explained in the interview conducted with an employee of the QSF library.

a reference point in terms of place, of space. Although university libraries can offer a quality service and experience, especially when one recognises the progress that has been made over the last twenty years in terms of bibliographic coverage and the skills of the librarians, the Querini is distinguished by the exceptionality of its location. Indeed, the Querini is more than just a library, it is a history, an experience, which can be felt through its architecture, its collections, its sounds, its smells. When studying at the Querini, the user is exposed to a series of information, subliminal inputs, curiosities, emotions, notions, elements that he acquires and that nourishes the user in an indirect way. This phenomenon could be called the "experiential moment", a contribution that goes beyond an offer simply in terms of information or services. This aspect could be investigated and developed in order to distinguish itself from other offers present in the city.

In sum, the QSF is facing increasing competition from Venetian university libraries. With this qualitative and quantitative increase, the QSF must seek to reinvent itself and distinguish itself. Some proposals have already been mentioned, even if the reflection seems to be still in progress and has not yet led to concrete changes.

These two Foundations are therefore facing several challenges, whether economic, symbolic or competitive. These difficulties stem from factors external to these institutions and are also accompanied by internal struggles within each of these Foundations.

3. 2. A managerial organisation sometimes irrelevant

Each of these Foundations seems to have some difficulties in managerial terms. Some technical skills seem to be lacking. The QSF also seems to have difficulties in renewing its employees, which prevents it from making room for external resources and implementing strong and innovative changes. However, these difficulties seem to be surmountable and are currently being dealt with by the teams in place¹²².

¹²² These managerial challenges were mainly highlighted in interviews conducted with people involved in each of these Foundations.

3. 2. 1. Since 2016, a questioned leadership and management at the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation

Compared to the years before the 2016 restructuring of the BLMF, the Foundation seems to be less linked to the cultural milieu than before. While its directors and employees had a strong link to the contemporary art world, its current leaders seem to be less involved in this field, which could however penalise the artistic legitimacy of the Foundation.

It should be recalled that in 2016 the Foundation was placed under Venetian public authority. However, the Municipality of Venice seems to have reduced its investment in purely cultural terms. As an example, since the election of the new mayor, the mayor is also the *Assessore* (Councillor) for culture of the city. Previously, this position existed, and during the previous mandate it was held by Angela Vettese, former director of the BLMF.

This distance from the artistic sphere is also visible in the current management of the BLMF. The new director was appointed in 2016 by the city council. He has a Master's degree in Economics and Management of Arts and Cultural Activities, yet he seems far from the world of contemporary art. Indeed, its strategic policy for the Foundation seems to be primarily focused on economic profitability rather than artistic legitimacy and cultural development¹²³.

In the past, the Foundation had a real foothold in the contemporary art world. The directors of the BLMF were part of this world, and their profession corresponded to the artistic scene. Looking at the last director of the Foundation before 2016, Angela Vettese, for example, in addition to being a curator, she is also an art historian and a philosopher. She has also participated in international contemporary art fairs such as Frieze or written in various specialized journals. Luca Massimo Barbero, director of the Foundation between 1998 and 2001, is also intrinsically linked to the art world, having graduated from Ca'Foscari as an art critic and having worked for various galleries and the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation, among others.

This knowledge of the contemporary art world seems relevant to be able to manage a Foundation like the Bevilacqua La Masa. Previous experience in the contemporary art world is important, in particular to be able to set up an exhibition and

¹²³ Managerial limitations pointed out in the various interviews conducted.

to know its constraints. This managerial skill could also allow for a better analysis of the Venetian cultural market, in order to know the high-quality institutions that would allow the Foundation to secure important partnerships for its development and cultural legitimacy.

3. 2. 2. The management of the Querini Stampalia Foundation is also open to criticism

The organization of the QSF also seems to be questionable, on the one hand due to a vertical functioning, and on the other hand due to ill-adapted skills.

The QSF is characterised by a vertical organisational structure: a hierarchical system imposes decision-making mainly from the top, thus limiting the independence of less hierarchically important employees. Most of the decisions should be validated by the director, including small ones. This daily verification could slow down the Foundation's decision-making process and may be an explanation for the difficulty in implementing innovative changes. Too much hierarchy can be detrimental to the organisation, as various scientific articles on the subject point out. This is the case of the article by Jan Wynen, Koen Verhoest and Kristin Rübeksen¹²⁴. By analysing different organisational structures, these scientists show that a less hierarchical and decentralised management *"lead to more committed and empowered middle and lower managers and consequently to improved organizational performance"*. The verticality of the QSF organisation can therefore be questioned.

On the other hand, a strong theoretical knowledge in cultural terms seems also indispensable to manage an institution like the Foundation. Indeed, these collections are relatively poor in terms of aesthetics but are extremely rich in terms of documentation and bibliography. Therefore, a theoretical training is necessary in order to know how to use these collections to enhance them and establish a clear cultural project. These theoretical skills seem to be fundamental to have for the QSF teams, and today the Foundation might lack such knowledge.

3. 2. 3. The Querini Stampalia Foundation is struggling to change

¹²⁴ WYNEN, J., VERHOEST, K., RÜBECKSEN, K., DECENTRALIZATION IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS: Do Organizational Autonomy and Result Control Lead to Decentralization Toward Lower Hierarchical Levels?, in *Public Performance & Management Review*, Vol. 37, No. 3, March 2014, p. 496-520.

It seems that the QSF nowadays finds it difficult to accept change and criticism. The staff are extremely competent in running the projects they know and are familiar with. However, they seem to be more reluctant to question their long-established practice and therefore look for modifications and changes that could transform their function and their institution. Querini employees seem to struggle in recognising the dysfunctions within the institution.

This unwillingness to self-critique in order to change is a phenomenon widely studied in economics. In his article, Carl Agócs¹²⁵ summarises the main reasons for inertia in the face of change:

“Individuals are said to resist change because of habit and inertia, fear of the unknown, absence of the skills they will need after the change, and fear of losing power. Organizations are said to resist change because of inertia, sunk cost, scarce resources, threats to the power base of the old dominant coalition, values and beliefs, conformity to norms, inability to perceive alternatives”.

In this article, one of the explanations put forward to understand this resistance to change is denial. This resistance occurs in organisations that refuse to recognise the challenges facing the institution and refuse to see the different elements that are not working well. This denial could be associated with Querini. In exchanging with the Querini employees, he seems at first to have a willingness to justify the actions taken in the past, and the directions taken in the present and for the future.

This inability to be self-critical and this resistance to change is visible in particular when they conducted the 2015 *Strategic Plan*, following the cuts in public financial support. This plan was conducted internally, in a rather defensive way. By turning to a third party, outside the organisation, it might have been easier to highlight the main challenges and reflect on consequent changes for the future. Being able to revisit its choices, to accept some form of questioning of its practices in order to move towards innovation and modernity is important for any organisation.

3. 2. 4. A low turnover in the Querini Stampalia Foundation

The QSF also reports a difficulty in renewing its employees, who have often been within the Foundation for 30 years or so. As people remain in the QSF, it is difficult to free

¹²⁵ AGÓCS, C., Institutionalized Resistance to Organizational Change: Denial, Inaction and Repression, in *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 16, No. 9, Women in Corporate Management, June 1997, p. 917-931.

up positions for new employees, especially younger ones. This lack of turnover makes some changes more difficult to implement. Indeed, employees who have been with the company for some time tend to replicate familiar patterns and ways of working, rather than challenge the way they do things. This low turnover is nevertheless to be qualified: in 2016, thanks to a donation from a friend of the Querini, the Foundation was able to hire a young consultant for several years, after a long period of time without any new people joining the Foundation. Its aim was to help the Foundation to create a movement of change and transformation in the company. Similarly, the QSF could be more attractive to a young population, if the profile of the employees reflects this population and has young people among its ranks.

This opinion is also shared by some QSF employees who describe a quite "old-fashioned" organisation. Some voices argue that young graduates, new human resources with a different background or culture would be beneficial to the institution in terms of bringing in new ideas, innovation and modernising the institution to keep up with current demands. While the QSF's employees are around fifty years old, new and younger arrivals would undoubtedly allow to feed the reflection on the evolution and the strategy of the Foundation, to anchor the Foundation in more contemporary debates, and to allow it to develop and to make the best use of all its resources.

The managerial organisation of these Foundations could therefore be improved, thanks to a stronger link to be created between the cultural background of these Foundations and its employees, or thanks to the arrival of new human resources capable of driving change.

3. 3. The youth of the Querini Stampalia Foundation library at the centre of its cultural policy?

While the youth who use the library is the most important population in terms of audience at the QSF, the Foundation could invest more in this population which it has at its disposal. Today, the Querini mainly focuses its policy on a school youth audience and does not involve the older age group.

3. 3. 1. Few professional opportunities for youth within the Querini Stampalia Foundation

One of the most direct contributions that these institutions could offer to Venetian youth is the offer of work within their institutions. Indeed, young people only stay on the island for a short period of time, mainly for studies, due to the lack of professional opportunities in Venice. From this point of view and being aware of the small scale of the QSF and the BLMF, neither of the two Foundations studied participate in the professional offer on the island.

However, it should be pointed out that the QSF works with young people through the *Servizi Sociali* or the internship system, keeping in mind that these short-term precarious jobs are not paid by the institution. It also seems that these positions are not renewed at the end of the contract, mainly due to financial restriction.

On the other hand, although the QSF offers the possibility of integrating these teams as trainees, it seems that the institution has difficulties in taking care of these trainees properly¹²⁶. Due to a lack of time, the QSF struggles in exploiting fully this human resource. For example, one of the former QSF trainees regrets not having been able to develop more projects, due to a lack of managerial follow-up. Although the project that was at the origin of her hiring was able to be carried out, on the one hand it was only partially exploited, and then the trainee was unable to develop other ideas even though that would have could fit in the hours of the internship. Another intern had been hired to work on the Foundation's strategy in terms of human resources. However, the Foundation teams finally asked him to translate the exhibition space labels.

The Querini is therefore not a source of employment for Venetian students and seems to have difficulty in exploiting the intern resource while it could bring new ideas to the institution.

3. 3. 2. The focus on education: the Querini Stampalia Foundation is primarily aimed at the school public

Today, an element that seems crucial in the Querini's strategy is education. Educational program, i.e., the creation of courses and paths on various themes related to

¹²⁶ This challenge was highlighted in interviews with former QSF trainees.

Querini offered to a very young public, from kindergarten to high school, has developed strongly since the 2000s. This program requires significant financial and human resources. For the school year 2020-2021¹²⁷, the courses offered include *Storie stampalate* (Printed stories), meetings to understand how to use the literary and heritage resources, guided tours to understand the Foundation's collections, and courses on the theme of Venice. This year's program includes the path *Venezia SOStenibile. I goals della Repubblica* (Sustainable Venice. The goals of the Republic), mainly dedicated to high school students, which can be included in the PCTO (*Alternanza scuola-lavoro*) program. These lessons are based on four main themes linked to the city: water, women, tourism and health. These themes are approached in a historical way, to understand their birth and their main characteristics over the centuries, through an approach based on the Foundation's funds. Addressing these themes and giving students the key to historical reading enables them to construct a critical view of contemporary reality.

However, and in the framework of our reflection on youth between 20 and 30 years old, the activities organised are mainly aimed at a minor school public. The QSF has chosen not to offer a program targeting the main age group that frequents the library's rooms. This choice is justified by certain employee, explaining that the library's audience does not want to be involved in the Foundation.

Furthermore, when analysing the Foundation's approach to knowledge transfer and the activities it offers, it seems that the Querini has a teaching posture, a vertical transmission of knowledge that goes from the institution to the public. It does not try to reverse this logic by adopting a posture that would also allow knowledge to go from the public, whoever it may be, to the Foundation. The Foundation has mainly a predominantly active, despite its desire to involve its public. Reverse this perspective could also be interesting to develop for the Querini, in order to reflect on its missions and strategy. Involving the user of the space, making him/her participate in the definition of the QSF could be a useful way to gather new ideas, and to better respond to the demand. This openness and transmission of knowledge from the young users of the library to the Querini teams seems to be a relevant method of analysis.

¹²⁷ FONDAZIONE QUERINI STAMPALIA, *Orienteering. Orizzonti tra arte, storia e architettura*, Attività educative per le scuole 2021/2022, [online], <https://www.querinistampalia.org/ita/uploads/FQS21-22%20Offerta%20educativa%20per%20le%20Scuole.pdf>, web page last accessed on 27/05/2022.

3. 3. 3. The youth of the Querini Stampalia Foundation library is not really involved

As a result, the young people who use the library are not really involved in the Foundation, other than by visiting its reading rooms. This lack of involvement of its users is mainly reflected in the fact that no activity is explicitly dedicated to them. Various strategies have been put in place to try to overcome this. For example, when registering for the library, users can specify whether or not they wish to receive the QSF newsletter, which is a significant means of communicating more widely about the activities and news of the library. The QSF has also introduced free admission to the museum for students on Wednesday afternoons, but this policy has had little success. Unlike the introduction of a voucher, i.e. a ticket to the Foundation's exhibition spaces given with registration in the library, which has had real results and has been used by users. Apart from these two elements, library users are not involved in the life or activities of the QSF. There are no activities offered to this age group, i.e. university students.

The lack of activities offered to young people, an offer that would be focused between 18 and 30 years old, is all the more visible as other Venetian cultural institutions offer them. This is the case, for example, of the Salomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, which has been collaborating since July 2021 with the group called Call Monica, to offer free workshops within the institution reserved for an audience of 18- to 25-year-olds, accessible to all, students or not, and free of charge. These workshops are spread over several days, for example on Thursday 26 and Friday 27 May 2022, the workshop *Naked Lobsters: muse indisciplinata*¹²⁸ two full days at the Peggy Guggenheim Museum. These themes are also rooted in current debates, with the Call Monica collective mainly addressing themes related to feminism.

On the other hand, the Foundation seems to struggle to exploit the pool of people that it has at its disposal and who frequent its walls every day. Although a questionnaire was carried out by a consultant in 2016 to understand the audience, today questioning the students who frequent the space is not an approach mentioned by QSF teams and which seems effective. However, turning to one's own public, to the audience that is

¹²⁸ PEGGY GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION, *Naked Lobsters: muse indisciplinata*, [online], 26 May 2022, <https://www.guggenheim-venice.it/it/mostre-eventi/eventi/naked-lobsters-muse-indisciplinat/>, web page last accessed on 27/05/2022.

obviously attached to the place, would be interesting for redefining the library's offer.

In short, young people aged between 20 and 30 fill the rooms of the Querini library, but they are not very involved in the Querini, while the Querini could use this youth to improve its venues and offer.

3. 4. Do these institutions really contribute to the sustainability of Venice?

While these Foundations have a strong historical link with Venice, this link sometimes seems to be questioned. While the BLMF does not advise its students to stay in Venice once their residency is over, the QSF finances itself through tourism, and timidly enters the debates on the city's sustainability.

3. 4. 1. For the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation artists, Venice lacks opportunities

Although the BLMF is in Venice, and the city seems to be suitable for the further training of young artists, the cultural institutions offered by the city seem to be of insufficient quality to retain these young artists in the city¹²⁹. Indeed, the advice of BLMF employees to emerging artists once the residencies are over is to leave Venice, to train and enter the professional world in other cities. They advise artists to go to Milan, Turin or even to leave Italy. This advice is mainly based on the idea that Venice does not offer enough professional opportunities to these young artists. There are not the galleries, the art critics, the emulation, the professionals that there are in other cities, which really allow these artists to build a professional career from now on. Venice is too far from the art market to offer real opportunities. Venice has an undeniable cultural heritage, high quality exhibitions that allow the training of the artist, an inspiring link that benefits creation, but lacks resources to help build the artist as a professional.

The BLMF, although it brings a creative population to the city for a few months, does not encourage these emergent artists to stay on the island, and thus in a way participates in the exodus of the young population that Venice is familiar with.

¹²⁹ Strategy explained in interviews with Foundation staff.

3. 4. 2. Economic sustainability of the Querini Stampalia Foundation dependent on Venice tourism

The QSF seems also to penalise Venice and to contribute on its own scale to the difficulty of settling a stable population in the city. Indeed, one of its financial resources comes from renting flats to tourists.

- *Financial incomes from tourism*

At first glance, the Querini seems to have a real desire to support Venice through its activity. However, its financial model could call it into question. Indeed, in 2016 a policy of restructuring its assets was put in place¹³⁰. While part of this income came from the land in Veneto that it owned, inherited from the founder of the institution, this land was sold in favour of the purchase of flats in the historic centre of Venice, a much more profitable investment. These flats are now rented out to tourists and represent a very important part of its income. This choice, although financially justifiable, calls into question the Querini's declared desire to defend a policy based on a dynamic, lively Venice, far removed from mass tourism.

At first sight, this strategic choice seems to be contradictory and inconsistent with the Foundation's statements. This is a place supposed to be eminently social, focused and oriented towards the Venetian population, seeking to offer a service to the community within the city for over 150 years. However, as presented in the first chapter, one of the main problems of Venice and which seems to be able to explain in part the depopulation of Venice is the lack of accessible housing at a decent price for a population living in the city. The citizens are faced with a rental offer that is mainly taken up by tourism. Therefore, this strategic choice of the QSF could be damaging for the city, and its possible survival in the face of ever-expanding tourism. By this choice, the Querini is not going in the opposite direction of this movement, but on the contrary supports it, and benefits financially from tourism. A Foundation with such strong social values, with an important political history, taking a decision of this type seems to be criticisable if one agrees that the city has a vital need for a stable population.

¹³⁰ Business model explained by QSF employees in interviews.

The second main financial contribution of the Querini, which also calls into question the Foundation's involvement in the transformation of the city, is the rental of space for private events and exhibitions. While the lack of space in Venice is a real problem, this privatisation of places does not meet the needs of the population in demand. To support the city, one of the opportunities and actions that could be taken by these Foundations is to make its spaces available at low cost to local associations and groups that are cruelly lacking in the city. In the same way, this privatisation of space mainly concerns the Venice Biennale, i.e. the renting of part of the QSF premises to host a collateral exhibition of the event for 6 months. This Biennale, which attracts a very large population to the city, does not really respect the idea of sustainable tourism that the Foundation puts forward.

- *An attempt at justification*

The decision to buy flats in the historic centre of Venice to rent out to tourists seems justifiable¹³¹. On one hand, the QSF needed these financial inflows to exist, and on the other hand these resources allow it to exist and to offer highly profitable services to the citizens.

First, the economic sustainability of the Foundation does not depend only on these rentals. Moreover, the Querini is renting only few flats, which will not change the mass tourism situation of the city, as these flats represent only a very small part of the total tourist rental offer of the city. This decision was taken very seriously by the Querini's teams and was taken in a context of extreme financial difficulty for the Foundation, which had to make this choice in order to remain open. It has undoubtedly enabled them to achieve the financial balance that seemed unattainable in 2016. Without this decision, it would not be possible today to pay the bills and keep the library open, to continue offering an educational service, to propose activities and debates as it is set up today.

Thanks to these financial resources, the QSF offers a service to society that is significant compared to the damage that results from these rentals. 65,000 students are able to use the library all year round, activities with a distinctly social focus, a museum that bears witness to the city's history and heritage... all of these contributions to society may outweigh the damage caused by these rentals. The Querini has also the responsibility

¹³¹ Justification given by QSF employees.

to offer a service to the population, and to provide keys to understanding the past in order to understand contemporary situations and to form citizens capable of making decisions and voting in a moral and fair way.

Finally, the Querini was forced to make this strategic choice, yet it is not the only one responsible. Public policies have drastically reduced financial support to cultural institutions and so they are equally responsible for the decision that the Foundation was forced to take.

It can be denied that there is an apparent contradiction that may exist due to the profit derived from these rentals. From an ideological point of view, the Querini should not rent out these flats, as this choice seems to be inconsistent with the current objectives of the Querini but also with the wishes of its founder. However, the daily economic reality explains why the ethics and ideology of the Querini seem to take a back seat to this debate.

Yet, without talking about economic value, this strategic choice seems also significant in symbolic terms. Although these rentals will certainly not change the situation of the city, making this choice is in a way symbolically endorsing the direction the city is taking. It is taking sides and inserting itself into a certain pro-tourism dynamic.

3. 4. 3. Venice: the need to take an official position in favour of its survival?

Not to mention its financial situation, the QSF does not seem to take part in the political debates that are raging in Venice, on themes such as the environmental sustainability of Venice, the question of mass tourism, the exodus of the population, or the link between the historic centre, the lagoon and the *terraferma*. These are all debates that exist and are discussed in associations, groups or political exchanges, debates that also involve the young population of Venice, which seems particularly involved and aware of these issues.

The QSF does not take part in these reflections, or at least does not take a public position on these subjects, whereas in the past it had a strong political identity. However, one could defend the need for a more global movement that would affect all the city's cultural institutions. Nevertheless, for the last twenty years or so, the city's cultural structures have preferred to close in on themselves, on their collections and objectives, rather than adopting a broader position, inserted in a city context¹³². Yet, the universities

¹³² Interview with an employee of a Venetian cultural institution.

seem to provide more reflection on these themes, with a reflection on their social role, their civic commitment within society, which is notably visible through the conferences proposed for example on the future of Venice. To give just one example, in May 2022 a series of conferences and exchanges was organised at Ca'Foscari University entitled *Parola ai giovani* (Words to the young)¹³³, and who ask questions such as: "What would you change about the society you live in and how?".

The Querini, instead of taking part in these debates from a public point of view, prefers to insert itself in the reflection through the educational. It offers courses on themes related to Venice, such as water, tourism or women, to schoolchildren. The Foundation does not take a frontal position, but it does an essential work for society through these educational offers. These reflections also give historical depth to the contemporary issues that are raging today, because through these courses, the Querini offers a vision of the Venice of the past, of its position in relation to foreigners, tourism and rising water levels, for example. There seems to be a real desire to develop the critical spirit of the participants by reflecting on the QSF's bibliographical sources.

3. 5. An attempt at a strategic reorganisation of the Querini Stampalia Foundation?

In view of all these findings, both concerning the economic and managerial difficulties of the QSF and the lack of involvement of the young people in its library, is the QSF seeking to change its foundations and redefine its strategy? Although the Foundation seems to be marked by a difficulty of innovation associated with a difficulty in defining a main objective, it seems to be trying to reflect on the strategy it wishes to adopt in the future.

3. 5. 1. Difficulties in being innovative

The Querini seems to have retained a rather similar role over the years, a phenomenon that is particularly visible in its library.

¹³³ Parola ai Giovani, il progetto di Giovanni Caccamo fa tappa a Ca' Foscari, in *CFNews*, 18 May 2022, https://unive.it/pag/14024/?tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=12632, web page last accessed on 25/04/2022.

The QSF seems to rest mainly on its position as an autumnal library and does not look far enough into the future. With its heritage, its reputation and the weight of the personalities who built it, the Foundation relies mainly on these elements (for example, strong communication around Carlos Scarpa, or on the founding directors of the Foundation). However, it would be beneficial to to insert itself into the contemporary debate. Struggling to be innovative, the QSF does not seem to be moving towards the culture and city of tomorrow.

This relative aspect can be seen in the themes chosen for its exhibitions, which are not really in line with the main contemporary debates, and which offer "niche" exhibitions that only reach a few people. Indeed, the contemporary art offer of the QSF is not anchored in contemporary issues, important to the young population. The programming could be more oriented towards current debates, for example around gender issues, LGBTQ+ struggles, environmental sustainability, which are crucial in today's world, and which are important for the youth. The programming could also take a greater advantage of the importance that the Foundation has gained in recent decades regarding architecture, through the various interventions of leading architects, it has managed to build up a significant reputation in this field and could therefore orient its production in this direction.

3. 5. 2. Today, the Querini Stampalia Foundation does not have a clear vision

Moreover, instead of focusing on a clear guideline with a few well-defined projects, the QSF is scattered in many different projects. It fails to define a single clear vision, which would allow Querini to be easily identified, and to direct all its investments towards a single project.

However, it should be borne in mind that the Querini is a set of elements that define it as a whole. The BLMF has a clear direction which consequently defines all its activities: it aims to promote young artists. The Querini does not have such a precise, simple and clear single vision. The QSF is a space that encompasses many spaces, a place that is remarkable for its architecture, for its collections, for its working and reflection spaces. This aspect is also its strength: it is not a space reserved for one population

profile; it is a place for all. However, this lack of precise vision of the Foundation is criticised by various actors¹³⁴.

However, it seems possible to unify the whole of the Querini under one main vision. According to Giorgio Busetto¹³⁵, one clear cultural project enables all the actions taken to fit into a more global project. The definition of a cultural project leads to a set of conclusions and directions to be taken. Under his leadership tried to implement such a strategy, which aimed to unify the QSF under a clear guideline.

On the one hand, from the point of view of the physical space of the Querini, during his mandate he enlarged the working space of the library from 2000 to 6000m². The library was also restored by Mario Botta, a pupil of Carlo Scarpa, thus continuing the architectural line taken by the Querini. From an ideological point of view, Giorgio Busetto started from the following observation: the QSF is relatively poor in terms of its library, its museum (in competition with other extremely important artistic institutions in Venice), and its cultural programme (due to a lack of financial means). Therefore, in order to strengthen the structure, he chose to unite the three areas, to turn these three weaknesses into a single strength. This unification gave the Foundation a unique image, a visibility, an ease of recognition of the institution, which it could not have had without unification. To achieve this unification, Giorgio Busetto set up some simple things:

- Exhibition of the paintings previously kept in an unsuitable way in the Foundation's storage area within the library rooms;
- Freedom of movement throughout the building, although the tour route was perhaps not very clear due to the lack of signage within the building because of its past as a living space and not an exhibition space;
- The possibility for employees to work in different departments of the QSF, between the library and the museum, concurrently in each department.

Each of these elements, according to the former director, gave strength to the institution. These initiatives have sometimes been abandoned: today, for example, there is a door that controls access to the library's study rooms, which are inaccessible to ordinary visitors.

¹³⁴ Challenge highlighted in various interviews.

¹³⁵ Busetto, G., Progetto di direzione della Querini Stampalia, [online], 1984, https://www.giorgiobusetto.it/scaricabili/B_4_1984%20-%20Programma%20Direzione%20FQS.pdf, web page last accessed on 23/06/2022.

In sum, Giorgio Busetto tried to put in place a single vision, from which a set of actions were put in place. Today, the Querini seems to lack this vision, which would be beneficial to it.

The article by Robyn Thomas, Leisa D. Sargent and Cynthia Hardy¹³⁶ published in 2011 helps to understand the barriers to defining a clear project and driving change. In particular, they highlight the difficulty of defining and imposing a change plan by the "senior manager". Although senior managers may have a clear vision and objectives, defining a change plan is not the result of their simple reflection, but is part of a more complex process. It starts with a draft and is then shared with the other employees who can then modify it or even change it completely. This modification is part of a process of interpretation of the proposed plan and negotiation that must take place between all members of the organisation to arrive at a final plan. The presence of long-standing employees in the Foundation therefore seems to complicate the definition of a change route to reach a certain vision. The authors of the article also argue that a project or vision defined by several people, both the senior manager and other employees, does not necessarily lead to the most innovative solutions. Finally, they point out that this proposal developed by the senior manager often meets strong resistance to change from employees. A new vision brings changes and new challenges that employees are often reluctant to face. This analyse seems to be similar to the managerial problems that the Querini is experiencing today.

The QSF therefore struggles to define a single, coherent vision, which is both the cause and the consequence of a difficulty in driving change towards a more innovative institution.

3. 5. 3. An attempt to redefine its strategy

However, the QSF seems aware of the challenges it faces. Despite the difficulties mentioned above, the institution is undertaking a rethink on its main functions¹³⁷. This reflection was started about 6 years ago, around 2016, by a collaboration between several

¹³⁶ THOMAS, R., D. SARGENT, L., HARDY, C., Managing Organizational Change: Negotiating Meaning and Power-Resistance Relations, in *Organization Science*, Vol. 22, No. 1, January - February 2011, p. 22-41.

¹³⁷ Focused group conducted within the QSF on the theme of the QSF library and involving different actors invested in the institution (May 2022).

actors, inside and outside the Foundation. During this period, the Foundation focused on four main objectives¹³⁸:

- To increase the number of visitors to the Foundation;
- Diversify its audience;
- Develop the Opificio programme;
- Transforming its assets by selling inherited land to buy flats in the historic centre of Venice for rent.

All of these measures reflect an awareness of the areas for development and improvement within the Foundation, but also a desire to ensure its economic sustainability.

Furthermore, internally the Foundation has moved from a very segregated model, where each department was independent, to a much more collaborative and participatory model. The different departments therefore work together. As an example, the library staff participated extensively in the revaluation of the collection.

The Querini has worked extensively on the presentation and enhancement of its collection. Recognising that this collection was poorly presented, particularly in terms of explanation of content, labels or definition of the itinerary, the institution has made a significant financial and human effort to restructure and redefine this aspect of its collections. For example, it now carries out a permanent analysis of the museum's audiences, to find out who visits it and how the visit is appreciated. This type of analysis makes it possible to improve the proposed exhibition, but also to invest in the museum, which is a significant part of the cash flow. A questionnaire given to museum visitors has been set up, and the museum teams have been trained in storytelling. In this context, various projects and exchanges have been carried out with the city's universities, through internships and collaboration with the Master's degree in Management of Cultural Institutions at Ca'Foscari University, in order to carry out this reflection in collaboration with the city's students. All this analysis with the aim of understanding the expectations of the public today, and how to attract a public that does not currently visit the museum. This reflection should also be valued in terms of reflection on the services offered to the local population as opposed to a service that would be primarily aimed at tourists.

¹³⁸ Explanation of the project set up, during interviews conducted with the actors involved.

More broadly, this reflection on the museum is also accompanied by an in-depth reflection on the Querini library. As part of this reflection, various meetings are organised with professionals from the sector (such as librarian, universities, publisher) in order to understand what are the library offers in Venice today. What is the service that the city needs? What is the target audience that the QSF may not have and that should be involved? What is the service that needs to be offered and that the QSF wants to develop?

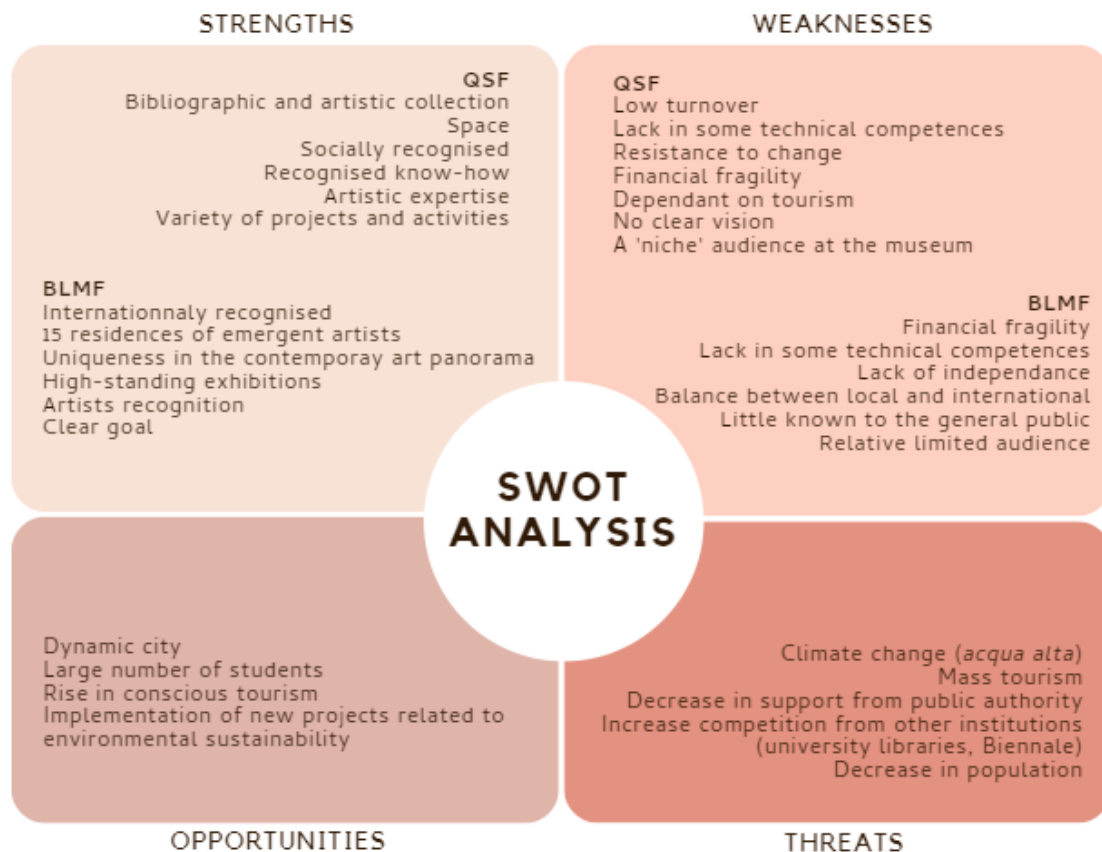
One of the avenues of reflection and strategic direction mentioned by the Foundation today is to attract more people to the Querini by widening the target¹³⁹. In geographical terms, while today the main users of the Querini reside in Venice, the team is interested in the possibility of expanding the areas reached. For instance, the Venetian economist Paolo Costa argues that it is no longer possible to reason in local terms, focusing only on the inhabitants of the historic city centre. He defends the idea of extending to Padova, Treviso and the surrounding cities, but to widen the spectrum even further to reason about the region encompassing Venice - Bologna - Milan - Munich. This quadrilateral encompasses a group of people with common interests and cultures. By thinking in terms of this quadrilateral, the Querini's numbers could be increased. Although this strategy does not convince all of the institution's employees, it is part of a reflection evaluating various options for reorienting and developing the Querini.

There is therefore a real reflection on the strategy of the library and more broadly of the Querini in terms of audience, service offered, directions taken for the future.

3. 6. Strengths and weaknesses of both Foundations

The following SWOT table shows the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the two Foundations studied. The opportunities and threats are identical for both foundations for simplicity, although there are subtle differences related to the particularity of each.

¹³⁹ Focused group conducted within the QSF on the theme of the QSF library and involving different actors invested in the institution (May 2022).



This table shows that each of the foundations has important intangible and tangible assets (other than financial) which contribute to their reputation. The main weaknesses are financial and managerial. Although the Venetian context has some threats based on mass tourism and public policy, these institutions are part of a dynamic city, reflecting on its needs and limitations, and with a large student population.

To conclude this third chapter, both Foundations, after more than 100 years of existence, seem to be facing various challenges. In addition to a certain detachment by the Venetian public authorities, financial difficulties have weakened these institutions and led them to restructure. These institutions are also marked by a managerial policy that could be irrelevant to tackle the cultural and contemporary challenges. In addition, the QSF could involve more the young population that uses its library and would benefit from the definition of a clear vision for the future of its organisation.

Nevertheless, each of these Foundations seems to be aware of these challenges and is looking for ways to overcome them. The following chapter underlines the indispensability of these Foundations to the city and proposes some avenues of development that could benefit simultaneously these Foundations, the resident youth and Venice.

CHAPTER 4: PROPOSALS FOR AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT FOR INSTITUTIONS ESSENTIAL TO YOUTH AND VENICE

After having analysed these two Foundations through their historical construction and their evolution until today, it is appropriate to underline again their fundamental character. The existence of the QSF and the BLMF and the services they offer to the population, especially young people, make them institutions of primary importance for the city.

However, and in view of the various challenges analysed above, certain avenues for reflection and improvement can be apprehended. These elements are mainly based on ideas and opinions that have emerged from my exchanges with the actors involved in the Foundations, the current context of the city, and the careful observation of their weaknesses and capacities.

4. 1. Youth: a key to safeguarding Venice

First of all, the importance of the role of these Foundations should be highlighted, as they support youth. Youth itself is fundamental to Venice, although it is marked by a certain temporality.

4. 1. 1. Although young people, often students, are a mainly temporary population...

Even Venice has a crucial need for youth, often equated with the city's student population, youth also concentrate its problems and limitations. One of them is the temporary nature of these inhabitants: whether it is at the QSF, which hosts a large part of local university students, or the BLMF, which offers one-year residences (which can be extended up to three years), these offers are primarily oriented towards a temporary population. All the more as youth is essential, because a population that ends up staying and settling in the city by working and living in Venice would be a real solution for the city's sustainability.

However, the city does not offer them sufficient conditions to consider staying, although this could often be part of their wish. On the one hand, the housing issue remains

essential in this choice and in this inability to live on the island. On the other hand, Venice being a monoculture based essentially on tourism does not offer them concrete professional opportunities commensurate with their level of study. Today, limited professional opportunities prevent the student population from staying in the city.

The temporary nature of their stay in Venice, often lasting a few months or sometimes a few years, prevents them from creating links and becoming concretely integrated into the city. These students and artists under construction do not really fit into the dynamics of the city, and often have few exchanges with Venetians or the local context. It is true that universities often offer courses related to Venice, its history or even its environmental or geo-political issues, but these courses rarely materialise into real interest or involvement in the city.

This issue of temporality highlights the social composition of the city. Today Venice is mainly composed of elderly people living permanently on the island, people living only temporarily in the city (students, or young artists in our case) and tourists¹⁴⁰. Venice is extremely polarised, and there is no middle class or social diversity. The city has to build the necessary conditions to sustain its population and convert this youth who only stay for a while on the island into a stable population. Through this stabilisation of a population of a rather wealthy class (artists, university students), the city will then need functions within the city, and will therefore have to bring in a middle or even lower social class, which is necessary for its vitality. This conversion from temporary to stable would ensure the social diversity of the city, which is currently non-existent when we look at the social composition of the city.

Therefore, the role of cultural institutions is to be part of a broad plan to restore this diversity and its inhabitants to the city. By providing dedicated spaces for its residents, institutions are indeed taking a first step towards this transformation that Venice needs to undergo.

4. 1. 2. This temporality does not only represent disadvantages

This temporality is a first step in building a more permanent population in Venice, although the city also needs a stable population in the long term. This temporary character does not only have disadvantages either, whether it is the students working at

¹⁴⁰ See first chapter.

the QSF, or the artists at the BLMF. Their main contribution to the city is that of consumption. They can actually create consumption mechanisms which are different from those of tourism, and which demand basic services necessary for the city.

Moreover, the temporality proposed by the BLMF can also be beneficial to both the city and these visiting artists, as it allows:

- To ensure the visibility of Venice in the art market and the world of culture: recognition of the work of the Foundation and therefore of the city as a place of artistic construction and adapted to creation.
- The 1 to 3 year programmes are long enough to settle in the city, to understand it and to participate economically and socially in it in a different way than a passing tourist.
- The programme allows to take advantage of the city's incredible cultural network and to bring it to life. As Venice is an unparalleled cultural breeding ground not only in terms of historical heritage, but also in terms of high quality contemporary cultural proposals (Biennale among others), the BLMF allows to transmit this incredible heritage to the future generation of artists, who will be nourished by it today through their training for the creation of tomorrow. From an artistic point of view, this exchange and passing on of artistic knowledge is essential for tomorrow's creation.
- With a duration of one year, the BLMF offers this opportunity to new artists each year, and thus offers this chance to a greater number of emerging creators.

In sum, this temporality certainly does not satisfy the need for resident citizens in Venice, but it also seems to bring a compromise and richness to the city.

4. 1. 3. And youth remain indispensable for Venice

Youth remains at the heart of the city's issues because it represents the city of tomorrow and is therefore fundamental. By investing in this population, the BLMF and the QSF underlines its importance for the city. Tiziana Agostina again defends the essential character of both the BLMF and this population for the city:

“Investing in the future means not only making an economic commitment, which is essential and the basis of any strategy, but also involving human capital, starting with young people. The young artists of today will be the performers of tomorrow. And even if they will not all become great, they will contribute, each according to his

or her talent, to making Venice the world capital of the immaterial and material of the third millennium, a new factory of ideas and art, without risk of pollution, but rather an opportunity for positive global contamination of histories and civilisations, the very basis of Venetian identity. New possible stories, to arouse the interest of the entire planet, starting from this corner of water and land, entirely artificial and entirely natural”¹⁴¹.

Their contribution is therefore essential in this very special city, and it is only by relying on this bias that solutions for the future can be found. In this text, she also underlines the importance of emulation and "contaminations", those interactions that are essential to the definition of Venice's identity, both yesterday and tomorrow.

In the same way, and during the debates that took place in 2016 on the safeguarding of the BLMF, Giorgio Busetto recalls once again its capacity to attract funds and brains to Venice through the quality of the institution:

“The autonomy enjoyed by the BLMF and the competence with which it has been run over the last five years [...] have ensured that the Institute has become involved in contemporary art, that the various artists belonging to the Institute have profited from it, and that important financial and economic contributions have resulted. Evangelically, we can say that the talents entrusted have returned important revenues to those who gave them, creating for Venice a place of artistic production that is valued and recognised throughout the world, capable of attracting numerous large and small companies, with high level events, even in recent collaborations.”¹⁴²

Attracting young people to Venice remains fundamental to making it a centre of creation and life, which refuses to be taken over by tourism alone. Creating a synergy between the Foundations and the young people who frequent them seems to be a key to understanding the city. By benefiting its population, the Foundations nourish both the city and the youth, and this youth, by relying on the resources provided by the Foundations, also develop the tools necessary to form the city of tomorrow. Chiara Bertola sums up this synergy well: *“This is why I have always supported any project that offers important international artists the opportunity to live and work in Venice. This is a way to transform the city into a centre of creative production of great interest.”¹⁴³*

¹⁴¹ AGOSTINI, T., Conclusioni, in *Felicita Bevilacqua La Masa : una donna, un'istituzione, una città*, Venice, Marsilio, 2005, p. 90 (translation by the author).

¹⁴² BUSETTO, G., *Bevilacqua La Masa, ora servono nomine di spessore*, *cit.*, (translation by the author).

¹⁴³ BERTOLA, C., *cit.*, p. 17.

Youth is therefore fundamental for the social, economic and cultural sustainability of Venice.

4. 2. The Querini Stampalia Foundation: an example of a sustainable economic model in Venice?

So how does the QSF fit into this need for sustainability in the city, social and economic sustainability? The QSF seems to provide an interesting example of a viable and efficient economic model for the city taking into account the challenges that the city must face. This economic model takes advantage of the income from sustainable tourism and transfers its benefits to a stable and mostly young population. This transfer of income may be interesting for evaluating the existing dynamics between the Venetian population, the city and its cultural institutions.

4. 2. 1. An offer oriented towards a more conscious tourism

Firstly, the QSF seems to be a good example of a Venetian institution based on a more sustainable tourism for the city, in social, economic and environmental terms, a tourism that is far from the current mass tourism. Indeed, one of its revenues is derived from the sale of entrance tickets to its museum. At first sight this income is again linked to the monoculture of tourism, on which Venice is well dependent. However, the Foundation relies on a more conscious tourism. These visitors have often visited the city before, and instead want to discover a more authentic Venice, far from the beaten track¹⁴⁴. The audience that is interested in the Querini Foundation is smaller than the mass tourism that makes up the majority of the city's tourists. For example, French tourists are particularly fond of this institution, which they visit in particular for its porcelain collection. This type of "niche" tourism is very significant and important for the Querini. This type of tourism is incomparable to what the Ducal Palace experiences, or to what cruise ships offer in Venice, which exploits the window of Venice. Mass tourism is therefore not favourable to it, as a large majority of tourists associated with mass tourism only stay for a day or two on the island and mainly focus on visiting the main tourist sites:

¹⁴⁴ Interviews conducted with QSF employees.

San Marco and Rialto. The visitors to the Querini have a different profile: they already know the city, they want to understand it and soak up its atmosphere and history. The letter of introduction published on the Foundation's website by the current director of the QSF clearly shows that the Foundation is aimed at a particular type of tourist, aware of and interested in the city:

"If you would like to discover Venice from a less predictable and obvious point of view, but rather for its originality and at the same time for its most ancient and prestigious traditions to which it is deeply bound, you have found the perfect place."¹⁴⁵

From then on, the QSF shows that tourism is less damaging to the city and more sustainable in the long term. The city is no longer used as a simple showcase or background for social networking sites, it is more respected by a population that wants to understand its past and its particularities.

4. 2. 2. Transferring income from tourism to services for the local population

In addition to relying on more sustainable tourism, it seems that the Querini has an economic model that allows it to use the funds generated by tourism to transfer them in the form of services to the local population.

The financial balance of the QSF is as follows: by attracting tourists to its commercial (shops, cafeteria, paid activities) and museum (paid entrance tickets) areas, and by renting out accommodation purchased in Venice to tourists, the Foundation can carry out its missions and open the library (free entrance).

So, could it be argued that the Querini represents a viable economic model for the city? On the one hand, an economic exploitation of a slower tourism, which appreciates less known cultural institutions and yet is rooted in the history and heritage of the city. And on the other hand, funds from this sustainable tourism reused in favour of the Venetians, users of the library.

However, the current economic difficulties of the Querini, which is unable to achieve economic profitability through this system, could jeopardise this possibility. The Querini's policy is to increase the number of visitors to the museum in order to generate

¹⁴⁵ FONDAZIONE QUERINI STAMPALIA, *Letter from the Director*, [online], https://www.querinistampalia.org/eng/fondazione_querini_stampalia/letter_from_the_director.php? web page last accessed on 9/04/2022.

more revenue through ticket sales. This policy could therefore imply that it is in favour of an economic system based on tourism, since it depends on it, a tourism which is certainly slower, but which cannot disappear at the risk of losing a source of income essential for its survival. Moreover, although the tourists visiting its premises are based on a more respectful tourism, the tourist rentals from which the QSF benefits are not based on this type of tourism. As developed earlier, this income is highly questionable in terms of the social ambitions of the Foundation

All in all, it seems that the Querini is again based on a "mono-income". Whether it is through entrance tickets or flat rentals, two very important items of income are dependent on this activity. It should be stressed that these are not the only financial inputs, the municipality also finances the institution as a remuneration for the service offered through the library, and private financial support through the Amici de la Querini is another form of income.

In short, the Foundation seems to sum up the city's paradox: to make the city live through its residents and the places reserved for them, but a city financially dependent on the arrival of tourists, and therefore possibly favourable to significant tourism. Its economic model is still too fragile to represent a reliable economic model to be propagated to the other cultural institutions of the city, although it shows an interesting balance between reasonable tourism and a certain investment in the vitality and population of Venice. This model does not seem to be sufficient to solve the challenges of the QSF and it is therefore necessary to examine other avenues for the development of this institution.

4. 3. What other ways to improve the Querini Stampalia Foundation?

I will only focus on the QSF for this section. My research has indeed allowed me to further develop an opinion and ideas for solutions mainly concerning this Foundation.

The QSF is undeniably an institution of enormous social importance for Venice. This Foundation must look to the future and have a role in defining the city of Venice of the future. In order to adapt, move forward and even define the future, the institution must have a certain agility, capacity for change and adaptation to the world to come. Because of its historical context, its social reputation, and its relatively small size, the QSF

has the possibility to become more dynamic, forward-looking, and to propose ambitious solutions for the future of the city. This Foundation can make a difference in the contemporary Venetian context, a necessity which is imposed on it by the testament from which it originated and on which it depends today. A will that defends the primacy of the social contribution that this Foundation owes to the city and its population. It is therefore its duty to support the citizens of Venice, and in particular its youth, and to consider possible improvements in order to best fulfil its missions.

Therefore, through the analysis that I have been able to conduct, some opportunities and possibilities seem to me important to propose to these Foundations.

4. 3. 1. Define a vision

The first essential point for the QSF seems to me to be to define a clear axis towards which it wishes to move and then to orient all its activities in the defined direction. One vision would be to see the QSF as a place that aims at nourishing reflection, knowledge and debate on subjects mainly related to Venice and its people.

To sum up what the Querini is today: a library, a museum retracing the life of a historic family for the city, an important architectural site, a contemporary exhibition space, an auditorium, a cafeteria, and a varied offer of activities aimed at a wide audience. Giorgio Busetto's objective of unifying all these elements seems to me to be very relevant in order to give the Foundation strength and ease of association. This unification could be based on the idea that the QSF is the place of knowledge about Venice par excellence, a knowledge that is lived around these spaces but also around meetings. It is a place of knowledge about Venice because it represents Venice from a historical point of view for more than 1000 years through the founding family, it also bears witness to the historical contributions of the previous century through the architectural interventions it presents, and a place of contemporary knowledge through its exhibition space, its library, and its auditorium where today's knowledge is created, reflected upon and discussed.

The Querini today separates each of these entities: a museum to visit, a library to study, an auditorium to listen, a cafeteria to eat. But it is neither a place associated with a simple visit, nor a library to be used for concentration. It should link the whole in research and knowledge of the city, based on its extraordinary collections.

In order to do this, and what seems to me to be cruelly lacking in the Querini, is to bring its spaces to life, to make this place, this extraordinary atmosphere, a place of

debate, of exchange, of cultural emulation on which Venice can rest and think about its future. Not denying the importance of tourism for the city, but aware of the importance of its citizens and its historical heritage, the QSF could be a place of reference in the knowledge of Venice and the definition of its direction for the future.

4. 3. 2. A place for exchange

This idea of a place of exchange and creativity is the different discussions I had with the actors involved in the Foundation, but also with the needs that seemed to emerge from the students I met throughout the year.

To implement this idea of a Foundation as a place of creation and emulation, the project could mainly focus on the axis cafeteria - auditorium¹⁴⁶. The auditorium is the place that allows the institution to live through meetings, concerts, conferences, which allows the place to be attractive on many subjects, and to attract young people able to study them. And the cafeteria, because it is a place to live together, to experience the atmosphere of the Foundation, and through this experience outputs are produced that would not otherwise have been possible. The Querini, and in particular through its cafeteria, should be a place of being, with the aim of creating, meeting, mixing experiences, crossing skills, crossing the profile of these visitors between young Italian students, internationals passing through, passionate specialists... Today, the Querini does not seem to be a space of meeting or creation because it struggles in setting up the opportunities where creativity and exchange can be born.

It is also interesting to note that this desire to make the Querini a place of emulation, reflection and crossroads, of altercations and discussions was already intended by Count Giovanni Querini. In fact, in his words:

*"Additional rooms shall be put at disposal for evening meetings among both national and international scholars and scientists. Already thought of as a meeting place, the library in his imagination was not at all a place for consultation or study."*¹⁴⁷

Once this ideology is established, what are the points to develop in this sense?

In order to bring the institution to life by making it a place for dialogue and creativity, the QSF should invest in its cafeteria, its auditorium, its places of passage where people meet and talk.

¹⁴⁶ Orientation mentioned in interviews with QSF actors.

¹⁴⁷ *Testamento e Codicillo del comte Giovanni Querini Stampalia, cit., p. 3, (translation by the QSF).*

The cafeteria, although very welcoming in the outdoor space today, is much less so inside. It seems to be an auxiliary cafeteria, used by tired museum visitors, or library students for a few minutes break. This cafeteria could be revitalised, invigorated and embellished. To do this, the interior space should be reworked from an architectural point of view, and it should also be opened up to allow it to become a place for dialogue. Furthermore, the QSF could create links with Venice. Why not, for example, use the incredible network of Venetian associations on the theme of food to propose dishes linked to the city, meetings on the history of local specialities. To name just one association, *Laguna nel Bicchiere* keeps this culinary heritage alive, produces oil and wine from the lagoon and exchanges about it. Organising meetings linked to the cafeteria, to this space, would also allow the development of financial income linked to this activity.

The auditorium also seems to me to be under-exploited. Although the use of this space is very costly, as the QSF employees point out, it seems to me that it could really define and bring to life the QSF and its collections. By organising less formal, participatory exchanges that could interest the young students currently cloistered in the library, and by opening its doors to associations and strong groups in the city, the QSF would regain a leading position in thinking about the construction of tomorrow's Venice, as it did historically by serving as a place of work and meeting for the city's future leaders. Themes such as: understanding the origin of tourism in Venice, using cultural heritage for its citizens, the contribution of Carlo Scarpa to the city, the place of women in a Venetian patrician family, the environmental history of the lagoon... Broad themes, which do not only concern a specialised audience, which reach out to the young public of the library, and which are defined rather by a subject than around a personality who is sometimes little known by the general public.

These exchanges could be much more informal than the meetings proposed today, where discussion, contribution of ideas, creation of new proposals and reflections would be the key to these exchanges. It would also be interesting to propose these events at times that would be more convenient for young students in the library, for example proposed meetings at 7pm, just after the reading rooms close: going from the place of study to the place of exchange and knowledge would be simplified by such a schedule. These meetings could also be proposed to Venetian associations, which could then lead them and thus relieve the workload of the institution's teams. Finally, in order to make

these meetings participative, it might be interesting to set up a weekly or monthly meeting that could perhaps create a community gathered around the Querini.

In addition, and with the aim of developing the Querini's economic income and audience, it could also be interesting to develop the offer of paying cultural events within the auditorium. Concerts, performances, plays, the entrance ticket could compensate the costs of opening the auditorium. A discount for students or library users would allow positive discrimination against young people.

Last but not least, by creating free-use spaces within the Querini, it would provide an offer appreciated by the students (how can you eat in the rain the prepared dish brought for lunch on a study day in the library?), and also the context for exchange and the birth of ideas and meetings. The only space currently available is the Court Mazzariol, which remains a place of passage, often taken by tired tourists, or those waiting for their guided tour of the museum. Thinking of another space that could be freely used would reinforce the welcoming and lively character of the Querini.

In short, the Querini should be a place of creativity par excellence, an intellectual creativity based on its different sources: students, visitors, collections, spaces. The Querini would therefore be a space of freedom, a space of crossroads of thoughts, which attracts through its activities and proposals, turned towards the youth and the thinkers of tomorrow.

4. 3. 3. Joining the debate on the environmental sustainability of the city

Tomorrow is also undeniably linked to climate change. In a few years' time, any entity that does not move towards an environmental policy will certainly no longer be relevant. Refusing to take an interest in the climate debate, to reflect on its internal practices, and not to see that in a few years' time the reflection on the preservation of the environment will be so extensive that no institution of any kind will be able to avoid it, seems to be a closed-mindedness and a highly damaging lack of anticipation of the future. It is of course an ethical and symbolic duty to be involved in these reflections on climate change, but it is also purely logical and realistic.

Therefore, Querini today seems to be very far from this kind of concern. As in many organisations, these issues seem to be too far from the core business, the economic challenges are too present, and conducting a real reflection and analysis on this environmental issue does not correspond either to the skills of the current employees or

to the guidelines originally envisaged. However, today, and particularly in Venice, this issue is crucial. Moreover, this direction would also allow the QSF to distinguish itself now from other cultural institutions in the city that have not yet made this shift. Some cultural institutions have already understood the importance of this issue, to mention only the most important one: the Venice Biennale is radically orienting its exhibitions around this topic. In 2021, the theme of the Architecture Biennale was for instance: *How will we live together?*

Thinking about a sustainable environmental policy within the QSF can again focus on different points.

On the one hand, the Querini must revisit all of its practices in order to adopt the most ecological behaviour possible internally. This means firstly analysing its practices with regard to its impact on the environment, i.e. its carbon impact, reflecting on its energy consumption, questioning the quality and sustainability of the products on sale (in the cafeteria or the shop), developing internal communication on the subject but also extending it to all users of the premises, limiting the negative environmental impact of its exhibitions or collections, to list just a few of the requirements.

This set of needs to achieve a more eco-responsible institution may seem at first glance to be inconsistent with the primary missions of the place and unrealistic in view of the tasks that the Querini is currently undertaking. However, these reflections seem to be indispensable and can also be part of a wider global project of social responsibility of the foundation. Again taking the original will of the Foundation, the Count states regarding the Foundation: *"It is something which is missing in this city, and which I believe useful to promote high interest in good studies and useful disciplines, which is the main goal of Fondazione Querini."*¹⁴⁸ It is the duty of the Foundation to define what these "useful disciplines" are, and it seems to me that today, and even more so in Venice, the environmental question is a crucial discipline, impacting all the other existing disciplines.

On the other hand, it seems important that these questions are present in the cultural programming of the institution. The QSF seems to be relatively aware of this need, as shown by the work carried out with one of the former trainees of the Querini. An intern was employed by the Querini to produce a podcast related to the environmental humanities. More specifically, the podcast was to highlight the environmental issues that

¹⁴⁸ *Testamento e Codicillo del comte Giovanni Querinni Stampalia, cit.*, p. 3, (translation by the QSF).

were clearly or more subtly involved in the artworks presented in the rooms of the Querini's museum. Unfortunately, this initiative was not presented over a long period. However, such a link made between the Foundation's collections, their historical contribution and the contemporary debate around environmental sustainability seems to be an adequate approach. This initiative has made it possible to use the collections as a support, but also to consider them from another angle, that of the environment. It therefore seems to me that the QSF could develop this kind of project with an environmental scope, without losing the essential link it must have with the collections and the Foundation's premises.

Finally, and as already mentioned above, Venice is full of associations trying to defend the preservation of the city through actions to inform about climate change, or to preserve as much as possible the ecosystem and the Venetian biodiversity. Connecting with these associations, offering them the opportunity to intervene in the city, and providing the scientific support sometimes necessary to fuel their battles, is an important way to support the fight against climate change.

All in all, these points seem to be essential to give the Querini the legitimacy it needs to survive in the future.

4. 3. 4. Participate in the social and economic sustainability of the city, by fostering professional opportunities

Another important element that I think should be developed for the Querini and that would also respond to the demands of the young people who frequent its walls is to contribute regarding the professional opportunities that exist in Venice. Working on this issue of work in Venice would also be a way to participate in the social and economic sustainability of the city and to act as intermediaries to develop job offers in the city.

Therefore, here are some guidelines in this direction, keeping in mind the limits of the institution.

- *Cultural programming linked to university programmes*

First of all, it seems important that the Querini should seek to develop these links with the universities, and to build its cultural programme in line with the latter's teaching. Offering conferences, exhibitions, meetings around the programme studied, would be a

good way to interest the students working in the library's rooms, and to provide them with knowledge that goes beyond that offered by the university. For example, one of the specificities of Ca'Foscari is its number of students learning foreign languages: the QSF could therefore try to reach this audience by proposing book presentations related to culture, exchanges around associated personalities, meetings or screenings on this theme. These links would be a way of getting in touch with students in the library, but also of putting them in touch with professionals involved in the disciplines studied.

- *Associated youth with the OpificioQuerini network*

The QSF has set up OpificioQuerini¹⁴⁹, a network of 10 companies that work within the Querini. From companies specialising in air conditioning (Viessmann Italy) to companies specialising in the conservation of works of art (Lares), these companies are varied and have strong roots in the Venetian territory. Being part of this group allows them to expand their network, by participating in events or meetings, and to form a group of actors at the service of the cultural institutions of Venice.

This group is a valuable tool for these companies, but it could also be used by the young people attending the Querini. Broadening the links and meetings associated with this membership by opening them up to Querini users would allow them to meet professionals working in Venice, and perhaps create professional opportunities as a result of these meetings. In the same vein and more widely, the Querini could also organise professional meetings for its youth within its establishment, without necessarily being limited to the OpificioQuerini network.

- *A free-to-use room or even a coworking space?*

How can the QSF position itself in relation to the impetus of new ways of working, distance working, which affects both students taking distance learning courses and professionals from various sectors?

Today, the QSF library offers mainly a space for students, working autonomously and in silence. A distance worker (student or employee) could hardly use the space

¹⁴⁹ FONDAZIONE QUERINI STAMPALIA, *OpificioQuerini*, [online], <https://www.querinistampalia.org/ita/sostienici/opificioquerini.php>? web page last accessed on 7/06/2022.

because of the silence and the impossibility to exchange that the library imposes. The Querini could therefore offer a room, a place specifically dedicated to an online working population. This room would make it possible to receive calls, or to make video-calls, to exchange freely, but also to create a community of workers or students of this type in the city.

The risk of this solution would be to become primarily a co-working space, rather than a research and knowledge space dependent on these collections. However, this option would accept the changes in learning today, which rely less and less on physical collections. Dedicating a space to professional work would be a way of acknowledging that the Querini's primary purpose is to provide any kind of working space when other institutions do not.

Providing a space not for reading but where exchange and communication aloud is possible seems to be a service that is missing at Querini. Within the Querini, there are currently very few places where the user can stay to make a call or do "noisy" work. The café does not accept users who do not drink, either inside or outside. The only place that is accessible to all is the inner courtyard, but that is ultimately a place of passage, with sofas made for resting rather than working. It would therefore be useful to provide a space for free use.

To take this further, it would also be possible to charge for access to this coworking space. While a student could use this space on a temporary and punctual basis and therefore not have to pay to have access to it, paid workers could see access to these places conditioned by a financial participation. This financial participation would be justified if the professionals use it on a daily basis, to replace an office that they do not have at home. In order not to be too far removed from the original wishes of the will, it would perhaps be appropriate to have a job with a certain link to the fields present within the Querini (culture, architecture, Venice, the book trade, etc.).

These free rooms or work rooms would therefore make it possible to exploit the atmosphere of the premises, open the Querini to a wider public, and create a new source of income for the Foundation. They would also correspond to the main vision of the Querini as defined above, i.e., a space for exchange and intellectual emulation.

4. 3. 5. Redefining the role and use of the Foundation's bibliographic collections

All these proposals also lead us to think again about the place of the collections, and in particular the bibliographic collections, in the organisation of the Querini.

Although the QSF is defined by its collections, it seems complicated today to continue to use them in the way they are used today. The staff recognise that there is an increasing drop in demand for the books. So how can the Querini exploit this resource? Obviously, access to these documents should be left to the specialised public, who need them as a research tool. But this fonds could also be used in other ways.

For example, from the point of view of developing teaching within Querini, these books could be used as a support for courses, training and activities offered by Querini. In the same way that today the collections are used in the various programmes associated with education, this could be the case if a training package, not only dedicated to the school public, were to be set up. In the same way, if meetings or exchanges are developed, these moments of thought and encounters could also be based on the institution's collection, as a starting point or support for reflection.

Furthermore, the digitisation of the collections could also be an avenue for modernisation that should not be overlooked. Some large libraries are currently digitising their historical collections, as is the case with the Harvard Library. The Querini, by digitising its own documents, would have a wider scope in terms of visibility, and could also charge a certain price to be able to consult certain documents.

Although I am aware that these proposals are ambitious for an institution that is fragile at various levels, I feel that these lines of thought for the future of the QSF correspond to its cornerstone. In fact, this vision, together with these proposals, responds to the wishes of Count Giovanni Querini and is in keeping with the history of the Foundation, as it uses its collections and spaces to support knowledge and project itself into the future. All of these proposals also seem to me to take into account young people and their current concerns, between professional research and climate anxiety. The QSF must find its direction and take its rightful place in the Venetian cultural institutional panorama. This duty is indispensable to respond to its social responsibility, which stems from the will on which it depends, but also from the role it has built up over time. Taking the time to reflect on its foundations and ambitions and on the structural changes it can

carry out seems to be indispensable in order to overcome its challenges and to take a position in a Venice in demand.

CHAPTER 5: REFLECTION AND METHODOLOGICAL INPUT ON THE MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

The aim of this chapter is to present the research methodology adopted, and to highlight the difficulties encountered. These difficulties are mainly related to the conduct of interviews, marked by subjective and sometimes biased opinions and speech controlled by different power relations.

5. 1. Research methodology

5. 1. 1. Overall methodology

My topic led me to analyse two Venetian cultural institutions in parallel. This simultaneous analysis allowed me to highlight some similar mechanisms specific to the cultural Foundations in Venice, but also constituted a difficulty in the methodology adopted.

The first difficulty was to analyse concomitantly two institutions that are nevertheless very different because of their status. Indeed, the main distinction between the QSF and the BLMF is that the former is private and the latter public. This distinction conditions the independence and autonomy of the Foundations with regard to the political power in place. Therefore, a public foundation is part of a larger cultural policy project, and in addition to its own objectives defined at the time of its creation, must also respond to the objectives and programmes set by the public authority in place. The private foundation, on the other hand, although partly dependent on funding from the municipality, is not part of a wider project and exists for itself and its own ambitions.

It seemed important to me to highlight these dependencies and power relations in order to understand the evolution of these institutions and their limits. How, then, to conduct an academic analysis of such institutions? My analysis has sought to adopt a perspective:

- Historical, tracing the history of these institutions and the definition over time of their objectives and particularities;
- Contextual, anchored in the Venetian context, understanding their interactions with the main actors (municipality, other institutions, citizens, associations) and

the debates of the city (exodus, mass tourism, environmental issues, political changes);

- Contemporary, analysing these institutions today, both from an internal (management, human resources) and an external point of view (what place they have today, what are their ambitions and future objectives);
- Critically, to take a critical view of all their activities.

To carry out all these elements, I relied on:

- A thorough observation of the places, of the interactions that are created, of the movements within each foundation, of the path of the visitors but also of the employees;
- A bibliography composed of historical documents, various publications, political and critical articles, documentary works;
- A focused group conducted within the QSF and involving different actors invested in the institution;
- Various interviews: a historian from Venice, current QSF employees, former QSF employees and current BLMF employees.

5. 1. 2. Interview methodology

I chose to work through semi-structured interviews. That is to say, by defining beforehand a certain number of questions and points to be addressed with each interviewee, while keeping a certain flexibility of questioning in view of each profile of the interviewees and the thread of the conversation. The main points discussed with all interviewees were the following:

- Presentation and link of the interviewee with the institution;
- Description of the Foundation currently and perceived objectives;
- Role of the Foundation in Venice;
- Role of the Foundation in relation to youth;
- Links between the Foundation and the Municipality;
- Funding of the Foundation.

All these questions were aimed at understanding the role of the Foundation as a whole, its limitations and its ambitions for the future.

Regarding the profile of the interviewees, each had between 3 months and 30 years of experience and links in the Foundation studied. The participants had different hierarchical and involvement levels in the Foundations, from the lowest level, to middle-managers, and finally director. The interviews lasted between 45min and 1.5 hours and were mainly conducted at the place of study (apart from some videocall interviews). They were conducted in English or Italian, depending on the preference of the interviewee.

This type of semi-structured interviews takes the model of interviews favoured by various academic researchers working on museum institutions. For example, Paul F. Marty¹⁵⁰ describes his research and interview method in a similar way, semi-structured interviews he conducted with 21 employees with different profiles working in various American museums.

5. 2. The difficulties encountered

Concerning the interviews conducted, different points and difficulties can be noted.

First of all, most of the interviewees were willing and happy to exchange and reflect on the institutions in which they work or evolve. A strong emotional bond was therefore clearly felt, and the interviewees were all committed to their relationship with each Foundation, having created a more simply professional bond. In each participant it seemed to me that a real feeling of belonging, and attachment was visible. The interviewees were therefore largely invested in each of their subjects and were genuinely seeking to understand the dynamics of their foundation, the avenues for improvement and their personal contribution. The interviewees were passionate about their subject and invested both personally and professionally in it.

This emotional bond also presented a difficulty in the task of academic analysis: it was sometimes difficult to detect whether the information given was consistent with the reality of the place or was biased by their own appreciation and valuing of an institution that they cared about.

¹⁵⁰ MARTY, P. F., Finding the skills for tomorrow: Information literacy and museum information professionals, in *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Volume 21, Issue 4, December 2006, p. 317-335.

Furthermore, in each interview an element of difficulty was the freedom of speech versus a certain restraint or difficulty in addressing more critical points. Therefore, the interviewees who were far away from the institution had a greater facility to give their personal opinion on the points raised. Sometimes this opinion was even highly critical and sought to question the current position or the leadership of the institutions. In contrast, interviewee closer to the Foundations showed a restraint and difficulty in addressing certain issues. The most problematic issues were mainly related to funding, and the difficulty of criticising the management of the companies in which each person was still working. Some interviewees were uncomfortable with discussing these subjects, and their answers were rather neutral or corresponded to the official discourse.

A discrepancy therefore became apparent. While the outsiders were critical and questioned a certain number of decisions taken by each of the Foundations without seeking to embellish the Foundation in question, the insiders were uncritical, and sought first to justify their Foundation and emphasise their personal contribution.

Conducting these different types of interviews in parallel also made it possible to highlight the power relationships within the Foundations, and to emphasise that adopting a critical point of view remains complicated and controversial.

Moreover, as a researcher, it was difficult to transcribe all of these points of view, which were sometimes contradictory and sensitive for the interviewees and the Foundations.

5. 3. Limits of my research

My research has had some limitations which have been updated as my work has progressed.

First of all, I found it sometimes difficult to work simultaneously on two Foundations, although similar in many aspects, different in others. This difficulty was noticeable first in the amount of time I had to divide between the two, then in the construction of the development, and finally in my decision to concentrate primarily on one of the Foundations, the QSF. I still chose to analyse each of the institutions equally from the point of view of history and social contribution to the city, but I focused mainly on the QSF regarding the challenges of the Foundation and the possibilities of improvement that I envisaged for the future. It should be noted, however, that these

institutions are closely linked through their employees, which was highly visible among the interviewed participants.

Furthermore, in order to conduct each of the analyses in greater depth, working at least one period as an employee within these Foundations would have been a great help and would have allowed me to deepen the reflection. An internal viewpoint, greater proximity to the participants in my research, a broader capacity to analyse, all of which would have enabled me to make a better managerial analysis of these Foundations. This would also have helped me to overcome certain biases that were noted during the interviews, which were formal interviews, whereas speech could have been freer and developed in a less formal context.

Finally, a limit that would have been easier to overcome was the number of interviewees. It might have been useful to interview a larger number of actors involved in these Foundations and to broaden the spectrum of interviewees to include people who are collateral and not central to the institutions, such as simple users of the QSF library, visitors to the exhibitions of the two Foundations, or artists currently in residence at the BLMF. However, I was able to broaden my approach by working on a focused group at the QSF on the theme of the library, where I was not present. I had then access to less formal thoughts, the thought process within the QSF. This focused group was a key element in my understanding of the development of the definition strategy that QSF is currently conducting.

These boundaries could be used by other students wishing to conduct academic research on a museum institution. These are very specific institutions, but they are very interesting because of their dynamism, the importance of their historical development in defining their identity, and the strong link with the city, society and its citizens.

In sum, this academic research has shed light on some of the mechanisms involved in conducting interviews. However, this practice is highly useful for the analysis of a cultural institution and remains indispensable for the analysis of dynamic and evolving Foundations. Adopting a broad perspective, looking at each Foundation from a historical, textual, contemporary and critical point of view, also allowed for a broad analysis highlighting the different interrelationships and interdependencies.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this thesis, the QSF and the BLMF have an essential historical and contemporary importance to the city thanks to a policy that is mainly oriented towards youth and towards the social and economic sustainability of Venice.

This importance is firstly materialised by the support they give to the young population in the city. This support takes the form, on the one hand of the library and space that the QSF offers to the city's students and, on the other hand, of the artists' residences that the BLMF makes available each year to promising young creators. Despite intrinsic or external difficulties in their organisation, they have been maintained for more than a century, they have marked the city by their cultural contribution and by the personalities who have crossed their wall, and they are still distinguished today by their expertise, their historical weight but also the example they embody. There are few cultural institutions in Venice that can boast of supporting the creative force, both artistic and in the production of scientific knowledge, of a young population since the end of the nineteenth century. Finally proposing an offer that seeks to move with the times, in order to maintain its legitimacy and know-how.

Therefore, these Foundations have a role in the economic and social sustainability of the city. In a Venetian context, where tourism is becoming increasingly important and the exodus of the population is weakening the city, these Foundations embody cultural institutions that are oriented towards a stable population and towards a model that seeks first to respond to the needs of society before seeking economic profitability linked to tourism. Of course, they benefit from this industry. However, through the services offered to the young population, whether it be through the granting of study rooms, an exceptional place for its atmosphere and its history, or residences and grants dedicated to the emergence of contemporary artists, these institutions fulfil their role and are entirely legitimate in their actions. There are indeed challenges to be raised, which could weaken these Foundations and therefore jeopardise their social role: firstly, an economic fragility, but also an organisational fragility, which sometimes prevents these institutions from fully supporting youth and the city. Their policies may seem limited by these

challenges, and it is sometimes difficult to define a clear guideline while respecting the founding wishes of their legatees.

However, these Foundations have opportunities and avenues for improvement which they are considering and which I propose to them at the end of my thesis. These proposals take into account the fundamental professional needs of the city's youth, but also on the need for space, the need for social links and exchanges which Venice lacks today, and which would nevertheless allow to reflect on the city of tomorrow, a city which could be sustainable in every sense of the word. Socially sustainable, with a varied and growing population, economically, diversifying its economy beyond tourism, and environmentally, respecting nature and its rights. By defining themselves as a place of knowledge and reflection on the future, on the upcoming creation, these Foundations could embody the Venice of the future, aware of its dependence on tourism, but trying to question it and reflect on the opportunities of tomorrow.

All in all, as a foreign student in Venice for a year, or maybe more, this thesis and these two Foundations made a big impression on me. As a passer-by, I quickly understood the challenges that concentrate the city: tourism, omnipresent water, an Italian language that is not heard enough, a one-way economy, a lack of services to its population... In the middle of this ensemble, incredible cultural institutions that hide in its *calle*. These institutions are the wealth of the city, but its future also depends on them. Incomparable historical heritage, they are also being transformed to meet the expectations of the population, but also the expectations of a student like me, in search of a place to work with such a special atmosphere, welcoming and steeped in history, perfect for writing her thesis, what better place than the QSF? Or looking for contemporary exhibitions at the cutting edge of artistic creation, what better place than the BLMF? These institutions have built a strong place over time linked to its stable population, but also to its passers-by, to temporary youth, who build themselves through it, and leave a perhaps partial imprint on these places, but who ultimately end up participating in their changes and definition for the future.

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