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**Inside a temporary art exhibition:
registrars and external personnel in the
Italian Museum system**

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“We would dearly love to know the wave that is carrying us over the ocean,
but we *are* that wave”¹

Jacob Burckhardt

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¹ L. Gossman, *Basel in the Age of Burckhardt: A Study in Unseasonable Ideas*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000, p. 529 (italics is not mine).

Introduction

The present thesis aims at deepening the current situation of the Italian museum system. In particular, the role of human resources will be analyzed in order to highlight the relevance of their professional performances inside an art institution, focusing on the making of a temporary exhibition.

This project originates from the acquaintance of Clarenza Catullo, former Registrar and Director of the Collections hosted at Mart Museum in Rovereto, Italy, who also worked at Palazzo Grassi and Guggenheim Collection in Venice. First with Ca' Foscari Mentorship Program, then with an internship inside the Collection Management and Exhibition Coordination Office at Mart Museum, Catullo profoundly contributed to this dissertation. Thanks to her knowledge and trust, the undersigned was able to conduct a series of sixteen interviews to art professionals, fifteen of which operate as freelancers or inside private firms. These last work at different levels of the “production chain” and cover different roles. A crucial aspect is that most of them declare that, when it comes to building temporary displays inside art museums, the registrar is their point of reference, as well as the pivotal figure of the whole process. At the present time, museums are by definition the “repositories”² of cultural heritage of mankind. The first chapter “The Italian Museum system and human resources” will shed light on this concept, as museums are vital public spaces and have assumed an “irreplaceable representative role”³ for their country, city, society, and community in the broader sense. By establishing themselves as “modern cathedrals” of the present, their urban centrality is clear in the plurality of purposes that they fulfil. They are now considered polyfunctional centers, offering multiple activities which attract a variety of audience categories. Subchapter 1.2 will deepen the entry of the private sector in Italian art museums. The fluidity and porosity, which characterizes museums today has led the public and the private spheres to intermingle and overlap more and more. For the purpose of, this thesis three levels of privatization are analyzed: the management

² UNESCO, *Recommendation concerning the protection and the promotion of museum and collections, their diversity and their role in society*, Paris, 20 November 2015, p. 5.

³ A. Lugli, G. Pinna, V. Vercelloni, *Tre idee di museo*, Milano: Jaca Book, 2005, p. 39; “un ruolo rappresentativo insostituibile”.

of the core organization, including the legal status and the financial support, the complementary services, and human resources. As the focus of the dissertation is in fact museum professionals, a great attention is paid to this last point in particular, in order to analyze and emphasize the increasing phenomenon of outsourcing this sort of professional figures. Subchapter 1.3 is exclusively dedicated to personnel and the state of the art of their formal recognition in the national museum system. Between ICOM Code of Ethics and the National Charter of the Museum Professions, the attention to museum staff in Italy has gradually increased and this demonstrates their key role in the development of the art museum in which they work. In recent years, important information has been brought to light and the search for a standardization of professional profiles is still actively ongoing.

The second chapter “The registrar: a phantom limb of the national museum system” will focus on the contribution of temporary exhibitions to keep art museums alive. In fact, they are considered an “experimental ground for museography”⁴, scientific projects, research, and a tool for cultural enrichment. The exponential growth of art loans, as a result of globalization, led to the emergence of a new professional profile: the registrar. This figure was in charge of recording every art piece, arranging packing and transport, storage and installation⁵, and always ensuring the safeguard of the works in every step of the process. By retracing the history of the registrar profile inside museums, subchapter 2.1 provides an overall view of their evolution in U. S. A. and in Europe, from their birth in the early years of 1900 until the present time. The following subchapter deepens the development of the position in the Italian territory. Even though the registrar is “the flywheel that ‘moves’ the artworks of one of the largest lending countries”⁶ and covers a central and interdisciplinary role in the making of an exhibition, it can be argued that they are a phantom limb of the art museum system.

⁴ C. G. Argan, *Il pubblico dell'arte*, Firenze: Sansoni, 1982, pp. XII-XIII; “terreno sperimentale per la museografia”.

⁵ H. Vassal, S. Daynes-Diallo, *From Functions to Profession: The Emergence and Rise of Registrar Profession in Europe*, in “Museum International”, 2016, vol. 68, pp. 59-70, here pp. 62-63.

⁶ F. Bonino, *Introduction by Flaminia Bonino*, in *Registrar di opere d'arte. Atti della terza conferenza europea. Approfondimenti sul ruolo e le competenze dei registrar in Europa*, F. Bonino, K. Spurrell (curated by), Milano: Silvana editoriale - Registrarte, 2004; “il volano che ‘muove’ le opere d’arte di uno dei maggiori paesi prestatori al mondo, spesso opera dietro le quinte e con appellativi differenti e molteplici”.

Despite this fact, the registrar is the holder of the “procedural chain”⁷ leading to an art display. In subchapter 2.3 the profile of the registrar is associated to other roles, as the former liaison between museum core staff, which is employed full time, and external personnel, which is hired on a temporary basis. Possessing a “high degree of versatility”⁸, their knowledge and expertise often overlap with other professionals. For the heterogeneity of their missions, registrars must constantly be in contact with the “museum family”⁹. Moreover, they also are responsible for the coordination of the whole staff, during the preparation and the making of a temporary exhibition, and also for overseeing and managing every type of risk and problem that may occur during transport, handling, installation, storage, etc. A series of testimonies from external professionals confirms the importance of this figure, whose tasks and competencies might overlap with others, such as the restorer-conservators. In some cases, Clarenza Catullo is cited by the respondents in the context of temporary exhibitions. Architects, security officers, transport companies, lighting designers, brokers and insurers, art handlers and photographers see the registrar as their reference. Subchapter 2.4 directly connects to the previous one, analyzing the phenomenon of outsourcing museum tasks on the occasion of art displays. Freelancers and private companies may possess a more diverse occupational background and thus can contribute to the individual and collective growth of the museum. They can contribute to the creation of a competitive advantage thanks to their know-how and unique level of expertise, gained on the field. In this perspective, Knowledge Sharing and Knowledge Transfer are two key aspects that can be regarded as pollination and cross-pollination processes, leading to the final result, that is the art exhibition. Thus, outsourcing established itself as a necessary, desirable and widespread practice in the cultural and heritage community”¹⁰, touching almost every aspect of the chain, from side to core positions. “Exhibitions are the

⁷ M. Serio, *Introduzione*, in *Registrar di opere d'arte. Atti della terza conferenza europea. Approfondimenti sul ruolo e le competenze dei registrar in Europa*, F. Bonino, K. Spurrell (curated by), Milano: Silvana editoriale - Registrarte, 2004; “catena procedurale”. The translation is from Professione Registrar, in “Registrarte”, <http://www.registrarte.org/p/index.php?page=professione-registrar> [last access 2/02/2022].

⁸ S. Daynes-Diallo, H. Perrel, H. Vassal, *Régisseur d'œuvres : enjeux d'un métier émergent et perspectives de professionnalisation*, in “In Situ. Revue des patrimoines”, vol. 30, 2016, p. 3 ; “grande polyvalence”.

⁹ M. Case, *Registrars on Record. Essays on Museum Collections Management*. Washington D.C.: Registrars Committee of the American Association of Museums, 1988, p. 25.

¹⁰ J. Harrison, *Outsourcing in Museums*, in “International Journal of Arts Management”, Vol. 2, No. 2, Winter 2000, pp. 14-25, here p. 16.

material outcome of a combination of many diverse skills [...]. The participation of different specialists will be necessary to achieve this”¹¹.

Chapter 3 is titled “Externalization in temporary art exhibitions: who does what?” and strives to demonstrate the importance of each collaborator working for the organization of a temporary exhibition. As already mentioned, it presents sixteen interviews. Raffaele Cipolletta, Architect and Exhibition Designer; Claudio Bertani, Managing Director of AGE S.r.l.; Giacomo Andrea Doria, Charged of Exhibition Set-ups, OTT ART; Filippo Trevisanello, Framer at Cornici Trevisanello; Andrea Orlando, Painter and Decorator at Fratelli Orlando S.n.c.; Giorgio Bacciolo, Blacksmith at Bacciolo Gelsomino e Figli S.r.l.; Leonardo Carrer, President and CEO of APICE S.C.r.l.; Antonella Cimarolli, former Marshal Chief of Security at Mart Museum; Alessandra Zambaldo and Isabella Bellinazzo, freelance professionals and external Conservator-Restorers at Mart Museum; Luisa Mensi, self-employed and external Conservator-Restorer at Castello di Rivoli; Claudio Cervelli, freelancer Lighting Designer; Olivier Maupas and Dario Zannier, free-lance Graphic Designers; Matteo De Fina, free-lance Photographer, Annalisa Casagrande, Education and Cultural Mediation Area at Mart Museum; Dario Pinton, self-employed Guide. Combining forces and expertise, external and internal personnel give birth to temporary art exhibitions, even if they are often not visible to the public.

¹¹ Y. Herreman, *Display, Exhibits and Exhibitions*, in *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*, ICOM, Paris: ICOM, 2004, pp. 91-103, here p. 95.

I

The Italian Museum system and human resources

1.1 Art museums in Italy: polyfunctional institutions

“Italy is also identified with its unparalleled treasures, with the history that shaped them [...] and that composes the DNA of our cities and our people”¹²: these are the words spoken by Sergio Mattarella, President of the Italian Republic, in 2016. Museums, in particular art museums, are the repositories of some of these unique and special treasures and should aim at preserving and protecting them. As “vital public spaces”¹³, they have assumed “an irreplaceable representative role”¹⁴ with respect to the place in which they are situated. Reflecting the evolution of mankind, they play a crucial part in its development and thus act as one of the main interconnection points of the civil, political, and economic progress¹⁵ of their country. As a result, from 1950 to 1996, the number of these institutions in the Italian territory exponentially increased from 534 to 4.120¹⁶. In 2018, the number reached 4.908, consisting of 3.882 museums and collections (79.1%), 630 monuments, 327 archaeological areas and 69 ecomuseums¹⁷. Among them, about 9% is managed by the State¹⁸, while the remaining is run by local authorities, private businesses, non-profit institutions, and religious bodies. The high presence of cultural sites is also evident in their dissemination: in Italy, a museum structure is present every fifty square kilometers and every six thousand inhabitants¹⁹.

The undeniable relevance of art institutions – and of the cultural sector in the broad sense – can be analyzed in several respects. The two macro areas that museums

¹² S. Mattarella, Intervention to the conference “*Città d’arte 3.0, il futuro delle Città d’Arte in Italia*”, Mantova, 2016; “l’Italia si identifica anche con i suoi tesori impareggiabili, con la storia che li ha plasmati [...] e che compone il DNA delle nostre città e del nostro popolo”; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fF2-Muy-fH0> last access [10/12/2021].

¹³ UNESCO, *Recommendation concerning the protection and the promotion of museum and collections, their diversity and their role in society*, Paris, 20 November 2015, p. 5.

¹⁴ A. Lugli, G. Pinna, V. Vercelloni, *Tre idee di museo*, Milano: Jaca Book, 2005, p. 39; “un ruolo rappresentativo insostituibile”.

¹⁵ P. Dubini, “*Con la cultura non si mangia*” (*Falso!*), Roma: Laterza, 2018, p. 3.

¹⁶ D. Jalla, *Il museo contemporaneo*, Torino: UTET, 2000, p. 43. The number includes museums, archaeological sites, monuments, and eco-museums.

¹⁷ ISTAT, *L’Italia dei musei 2019*, 23 December 2019, p. 2.

¹⁸ P. Dubini, “*Con la cultura non si mangia*” (*Falso!*), Roma: Laterza, 2018, pp. 61-62.

¹⁹ ISTAT, *L’Italia dei musei 2019*, 23 December 2019, p. 2.

represent are the identity-social-educational one on one side, and the economic-commercial one on the other. It is needless to say that contemporary institutions, conceived as meeting points proposing a variety of services, have weaved a complex and interconnected web of functions that goes beyond this simplistic division. However, this initial partitioning will serve the purpose of this thesis' reasoning by underlining the utilitarian and non-utilitarian aspects of the museum system, which will be further linked to the private and public spheres. This analysis will consider as well the way in which way these last compenetrates each other and foster new common grounds for the development of the sector.

	Stato	Università	Regione	Provincia	Comune	Ecclesias.	Privata	Altre	Totale
1950	122	2	-	15	243	77	66	9	534
%	22,8%	0,4%	0,0%	2,8%	45,5%	14,4%	12,4%	1,7%	100%
1990	483	194	91	57	1471	432	523	60	3311
%	14,6%	5,9%	2,7%	1,7%	44,5%	13,0%	15,8%	1,8%	100%
1996	551	250	90	77	1735	535	707	175	4120
%	13,4%	6,0%	2,1%	1,9%	42,1%	13,0%	17,2%	4,3%	100%

Ill. 1 D. Jalla, *Il museo contemporaneo*, Torino: UTET, 2000, p. 43. The exponential growth of museums between 1950 and 1996 in Italy. Their juridical position is also explained: they are managed by the State, the university, the region, the province, the municipality, the ecclesiastical bodies, private subjects, others. The last column on the right represents the total.

Being the museum “in the service of society and its development”²⁰, it “acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment”²¹. Because of the materials and techniques with which the artistic heritage is created, art is constantly changing and evolving into new expressions and outcomes. Museums should monitor this process and succeed in protecting and safeguarding art in the best possible manner, not only for present generations but also and above all for future ones²². Art museums house the aesthetic testimonies of history, in which present communities reflect themselves in different ways and for different reasons: “culture has an identity value: we understand who we are and where we come from thanks to culture”²³. By assisting in stimulating collective and strong reflections, “museums can

²⁰ ICOM, *ICOM Statutes*, amended and adopted by the Extraordinary General Assembly on 9th June 2017, Paris, France, Art. 3 section 1, p. 3.

²¹ Ibid.

²² P. Dubini, “*Con la cultura non si mangia*” (*Falso!*), Roma: Laterza, 2018, p. 23.

²³ Ibid, p. 6.

serve to reflect change and continuity in cultural values and cultural identity”²⁴. In fact, a further goal that Italian museums should seek towards its public is to broaden its knowledge: visiting an art exhibition or a permanent collection should mean experiencing a cultural enrichment. In particular, educational services provide to all types of audience the tools for a personal reading of the art pieces, initiating a learning process that starts from the observation and identification of the formal elements and the different languages adopted by the artists²⁵. Constant research and study by the specialized personnel are the key aspects to succeed in the process of collective social growth, that can be associated, to some extent, with the one of Knowledge Sharing and Transfer²⁶. From the local inhabitants to the overseas sightseers, these multi-purpose institutions aim at providing an individual cultural enrichment and a collective economic enrichment. In Italy and in other countries, they trigger a leverage effect and make the tourism industry the first beneficiary of it²⁷. In fact, they make “a major difference to the ways in which visitors experience tourist destinations and residents appreciate their own history and heritage”²⁸.

The art museum is a driving force for the whole economy: [...] museums can be economic actors in society and contribute to income-generating activities. Moreover, they participate in the tourism economy and with productive projects contributing to the quality of life of the communities and regions in which they are located.²⁹

Culture is a “‘healthy carrier’ of wealth (material and immaterial)”³⁰: tourism attractions often develop around cultural ones, thus generating and benefiting from each other’s positive externalities. In 2016, the European Union’s Cultural and

²⁴ T. Ambrose and C. Paine, *Museums Basics. The International handbook*, London and New York: Routledge, 2018, p. 7.

²⁵ E. Valente, S. Vannini, *Il Servizio Educativo*, in *MAXXI: Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo*, P. Baldi (curated by), Milano: Electa, 2006, pp.118-119.

²⁶ Further information on the topic of Knowledge Based Theory and Knowledge Sharing and is developed from p. 56.

²⁷ Fondazione Symbola and Unioncamere, *Io Sono Cultura - Rapporto 2017*, 2017, p. 6; L. Cataldo, M. Paraventi, *Il museo oggi. Linee guida per una museologia contemporanea*, Milano: Hoepli, 2007, p.42.

²⁸ T. Ambrose and C. Paine, *Museums Basics. The International handbook*, London and New York: Routledge, 2018, p. 7.

²⁹ UNESCO, *Recommendation concerning the protection and Promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society*, Paris, 20 November 2015, p. 5.

³⁰ P. Dubini, “*Con la cultura non si mangia*” (*Falso!*), Roma: Laterza, 2018, p. 76; “‘portatrice sana’ di ricchezza (materiale e immateriale)”.

Creative Sectors (CCS) accounted for 4.2% of the Gross Domestic Product³¹, which consists in the Union's overall production, and it measures its economic health. Similar considerations refer to the United States, where “the arts contributed \$763.6 billion to the U.S. economy in 2015 [...] and counted 4.9 million workers”³². In Italy, in 2017 the CCS produced 6% of the total wealth, that is 89,9 billion of euro³³. It has also been pointed out that in Italy the multiplier effect of culture has a coefficient of 1,8: this means that the aforementioned 89,9 billion stimulates another 160 billion of euros. The amount reached is 250 billion and it constitutes the profit produced by the entire cultural chain. The latter equals to 16.7% of the national added value³⁴. According to estimates, the spread of Covid-19 made National museums suffer an economic loss of about 20 billion of euros per month³⁵. In Europe, the CCS lose 30% of its turnover, which went from 650 billion of euro in 2019, to about 440 billion in 2020³⁶. Despite the present health crisis, museums and cultural institutions are two of the milestones characterizing and representing the past and the present moment. Even if their birth is relatively recent, their evolution has been rapid and incessant. Bringing together utilitarian and non-utilitarian purposes – as briefly mentioned –, museums represent the emblematic place of culture and cultural enrichment. However, in Salvatore Settis' opinion, archaeologist and art historian, “there is no guarantee that museums will still exist in a hundred or fifty years: they are a historical formation that, like others, can at some point exhaust its vitality”³⁷. For this reason, it should be the society's duty to keep them alive since museums, in turn, keep the human's history alive.

³¹ European Union, *Good practice report. Towards more efficient financial ecosystems: innovative instruments to facilitate access to finance for the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS)*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016, p.8; <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f433d9df-deaf-11e5-8fea-01aa75ed71a1> [last access 20/12/2021].

³² Data released by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), *The Arts Contribute More Than \$760 Billion to the U.S. Economy*, in “National Endowment for the Arts”, 6 March 2018; <https://www.arts.gov/about/news/2018/arts-contribute-more-760-billion-us-economy> [last access 20/12/2021].

³³ Fondazione Symbola, Unioncamere, *Io Sono Cultura - Rapporto 2017*, 2017, p.5.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Fondazione Symbola, Unioncamere, *Io Sono Cultura - Rapporto 2020. Interview to Antonio Tarasco*, 2020, p. 223.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁷ S. Settis, Roma al futuro, in *MAXXI: Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo*, P. Baldi (curated by), Milano: Electa, 2006, pp. 28-31, here p. 30; “nulla garantisce che i musei debbano ancora esistere fra cento o cinquant'anni: essi sono una formazione storica che, come altre, può a un certo punto esaurire la propria vitalità”.

Different subjects, of public and private kind, manage Italian museums and contribute to preserve the national heritage. Among them: public administration bodies – the ministry, the superintendencies, the museums centers, the local culture departments, the civic museums... – more than 218,000 non-profit bodies (from public/private partnerships, such as the Egyptian Museum of Turin, to foundations and associations), the cultural enterprises, the media and the companies specialized in distribution of content³⁸. To understand the difference in terms of management, it will be helpful to mention few examples: the National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rome is a ministerial institution; the Museum of Modern art in Bologna (MAMbo) is property of the Municipality of the city. In Turin, the Civic Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art (GAM) and Castello di Rivoli – a cultural association – function as long-term deposits for the artworks acquired by the foundation Cassa di Risparmio di Torino (CRT). Trussardi Foundation, Prada Foundation, Vedova Foundation, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Foundation, Triennale Milano, Palazzo Strozzi Foundation, Cini Foundation, Merz Foundation, Querini Stampalia Foundation are all private entities. On the other hand, Viafarini in Milan is a non-profit organization promoting emerging artists; in the past it was able to involve in its financial management the Municipality and the Province of Milan, together with Lombardy region and the Italian Cultural Heritage Department. Among the several private art galleries, Galleria Continua has also established a not-for-profit association (Associazione Continua) which bears an active social mission. Created in 1987-1988, Mart Museum is an autonomous body of the Province of Trento and Rovereto. As is clear, the world of Italian art institutions is wide, complex, and layered. Although sharing the same functional and non-functional goals in different ways and proportions, these structures are characterized by openness and fluidity. These two main features help to lay the foundations for a “liquid” dialogue concerning art museums and institutions, in line with the “Liquid Life”³⁹ we are experimenting inside this “Liquid Modernity”⁴⁰.

This same plurality and push for diversity are evident in the new languages that have emerged in the art field. As art expression reflects the time in which it is created and artists use their ability to process it, in a similar way museums represent these changes,

³⁸ P. Dubini, “*Con la cultura non si mangia*” (*Falso!*), Roma: Laterza, 2018, pp. 64-65.

³⁹ Z. Bauman, *Liquid Life*, Oxford, England: Polity Press, 2005.

⁴⁰ Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Oxford, England: Polity Press, 2000.

reflecting their communities, nations⁴¹ and the global history. As such, it cannot be conceivable that art museums, as places whose main aim is to protect, “[...] preserve, interpret and promote [...]”⁴² the art of the present and the past, have a univocal identity. Due to their high degree of complexity, they are divided, fractionated into as many different declinations as are the different art expressions⁴³. The qualitative transformation museums are facing is thus stimulated by the nature of contemporary art itself, making these institutions “not homogeneous but hybridized”⁴⁴. Art is an open language, always evolving and acquiring new forms: the identity of today’s art museums expresses the different nature of the art displayed inside them. Nonetheless, art museums have also gone through a quantitative transformation⁴⁵: their shape breaks with traditional proportions and expands in the environment. Following a new concept of decentralisation, they distribute themselves through the territory thanks to the concept of widespread museum, open-air art installations, artists’ interventions in architectural spaces and structures⁴⁶, and several social activities. The present multi-layered characterization of museums started to take shape at the end of the first half of the XX century: in 1939, the director of the Museum of Modern Art Alfred H. Barr defined the contemporary art museum as a “laboratory. In its experiments the public is invited to participate”⁴⁷. Becoming a poly-functional center, the art institution has opened its doors to a wider public and aims at educating it by fostering a large cultural proposal. The new image of art museums marks a radical fracture with the traditional concept of museum, according to which art was exclusively collected, conserved, promoted and displayed in the permanent collection, then also through exhibitions and other temporary initiatives⁴⁸. The fact remains that, as in the past as much as in the present, traditional and today’s museums were and still are the center for the formation of knowledge. What has changed is that the museums of the present host different

⁴¹ A. Lugli, G. Pinna, V. Vercelloni, *Tre idee di museo*, Milano: Jaca Book, 2005, p. 10.

⁴² ICOM, *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, Paris, ICOM, 2017, p. 2.

⁴³ A. Polveroni, *This is so contemporary!*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2007, pp. 14-16.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 17; “non omogeneo ma ibridato”.

⁴⁵ This binary transformation of contemporary art museums is presented and developed in A. Polveroni, *This is so contemporary!*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2007, p. 16.

⁴⁶ P. Ciorra, *Museo... e poi?*, in “Rivista IBC” vol. XIV, 4, 2006; <http://rivista.ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/xw-200604/xw-200604-a0012> [last access 20 December 2021].

⁴⁷ Museum of Modern Art, *Art in Our Time: An Exhibition to Celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the Museum of Modern Art and the Opening of Its New Building*, New York: Ayer Publishing, 1972, p.15.

⁴⁸ A. Polveroni, *This is so contemporary!*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2007, p. 16.

kinds of artistic heritage, which mix, overlap, and stratify, fostering a variety of services. Consequently, “this process has raised the level of complexity at both management and governance levels”⁴⁹.

These new evolving multi-purpose models are characterized by the attention to combine the functions of both safeguard and enhancement, of fruition and expansion of the collective heritage, trying to attach equal importance to every cited dimension⁵⁰. Since art museums are called to fulfil several missions, their management structure has become more complex and articulated. The art museum of the present has “a structural vocation to opening”⁵¹, becoming “a fluid rather than structured entity, capable of engaging a different public from the one attracted by art”⁵². This same versatility is not only clear in the type of audience and in the differentiation of the cultural offer, but also on other levels of the system, such as the architectural one. The case of the National Museum of the Arts of the XXI century (MAXXI) in Rome is here emblematic: Zaha Hadid, the architect who designed it, described it as “porous”, “a force field”, “a world to dive into”⁵³. The art museum must respond to “the increasingly complex contemporary urban life”⁵⁴ and should be conceived as the bearer of different layers of cultural narratives, thus speaking multiple languages and being available to a wide audience. Museums, both as architectures and cultural institutions, have established a new urban centrality by appropriating the plurality of functions the city represents and by relaunching it: they are the modern cathedrals⁵⁵ of the present. Moreover, these organizations are a key factor in activating social mobilization processes, gentrification, and urban regeneration. These reflections are

⁴⁹ F. Baldassarre, *Il museo: organizzazione, gestione, marketing*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2009, p. 74; “tale processo ha innalzato il livello di complessità sia a livello gestionale sia a livello di governance”.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 74-75.

⁵¹ A. Polveroni A., *This is so contemporary!*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2007, p. 17; “vocato strutturalmente all’apertura”.

⁵² Ibid.; “un’entità fluida piuttosto che strutturata, capace di coinvolgere un pubblico diverso da quello deputato all’arte”.

⁵³ M. Guccione, *I musei d’arte contemporanea in Italia*, in P. Baldi (edited by), *MAXXI. Museo Nazionale delle Arte del XXI secolo*, Milano: Electa, 2006, p. 90; “poroso”, “un campo di forze”, “un mondo in cui tuffarsi”.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 92; “alla vita urbana contemporanea sempre più complessa, con pubblici mutevoli e sovrapposti dalle esigenze multiple e simultanee”.

⁵⁵ This appellation has become very common in the literature. It is retraceable, among others, in A. Polveroni A., *This is so contemporary!*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2007; F. Poli, *Il Sistema dell’arte contemporanea*, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1999; C. Jencks, T. Wolfe, *Musei. Le nuove cattedrali*, Napoli: Medusa Edizioni, 2016.

demonstrated by many examples: with his project for Guggenheim Bilbao, Frank Gehry was able to reshape the future of the city and show that the art audience overlaps with the more traditional and touristy one. Since its opening in 2000, London's Tate Modern has been a highly transformative element of the reality in which it operates. MADRE Museum in Naples was built in a degraded area of the historical center, while MuSe in Trento was conceived on public initiative with significant economic support and has radically changed both the social space and the economy of the area.

Museums are considered as “the urban monuments par excellence, the main elements of strategy and construction of the city's image”⁵⁶. This reflection inspired Suzanne Greub, director of the Art Center Basel, to conceive in 2000 the exhibition “Museums for a new millennium: concepts, projects, buildings”⁵⁷. The display strove to deepen the constantly changing roles, identities and aims of museums in relation to their structure, the art conserved and exhibited inside, and the world surrounding them. Hosted in numerous international museums, the exhibition travelled to Mart Museum in Rovereto and MAXXI in Rome as well. On this last occasion, Pippo Ciorra – Senior Curator at MAXXI, architect and critics – pointed out a fundamental aspect regarding the new museum architecture.

Today, it is precisely the risk of being cut off from the relationship between art and place that induces architecture to work on the imprecise and open nature of the container, on its strategy of use, or simply on its disappearance and therefore on the con-fusion between architecture, city and landscape⁵⁸.

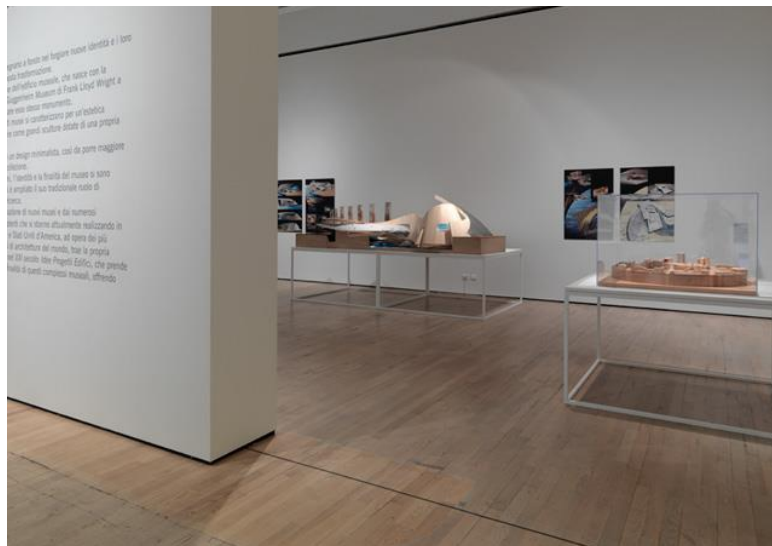
Accordingly, “post-Beaubourg museums” are “metropolitan icons” in which a continuous and active dialogue is established “between their multiple identities (spaces for exhibitions, leisure, study, meetings, shopping, etc.: suffice it to think about the Getty Center of Meier)”. In fact, they “summarize within themselves the city [...] and

⁵⁶ L. Basso Peressut, *Musei, architetture 1990-2000*, Milano: Federico Motta, 1999, pp. 8-52, here p. 37; “monumenti urbani per eccellenza, elementi portanti di strategia e di costruzione dell'immagine di una città”.

⁵⁷ S. Greub, T. Greub, *Museums in the 21st century*, New York: Prestel Publishing, 2006. For further information on the exhibition: <https://fristartmuseum.org/exhibition/museums-in-the-21st-century/> [last access 20 December 2021].

⁵⁸ P. Ciorra, *Museo... e poi?*, in “Rivista IBC” vol. XIV, 4, 2006; “proprio il rischio di essere tagliata fuori dal rapporto tra arte e luogo induce oggi l'architettura a lavorare sulla natura imprecisa e aperta del contenitore, sulla sua strategia d'uso, o semplicemente sulla sua sparizione e quindi sulla con-fusione tra architettura, città e paesaggio”; <http://rivista.ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/xw-200604/xw-200604-a0012> [last access on 20 December 2021].

substitute it”⁵⁹. In some ways, the museum can be conceived as a repository of the same plurality, even if in a substantially smaller scale, that the city possesses, and these two “containers” fluidly intertwine and influence one another.



III. 2 Exhibition view of “Museums in the 21st century. Concepts, projects, buildings”⁶⁰, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2010-2011; ph. Mart, Archivio fotografico e Mediateca.

1.2 The three layers of private intervention in the museum sector

The porosity, which characterizes the art museum, invades its central structure too, resulting in a continuous encounter between public and private. Since the ‘80s, these two apparently opposite spheres intermingle and compenetrates, developing a bond in different departments of the museum and giving light to a more and more intricate system. As a visual aid, it is possible to schematically divide the services offered by museums observing a general taxonomy⁶¹. The latter is divided into three categories: core services, complementary services, and additional ones. Core services are identified as the ones concerning conservation, cataloguing and display; complementary activities include guided tours, educational assistance, photo library

⁵⁹ Ibid.; “i musei post-Beaubourg”; “icone metropolitane”; “tra le loro molteplici identità (spazi espositivi, di svago, di studio, di incontro, di shopping, ecc.: basta pensare al Getty Center di Meier)”; “riassumono dentro di sé la città [...] e la sostituiscono”.

⁶⁰ For further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/museums-in-the-21st-century-concepts-projects-buildings-138645> [last access on 20 December 2021].

⁶¹ L. Solima, *L'impresa culturale. Processi e strumenti di gestione*, Roma: Carocci editore, 2008, p. 77; “tassonomia dei servizi museali”

and library services, etc. Lastly, additional services include areas such as cloakrooms, cafes, restaurants, shops, to name just a few.



III. 3 L. Solima, *L'impresa culturale. Processi e strumenti di gestione*, Roma: Carocci editore, 2008, p.77. "Taxonomy of museum services",

As it will become clear, the private intervention has worked its way on all of these levels. For the purpose of this thesis, a particular focus will be consecrated to three main aspects, in the following order: the management services of the core organization – which include the legal status and the financial support –, the collateral services⁶², and human resources. Each of these points will be analyzed, especially stressing the last one.

The first intertwine is present in the official identity and in the financial sphere of art museums. As regards the formal aspect of the institution, it has been briefly pointed out that different subjects manage Italian art institutions⁶³: the State, the regions, private entities, universities, and ecclesiastics bodies. It can happen that public and private collaborate to create a stronger and more structured institution: the Venice Biennale foundation is a private organization which benefits from private sponsors and partners, like Illy and Swatch, but it is also supported by the Veneto region, the Venetian municipality, and public universities. Nonetheless, Italian State-owned museums have undergone a privatization campaign, made possible by the implementation of the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape⁶⁴, that allows the State to alienate its heritage, including its cultural possessions. From a strictly financial perspective, a public museum often receives financial support from private entities.

⁶² Hereinafter, if not specified differently, complementary and additional services will be considered as one and called with the same name.

⁶³ Some examples regarding the legal statute of Italian museums are provided at p. 9.

⁶⁴ Legislative Decree of 22 January 2004, n. 42.

On the other hand, private art institutions, like foundations, collaborate with public ones to create a beneficial bond from which both can take advantage. It goes without saying that, due to the high degree of complexity, every country has developed its own policy and legal framework for the cultural sector, rooted in its historical and social background. For instance, museums in the United States heavily rely on private subjects' donations, encouraged by tax exemptions granted by the State, so that this funding actually consists of public money⁶⁵. In Italy, despite the fact that a process of public decommissioning in museums' management has been carried out in favor of private solutions, with the aim of accelerating museum systems and stimulate profit, the survival of Italian cultural institutions still heavily relies on the funding allocated by the State itself⁶⁶. However, given the quantity and the territorial dispersion of cultural institutions and Italian cultural heritage, public funding is often insufficient to ensure financial stability⁶⁷.

Private interventions, no matter at what level of the museum chain, are decoupled from national procedures, often slow and bureaucratically challenging. This is the reason why, with the passing of time, the presence of private subjects has gradually but incessantly become more prevalent inside art institutions. The thoughts and opinions about this measure have divided the Italian professionals and experts in the field. According to Salvatore Settis, "in our country, in the last two decades, every action carried out in favor of museums [...] moved in an economic perspective"⁶⁸. Privatization moved not only in private art institutions but in public ones too, becoming one of the most important steps to gain an income from a series of activities that, considering their non-utilitarian purposes, have nothing to do with commercial prospects. Following the line of thinking of Settis, it can be argued that, with the entry of the private sector inside the museum system, the management of the latter has overshadowed what are the essential features of this kind of institution: "the museum

⁶⁵ A. Lugli, G. Pinna, V. Vercelloni, *Tre idee di museo*, Milano: Jaca Book, 2005, pp. 21-22.

⁶⁶ F. Baldassarre, *Il museo: organizzazione, gestione, marketing*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2009, p. 52.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ A. Lugli, G. Pinna, V. Vercelloni, *Tre idee di museo*, Milano: Jaca Book, 2005, p. 26; "nel nostro paese, in questi ultimi due decenni, ogni azione effettuata a favore dei musei [...] si è mossa in un'ottica economica".

is first and foremost a hearth of knowledge, in its dual impulse of memory and invention, and an educational tool”⁶⁹.

In Italy, the commercial trend is approved for the first time with the implementation of the laws⁷⁰ regulating the privatization of museums’ collateral or integrated activities. The Ronchey law of 1993⁷¹ legitimates the involvement of private entities exclusively for these services, that is all those lucrative businesses that allow the proper functioning of the museum and improve the quality of the visit. During the fruition of the museum, the integrated services are as important as core ones. In fact, an experiential environment will attract the audience and the design of the venues will affect their visit inside the museum; an attractive environment may influence the public to come back⁷². After about ten years, the Italian legal framework was modified: the entire regulation concerning the topic is collected, as mentioned, within the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape⁷³. Here, the tendency to assign *in toto* the management of a museum to private subjects, through concessions and entrustments, has its formal consecration. In fact, from the ‘90s in Italy, almost every interaction point between the museum and its visitors has been managed by the private sector. The latter has developed an important level of specialization, acquiring high skills not only in the management, but also in the creation of innovative and up-to-date services, capable of involving all public categories⁷⁴.

It is crucial to point out, even though it may seem obvious to some, that the primary product of museums, i.e., culture, cannot be sold nor purchased because of its

⁶⁹ M. Fumaroli, *Les Musées au service du public. Les Origines*, in E. Bonnefous, E. Peuchot, L. Richer, “Droit au Musée Droit des Musées”, quote translated by G. Pinna in “Tre idee di museo”, Milano: Jaca Book, 2005, p.27; “il museo è prima di tutto e soprattutto un focolare della conoscenza, nel suo duplice impulso di memoria e di invenzione, e uno strumento di istruzione”.

⁷⁰ Legislative Decree 14 Novembre 1992, n. 433, *Misure urgenti per il funzionamento dei musei statali*, art. 4; Decree 24 March 1997, n. 139, *Regolamento recante norme sugli indirizzi, criteri e modalità di istituzione e gestione dei servizi aggiuntivi nei musei e negli altri istituti del Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali*.

⁷¹ Ronchey law, 14th January 1993, n. 4, *Conversione in legge, con modificazioni del decreto-legge 14 novembre 1992, n. 433, recante misure urgenti per il funzionamento dei musei statali. Disposizioni in materia di biblioteche statali e di archivi di stato*.

⁷² A. Martinez-Martinez et al., *Knowledge management as a tool for improving business processes: An action research approach*, in “Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management”, vol. 11 n. 2, 2018, pp. 276-289, here p. 277.

⁷³ Legislative Decree 22 January 2004, n. 42, *Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape*, pursuant to Article 10 of Law n. 137 of 6 July 2002.

⁷⁴ S. Monti, *Il futuro della legge Ronchey. Riflessioni sul rapporto tra pubblico e privato*, in “Artribune”, 19 June 2020; <https://www.artribune.com/professionisti-e-professionisti/diritto/2020/06/legge-ronchey-rapporto-pubblico-privato/> [last access 23/12/2021].

intangible nature⁷⁵. To be economically profitable, art museums must sell their own secondary products, that foster cultural promotion and diffusion, such as the exhibition's catalogue and the affiliated visual merchandising, audio guides and guided tours. The phenomenon consisting in privatizing the management of this kind of services is called outsourcing or externalization and represents the second layer of private intervention inside art museums. "We define outsourcing, or contracting out, as government tendering for goods and services from third parties, either in the private sector or not-for-profit institutions"⁷⁶. In these years, this has become the norm for both public and private museums. As evidence, "the literature on the financial benefits of outsourcing government services is mostly related to commercial service"⁷⁷ which are also called non-mandated services. These last include all the activities that are "not fundamental to the museum's mission and mandate"⁷⁸. The majority of art museums, especially those of recent construction, benefits from additional spaces built aside the ones dedicated to art exhibitions, contributing to make even more concrete the concept of the museum as a small town. An auditorium suitable for theatre shows, conferences and screenings; a library and some study rooms; a museum archive to consult historical-artistic resources; an educational area with different rooms for laboratories; a restaurant and a café; a bookshop. Some of these additional facilities can be important sources of income and generate an economic turnover, others can increase visibility and attendance of the museum's premises, hence help in raising the customer's loyalty⁷⁹. This new strategic model, which has been the norm for other countries for quite some time, has become popular in Italy fairly recently. For instance, in 2003 Frey wrote that the Beyeler not-for-profit foundation, based in Basel, Switzerland, "outsourced various activities, such as ticket office, entrance control, the Museum shop, the restaurant and the cleaning of the premises"⁸⁰. In parallel, with the

⁷⁵ A. Lugli, G. Pinna, V. Vercelloni, *Tre idee di museo*, Milano: Jaca Book, 2005, p. 30.

⁷⁶ J. Harrison, *Outsourcing in Museums*, in "International Journal of Arts Management", Vol. 2, No. 2, Winter 2000, pp. 14-25, here p. 14.

⁷⁷ Ibid., here p. 15.

⁷⁸ Ibid., here p. 16.

⁷⁹ A. Polveroni, *This is so contemporary!*, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2007, pp. 19-20; A. Cherchi, *Patrimonio museale da valorizzare*, in "Il Sole 24 ore", 21 February 2012; <https://st.ilsole24ore.com/art/commenti-e-idee/2012-02-21/quei-beni-dobbiamo-crescere-064016.shtml?uuid=Aa7FY1uE> [last access 10/12/2021].

⁸⁰ B. S. Frey, *Arts & Economics. Analysis & Cultural Policy*, Berlin, Springer, 2003, p. 99.

British example⁸¹, it is possible to understand another positive impact given by the externalization of collateral services: here, the admission to all national museums is free, since the State's aim is to focus on the social and cultural profitability of the institutions. By doing so, repeated visits by the same individual have increased, as well as sales of the libraries together with the attendance of the museum's cafés and other collateral spaces. When Neil McGregor was director of the National Gallery, he declared that this decision led to the growths of revenues by the private entities compared to the revenues they earned when the museum had an entrance fee⁸². In such a way, core services have the power to influence complementary and additional ones and vice versa, by fostering a circular process.

So far, two of the three points of privatization have been briefly analyzed. The third and last level of privatization inside the art museum sector regards human resources, especially external ones. Freelance professionals and private companies contribute to the organization of temporary exhibitions and, on certain occasions, also to the conservation of the permanent collection. In the case of art museums, the institution requests other subjects' or companies' expertise to perform some tasks for the development of some phases of the production process. Alternatively, as already mentioned, it directly transfers to third parties the property and management of some activities carried out inside the museum. In most recent years, the practice of externalization has been applied also to core activities that are tied up with the museum statement and goals. To quote again the Beyeler Museum's example, it has outsourced the tasks concerning the conservation and restoration of its painting to the public Kunstmuseum of Basle⁸³. In order to accurately deepen this topic, it is necessary to make a preliminary remark concerning the role of knowledge, expertise and experience brought by both internal and external professionals. Museum institutions could not be called as such if it was not for the people helping in its development by working in it or for it. Human resources represent the "raw material"⁸⁴ that allow the museum to achieve a unique competitive advantage that can be preserved over time. Ludovico Solima – researcher and university professor – asserts:

⁸¹ A. Lugli, G. Pinna, V. Vercelloni, *Tre idee di museo*, Milano: Jaca Book, 2005, p. 33.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ B.S. Frey, *Arts & Economics. Analysis & Cultural Policy*, Berlin: Springer, 2003, p. 99.

⁸⁴ L. Solima, *L'impresa culturale. Processo e strumenti di gestione*, Roma: Carocci editore, p. 157; "materia prima".

each individual, in fact, is the bearer of her/his own professionalism and skills, which can – or should – be fully put at the service of the organization in which she/he operates. [...] If an individual feels as an integral part of the organization, identifying with it and with the objectives that it pursues (commitment), he/she will naturally be inclined not only to make the maximum effort in the performance of the assigned tasks but also to provide its own contribution in terms of creativity and originality⁸⁵.

Art museum final products are not only made by internal staff. Let us consider the making of a temporary exhibition: supply chains are often long and require the collaboration of a variety of specialized operators⁸⁶ coming from the outside of the museum. The difficulty in recognizing the number of sectors linked to cultural products and museums is precisely due to the frequency to outsource many stages of the production⁸⁷. It is crucial to bear in mind not only the “‘breadth’ of the fields and the extension of the sectors that have relations with cultural chains, but also the ‘depth’ of the production chains”⁸⁸, which constitute the museum system and final product. Since it evolved into a poly-functional center, attracting new and different audience categories, the museum structure changed and, with it, its internal and external workers’ skills developed. The museum’s human resources are required to have or acquire a high level of expertise and competence in the light of the tasks they are assigned. The scientific and the technical-operational sectors are the two macro areas of work inside museums. In this context, human resource management is becoming more and more important. The latter has to deal with the growing complexity of professions, the diversification of working profiles, the need for internal communication, the demand for more qualifications and specialization of the staff, the widening of teamwork for improving both the quality of services and the relationship

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 157-158; “ciascun individuo, infatti, è portatore di proprie professionalità e competenze, che possono – o dovrebbero – essere integralmente messe a servizio dell’organizzazione in cui egli opera. [...] Se individuo si sente parte integrante di organizzazione, identificandosi con essa e con gli obiettivi che questa persegue (commitment), sarà naturalmente incline non solo a approfondire il massimo impegno nello svolgimento delle mansioni assegnate ma anche a fornire un proprio contributo in termini di creatività e originalità”.

⁸⁶ P. Dubini, “*Con la cultura non si mangia*” (*Falso!*), Roma: Laterza, 2018, p. 59.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 64.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 67-68.

with visitors⁸⁹. Focusing on this topic, Giovanni Pinna, professor in Palaeontology and museologist, explains:

five basic functions are present inside a modern museum: the recovery, the conservation of cultural heritage, the protection of this heritage, [...] the cultural production, namely the scientific research, and, finally, the function of cultural dissemination⁹⁰.

Art institutions must have access to a wide web of professionals to perform and implement all the activities and services they are built to carry out. In fact, their system and “the heterogeneous characteristics of museums themselves contributed to the rise of divergent professional”⁹¹ figures. Art historian Mottola Molfino considers the people working in a museum as one of the “assets, valuable elements for the identity and life of the institution”⁹². In being responsible both for the collection and the visitors, the personnel “acts as mediator in the relationship between them”⁹³.

The presence of all the necessary professional figures, the quality of their training and the maintenance of high professional standards are crucially important to achieve the balance [...] between the needs of the public (fruition, communication, reception, even physical comfort of the visit) and those of the collection (conservation, documentation, study, care, security). [...] Since the museum is both a place for the production, the conservation and the transmission of culture, and an organizational machine that has become increasingly complex over time, the functions that must be guaranteed by the internal staff or by external collaborators are manifold and continuously oscillate between theory and practice⁹⁴.

⁸⁹ M. Vigli, G. Panagiotopoulos Giorgos, M. Argyropoulou, *Managing and Developing Human Resources at the Museum: Modern Trend or Quality Upgrade?*, in “Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries (QQML)”, vol. 8, 2019, pp. 1-11, here p. 4.

⁹⁰ L. Binni, G. Pinna, *Museo*, Milano: Garzanti Libri, 1989, p. 81; “cinque sono dunque le funzioni base di un museo moderno: il recupero, la conservazione dei beni culturali, la tutela di questo patrimonio, [...] la produzione culturale, e cioè la ricerca scientifica e, infine, la funzione di trasmissione culturale”.

⁹¹ J. L. Teather, *Professionalism and The Museum*, in *The museum: a reference guide*, M. Schapiro (edited by), New York: Greenwood Press, 1990, pp. 273-298, here p. 275.

⁹² A. Mottola Molfino, C. Morigi Govi, *Lavorare nei musei*, Torino: Umberto Allemandi, 2004, p. 9; “patrimoni, elementi preziosi per l’identità e la vita dell’istituzione”.

⁹³ M. V. Marini Clarelli, *Che cos’è un museo*, Roma: Carocci editore, 2005, p. 19; “funge da mediatore nel loro rapporto”.

⁹⁴ Ibid.; “la presenza di tutte le figure professionali necessarie, la qualità della loro formazione e il mantenimento di standard professionali elevati rivestono un’importanza cruciale per raggiungere l’equilibrio [...] tra le esigenze del pubblico (fruizione, comunicazione, accoglienza, comfort anche fisico della visita) e quelle della collezione (conservazione, documentazione, studio, cura, sicurezza). [...] Poiché il museo è sia un luogo di produzione, conservazione e trasmissione della cultura, sia una macchina organizzativa divenuta con il tempo sempre più complessa, le funzioni che devono essere garantite dal personale interno o da collaboratori esterni sono molteplici e oscillano continuamente fra la teoria e la pratica”.

Most of the activities performed inside an art museum take place behind the scenes: usually, visitors only meet the staff involved in their welcoming, in charge of giving them some information, and the surveillance personnel⁹⁵. “Over the past decades museums professionals have acquired many new skills and positive experiences through visitor-oriented museum policy in exhibitions”⁹⁶. It is crucial to consider the museum’s necessity for a large and experienced staff, most of whom is invisible to the public.

1.3 Museum professions: ghost sector or actual legal recognition?

The Italian regulatory framework has been

decisive for the evolution of museums, with consequences that are felt not only in their role, but also in their scientific and cultural orientation and in the image that of them, as a result, has been settling over time in the common feeling of the country [...], contributing in a way far from secondary to produce the shape of the museum itself, like other factors of its existence, such as the characteristics of its heritage, the scientific disciplines that guide its activity and the demand that determines its function and social and cultural role⁹⁷.

One of the benchmarks that museums should follow and keep as a reference is the ICOM (International Council of Museums) *Code of Ethics for Museums*⁹⁸, first issued in 1986 and updated in 2004⁹⁹. The Code is “a container of rules” concerning “general ethical principles that summarize and guide the mission of the museum, while defining its reference values”¹⁰⁰ and “therefore providing a unifying framework for the

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

⁹⁶ H.-M. Hinz, *ICOM turns 70: Ethics and the value of creation role of museums*, in *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*, B. L. Murphy (edited by), London and New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 3-8, here p. 7.

⁹⁷ D. Jalla, *Il museo contemporaneo*, Torino: UTET libreria, 2003, p. 5-6; “determinante per l’evoluzione stessa dei musei, con conseguenze avvertibili non solo nel loro ruolo, ma anche nel loro orientamento scientifico e culturale e nell’immagine che di loro, di conseguenza, si è andata sedimentando nel tempo nel comune sentire del paese [...] concorrendo in modo tutt’altro che secondario a produrre la forma stessa del museo, al pari di altri fattori del suo esistere, come le caratteristiche del suo patrimonio, le discipline scientifiche che ne orientano l’attività e la domanda che ne determina la funzione e il ruolo sociale e culturale”.

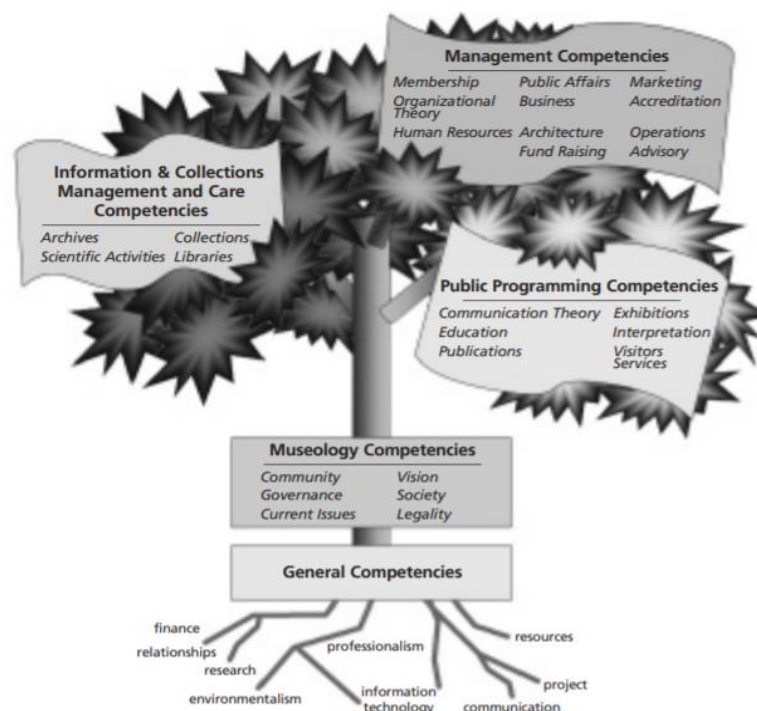
⁹⁸ ICOM, *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, Paris: International Council of Museums, 2006.

⁹⁹ M. Mainardi, *I valori del museo: il codice etico*, in *I valori del museo. Strumenti e prospettive manageriali*, B. Sibilio (ed. by), Milano: Franco Angeli, 2014, pp. 21-42, here p. 22.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 25; “un contenitore di regole”, “principi etici generali che riassumono e guidano la missione del museo, definendo nel contempo i valori di riferimento”.

protection of standards in museums everywhere”¹⁰¹. Eight areas of intervention are presented and here synthesized:

1. Museums preserve, interpret and promote the natural and cultural inheritance of humanity
2. Museums that maintain collections hold them in trust for the benefit of society and its development
3. Museums hold primary evidence for establishing and furthering knowledge
4. Museums provide opportunities for the appreciation, understanding and management of the natural and cultural heritage
5. Museums hold resources that provide opportunities for the public services and benefits
6. Museums work in close collaboration with the communities from which their collections originate as well as those they serve
7. Museums operate in a legal manner
8. Museums operate in a professional manner¹⁰².



III. 4 ICOM and ICTOP, *Curricula Guidelines for Museum Professional*, Paris: ICOM, 2000. The tree model is from: A. Garlandini, *La carta nazionale delle professioni museali. Genesi, risultati, prospettive*, in “*Museologia scientifica*”, vol. 1, 2007, pp. 129-139, here p. 138.

¹⁰¹ H.-M- Hinz, *ICOM turns 70: Ethics and the value of creation role of museums*, in *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*, B. L. Murphy (edited by), London and New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 3-8, here p. 6.

¹⁰² G. Lewis, *The ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums. Background and objectives*, in *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*, B. L. Murphy (edited by), London and New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 45-53, here pp. 46-51. See also M. Mainardi, *I valori del museo: il codice etico*, in *I valori del museo. Strumenti e prospettive manageriali*, B. Sibilio (ed. by), Milano: Franco Angeli, 2014, pp. 21-42, here p. 26.

Without internal and external human resources, responsible for bringing to completion all these activities, the museum could not operate and fulfil its mission. Since the early 2000s, ICOM has thoroughly discussed the topic of museum professions. The first outcome of this debate is the publication of the 2000 *Curricula Guidelines for Museum Professional*¹⁰³ by ICTOP, the International Committee for the Training of Personnel. The document describes the knowledge and skills that museum professionals should possess, subdividing them into five broad areas. In the tree model developed by ICTOP (see Ill. 4) the roots and trunk represent the general and museology skills that must be shared by all those working inside a museum. The functional skills needed to carry out specific activities are identified by the branches and foliage: public service competences, managerial ones, and skills related to information-communication and to the care and management of archives and collections¹⁰⁴.

In 2005, based on the functions outlined in the *Code of Ethics*, ICOM Italy together with different Italian museums associations, such as AMACI (the Italian Association of Contemporary Art Museums) drafted the *National Charter of Museum Professions*¹⁰⁵. Defining twenty professional profiles, the document identifies four main subjects that, “without any hierarchy”¹⁰⁶, best meet the specific features of the Italian context of museums and correspond to the eight ICOM’s principles¹⁰⁷. “The subdivision into four macro-areas of activity is useful because it highlights the wide range of professionalism required for the proper functioning of museums¹⁰⁸. The topic of the museum professions has taken a greater importance thanks to the innovations of the national system. In particular, the museum has been recognized as an institution and its minimum standards have been declared, thus ensuring its correct running. Moreover, the key concepts of protection and enhancement have been deepened and a

¹⁰³ ICOM, ICTOP, *Curricula Guidelines for Museum Professional*, Paris: ICOM, 2000.

¹⁰⁴ A. Garlandini, *La carta nazionale delle professioni museali. Genesi, risultati, prospettive*, in “Museologia scientifica”, vol. 1, 2007, pp. 129-139, here p. 138.

¹⁰⁵ ICOM Italia, *Carta nazionale delle professioni museali*, 2008; the Charter was written in 2005, but the final draft approved and published in 2008.

¹⁰⁶ A. Garlandini, *La carta nazionale delle professioni museali. Genesi, risultati, prospettive*, in “Museologia scientifica”, vol. 1, 2007, pp. 129-139, here p. 132; “senza alcuna gerarchia”.

¹⁰⁷ F. Baldassarre, A. S. Labroca, *Le scelte organizzative e la gestione delle risorse umane nei musei, in Il museo: organizzazione, gestione, marketing*, F. Baldassarre, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2009, pp. 131-139, here p. 138; for the eight ICOM’s principles see ICOM, *Code of Ethics for Museums*, 2017.

¹⁰⁸ A. Garlandini, *La carta nazionale delle professioni museali. Genesi, risultati, prospettive*, in “Museologia scientifica”, vol. 1, 2007, pp. 129-139, here p. 133; “la suddivisione nelle quattro macroaree di attività è utile poiché evidenzia l'ampio spettro di professionalità richieste per il buon funzionamento dei musei”.

progressive orientation to the public is underlined¹⁰⁹. The *National Charter* contributes to fill the lack of a definition of certain roles and professions within the Italian museum system, shedding light on the need for an update of staff specifications. The following figures are described in detail with respect to their “responsibilities, scope and tasks, requirements for access to the job, mode of assignment”¹¹⁰: director, conservator, cataloguer, registrar, restorer, assistant in charge of collections, head of educational services, museum educator, coordinator of reception and custody services, reception and custody service operator, documentation service manager, head of the library, administrative and financial manager, secretary, head of press communications and public relations, development manager, website manager, head of facilities and plant engineering, head of IT network, head of security, designer of the exhibition installations of the museum spaces and temporary exhibitions¹¹¹. It is unquestionable that contemporary museums demand professionalization, specialization, as well as interdisciplinarity, transversality and the ability to work in team¹¹². Particularly, the innovative feature of the document is that “the Charter looks to the future rather than to the past” by including “not only the professions that are traditionally present in museums, but also new ones, not yet consolidated inside Italian museums. It is addressed to all museums, whether public or private, regardless of their size, origin, ownership, type”¹¹³.

Contextually, President of ICOM International Alberto Garlandini specifies:

The Charter is not the ideal organizational chart of a museum, nor identifies hierarchies [...]. Each museum has its own specific organization, which is the result of its history, its institutional nature, its resources, its mission. In reality, in many Italian museums few, or very few, professionals find themselves managing

¹⁰⁹ D. Jalla, *La riforma dei musei statali italiani*, in “Il Giornale delle Fondazioni”, 15 April 2015; <http://www.ilgiornaledellefondazioni.com/content/la-riforma-dei-musei-statali-italiani> [last access 28/12/2021].

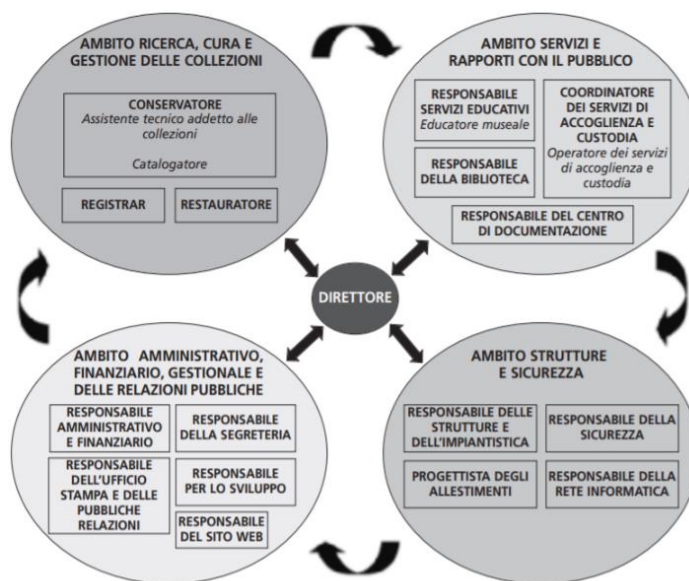
¹¹⁰ A. Garlandini, *La carta nazionale delle professioni museali. Genesi, risultati, prospettive*, in “Museologia scientifica”, vol. 1, 2007, pp. 129-139, here p. 132, “responsabilità, ambiti e compiti, requisiti per l'accesso all'incarico, modalità di incarico”.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, here pp. 132-133.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, here p. 132.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*; “la Carta guarda al futuro più che al passato”; “non solo professionalità tradizionalmente presenti nei musei, ma anche professionalità nuove, non ancora consolidate nei musei italiani. È rivolta a tutti i musei, siano essi pubblici o privati, indipendentemente dalle loro dimensioni, origini, titolarità, tipologia”.

the whole set of museum functions. The Charter is a useful tool to claim a greater presence of professionals in museums¹¹⁴.



Ill. 5 Map of the main museum professionals¹¹⁵: “all the professionals in the Map are essential for the proper functioning of a museum”¹¹⁶.

As a consequence of the Italian Charter, the text *Museum Professions - A European Frame of Reference*¹¹⁷ was drawn up in 2008, signed by ICOM’s National Committees of Italy, France and Switzerland and edited by Angelika Ruge, the then President of ICTOP. The figure of the registrar is here taken as an example to express the need to engage in a broader European debate on museum professionals, aimed at establishing a common definition of the roles – which was lacking for many of them – and therefore formally recognize them. This process would have been essential to guarantee a standard quality level both at a national and international level in the long run. In 2015, ICOM and UNESCO issued the *Recommendation on the Protection and Promotion of*

¹¹⁴ A. Garlandini, *La carta nazionale delle professioni museali. Genesi, risultati, prospettive*, in “Museologia scientifica”, vol. 1, 2007, pp. 129-139, here p. 134; “la Carta non è l’organigramma ideale di un museo, né individua gerarchie [...]. Ogni museo ha una propria specifica organizzazione, frutto della storia, della natura istituzionale, delle risorse che ha a disposizione, della missione che gli è affidata. Nella realtà, in molti musei italiani pochi, o pochissimi, professionisti si trovano a gestire da soli l’insieme delle funzioni museali. La Carta è uno strumento utile per rivendicare nei musei una maggiore presenza di professionisti”.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., here p. 133.

¹¹⁶ ICOM, *Carta nazionale delle professioni museali*, 2008, p. 9; “tutte le professionalità della Mappa sono indispensabili al buon funzionamento di un museo”.

¹¹⁷ A. Ruge (ed. by), *Museum professions – A European Frame of Reference*, 2008; for the Italian translation see ICOM Italia, *Professioni museali*, in “ICOM Italia”, June 2018; <https://www.icom-italia.org/professioni-museali/>, [last access 26/12/2021].

*Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society*¹¹⁸. The document “recognizes the importance of museum professionals who are trained in different museum jobs and can fulfil their role of protecting knowledge and research, interacting with public and managing collections”¹¹⁹ and thus can maintain “an effective workforce”¹²⁰ thanks to their training and experience.

In Italy, the recent need for an update of the *National Charter of Museum Professions* paved the way for a new dialogue on the subject. Considering the new necessities that have been emerging during the last decades, the objective was to outline the profiles of the professionals which are essential for the functioning of museums. The outcomes have given light to new official working positions, following the “criterion of *who does what* rather than *who is who*. This has allowed, in the declination of tasks and actions, to have a real picture of the operativity and professional competences (knowledge and abilities) required”¹²¹. In 2008, the conference “Occupational profiles, skills and training courses for cultural heritage”¹²² was the occasion to present the final results of the interregional research project called “Professions and jobs of cultural heritage”¹²³, in which Lombardy was the frontrunner, followed by Abruzzo, Calabria, Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Liguria, Piedmont, Valle d'Aosta and the Autonomous Province of Bolzano. The seventeen professional profiles identified and described have been divided into two categories, i.e., conservation and access-fruiting. Five focus groups were dedicated to rebuilding the process of conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, while the other five reconstructed the competences of the professionals taking part in these processes. Each Focus Group interviewed twenty experienced

¹¹⁸ ICOM, UNESCO, *Recommendation on the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society*, May 2015.

¹¹⁹ A.-C. Robert-Hauglustaine, *The role of museums in the twenty-first century*, in *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*, B. L. Murphy (edited by), London and New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 9-13, here p. 11.

¹²⁰ ICOM, UNESCO, *Recommendation on the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society*, May 2015, p. 7.

¹²¹ ICOM Italia, *Professionalità e funzioni essenziali del museo alla luce della riforma dei musei statali*, November 2017, p. 4, “criterio *cosa fa chi* e non del *chi è chi*. Questo ha permesso, nella declinazione di compiti e azioni, di avere un quadro di realtà dell’operatività e delle competenze professionali (conoscenza e abilità) richieste”.

¹²² “Profili occupazionali, competenze e percorsi formativi del patrimonio culturale”, Milan, 5 November 2008; <http://old.formedil.it/index.php?p=news&id=281> [last access 26/12/2021].

¹²³ “Professioni e mestieri del patrimonio culturale. Profili occupazionali, competenze e percorsi formativi del patrimonio culturale”. The initiative was financed by the European Social Fund.

professionals¹²⁴ in order to “make a concrete contribution to the formulation of guidelines for the training of professionals working in the field of cultural heritage”¹²⁵. The resulting chart of professions is organized following a three-step process of preparation which consists of expert, technician, and worker.

Livello	Conservazione	Accesso e fruizione
Esperto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direttore di istituzione culturale - museo - Conservatore - Responsabile di cantiere di restauro architettonico - Diagnosta del patrimonio culturale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Esperto dei servizi educativi delle istituzioni culturali e del territorio - Esperto di marketing culturale - Registrar
Tecnico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tecnico dell'ispezione e manutenzione di edifici storici - Tecnico collaboratore restauratore di beni culturali - superfici decorate di beni architettonici 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tecnico dei servizi educativi delle istituzioni culturali e del territorio - Tecnico dei servizi di accoglienza e custodia del patrimonio culturale - Tecnico del marketing culturale
Operatore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Muratore specializzato in edifici storici (a- intonacatore; b- coperture) - Stuccatore, decoratore, doratore di edifici storici - Falegname specializzato in beni culturali - Doratore specializzato in beni culturali 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operatore specializzato dei servizi di accoglienza e custodia del patrimonio culturale

Ill. 6 List of the identified occupational profiles. *Professioni e mestieri per il patrimonio culturale. Report processi di lavoro, profili professionali e standard formativi*, 2008, p. 27.

In addition, from 2015 a review of the National Charter has been conducted, leading, two years later, ICOM Italy to the text *Professionalism and Functions of the Museum in the Light of the Reform of State Museums*¹²⁶. The title refers to the reform brought by the Prime Ministerial Decree 171/2014 and to the Ministerial Decree of 23 December 2004, that resulted in a major modification of the national legislation for what concerns cultural heritage. The participation of ICOM Italy to the debate on the national museum system is of particular relevance, especially after the cooperation

¹²⁴ Ministry of Cultural Heritage (MIBAC) et al., *Professioni e mestieri per il patrimonio culturale. Report processi di lavoro, profili professionali e standard formativi*, 2008, p. 3; https://ufficiostudi.beniculturali.it/mibac/multimedia/UfficioStudi/documents/1261133754959_Lombardia_Report-2.pdf [last access 26/12/2021].

¹²⁵ Ministry of Cultural Heritage et al., *Professioni e mestieri per il patrimonio culturale. Report ricerca desk analisi del mercato del lavoro*, 2008, p. III; “offrire un concreto contributo alla formulazione di linee guida per la formazione delle figure professionali che operano nel campo dei beni culturali”; https://ufficiostudi.beniculturali.it/mibac/multimedia/UfficioStudi/documents/1261133604749_Lombardia_Report1.pdf [last access 26/12/2021].

¹²⁶ ICOM Italia, *Professionalità e funzioni del museo alla luce della riforma dei musei statali*, November 2017.

agreement with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism (MiBACT) concluded on 25 May 2015¹²⁷. In it, the two parties engage to collaborate for the definition of the standards for the management of museums and the identification of professional museum profiles¹²⁸. Coming back to the 2017 dossier¹²⁹, the introduction of the latter elucidates the importance of human resources as follow.

The museum, as a cultural institution that performs precise functions for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment, requires the presence of knowledge and competent human resources allowing to transform the museum space in a place of cultural action at the 'service of the society and its development'. Professionalism is therefore the founding element in a complex organism such as the contemporary museum¹³⁰.

Through the implementation of the professions discourse, first brought to light in Italy with the National Charter, many considerations were taken up and elaborated anew. The increasing attention to museum staff demonstrates its key role for the smooth operation of the museum and highlights the need for interdisciplinarity together with quality standards. A consequent aspect of the debate is how to gain proper experience, specific competences and know-how. Since

today it does not exist a specific training course for museum professions [...] the necessary skills are mostly developed through field experience (apprenticeships, internships, volunteering...) or through training days, symposiums, conferences and/or master classes, very different from each other in terms of approach and subject matter. This often leads to a high level of professionalism in highly specialized fields, though lacking an overall vision¹³¹.

One crucial characteristic of museum professionals, if not the most important, is precisely their high level of expertise. If, on the one hand, it is arguable that this leads them to lose the whole picture, on the other it stimulates the creation and development

¹²⁷ MiBACT, ICOM Italia, *Accordo di collaborazione tra il Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo e l'International Council of Museums*, 25 maggio 2015.

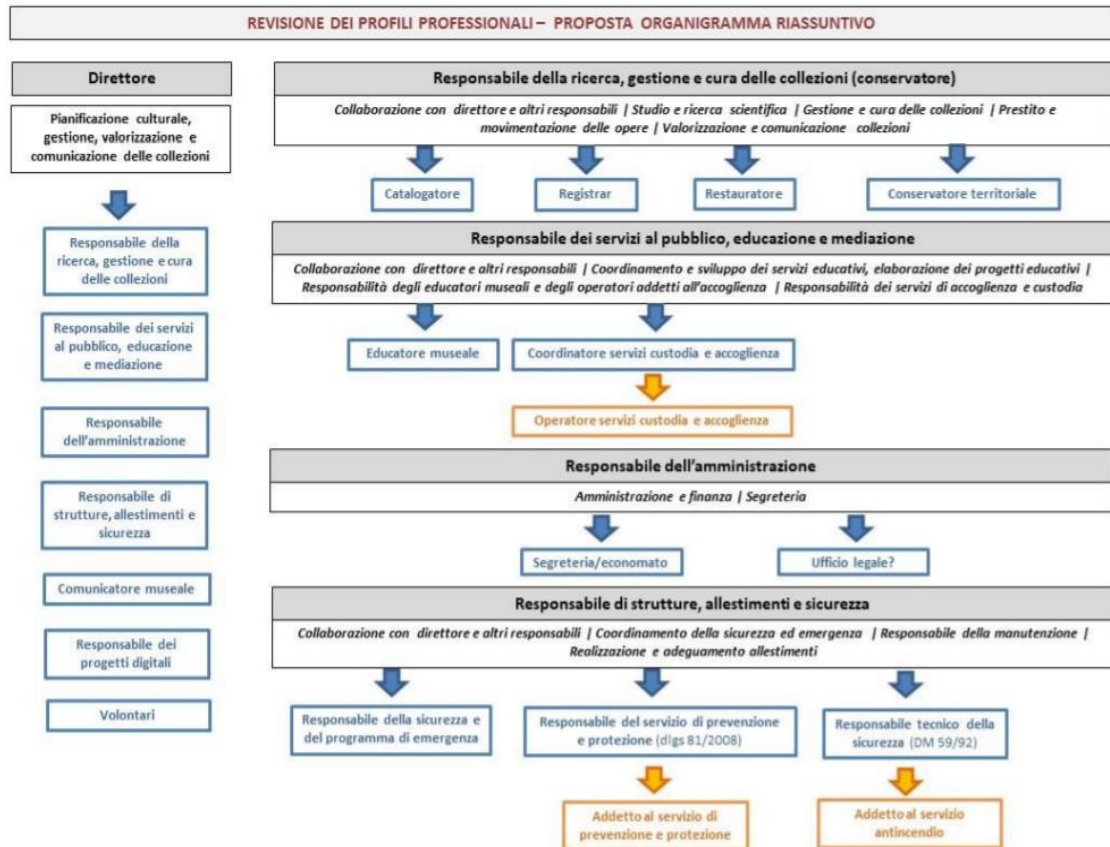
¹²⁸ Ibid., art. 2.

¹²⁹ ICOM Italia, *Professionalità e funzioni del museo alla luce della riforma dei musei statali*, November 2017.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 3; "il museo, in quanto istituzione culturale che svolge precise funzioni con finalità di studio, educazione e diletto, esige la presenza di saperi e risorse umane competenti che consentano di trasformare lo spazio del museo in luogo di azione culturale al 'servizio della società e del suo sviluppo. Le professionalità sono quindi l'elemento fondante in un organismo complesso come il museo contemporaneo".

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 13; "oggi non esiste un percorso formativo specifico per le professioni museali [...] Le competenze necessarie vengono per lo più maturate attraverso esperienze sul campo (tirocini, stage, volontariato...) o attraverso giornate di formazione, conferenze, convegni e/o master, molto diversi tra loro per impostazione e materie trattate. Ciò spesso comporta un'alta professionalizzazione in ambiti molto specialistici, mancante però di una visione generale".

of a unique competitive advantage for the institution. In the next chapter, it will become clear that the aforementioned “overall vision” is not lost at all. On the contrary, different profiles inside the museum, i.e., the registrar for temporary exhibitions, are able to centralize all the different figures that orbit around her/him in their all-encompassing role.



III. 7 Review of professional profiles – proposition of a summarized organizational chart. ICOM Italia, *Professionalità e funzioni del museo alla luce della riforma dei musei statali*, November 2017, p. 15.

Regarding the present situation in Italy, at the end of 2020 the Fondazione Scuola Beni Attività Culturali issued the final report of the statistical survey *Competencies for the cultural heritage*¹³². “The aim of this research is to acquire an overall knowledge framework on professional profiles with a managerial role for what concerns the Italian cultural heritage”¹³³. The museums involved in the survey were 512: 64% were

¹³² Fondazione Scuola Beni Attività Culturali, *Competenze per il patrimonio culturale. Indagine statistica presso i luoghi della cultura in Italia. Rapporto Finale*, December 2020.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 5; “l’obiettivo della presente ricerca è quello di acquisire un quadro conoscitivo d’insieme sui profili professionali con ruolo direttivo che interessano il patrimonio culturale italiano”. By

museums run by local authorities, 14% foundations or other non-profit bodies, 10% were run by Church institutions, 8% MiBACT Museums, and 4% University ones. Among the key findings, 52% of the 512 museums have declared that, at the date of the survey, they had no service in concession to third parties – which means they still have not externalized any collateral activity. Among the services museums tend to outsource more, the didactic and educational ones are the most frequent (24%), followed by guided tours and ticket office (21%), vigilance (13%), bookshop and publishing services (12%), and custody (10%)¹³⁴.

Moreover, the analysis of the staff composition revealed some important information that is worth to highlight¹³⁵: Curators are present in 48% of the structures but only in 8% of the cases these figures are internal and exclusively deal with the duties specific to their profession; in 75% of the cases, they also carry out other tasks or work with other museums. The Registrar is the least present profession in these museums; in 67% of the cases, they have to deal with other tasks and in 22% of them are a shared figure with other museums. The Head of Educational Services is present in only 43% of cases; in 76% of them also provide other services and in 17% of cases this figure is shared with other museums. Again, the Head of Public Relations, Communication, Marketing and Fundraising is present in 38% of cases, but only in 7% with a unique and internal role; in 63% of cases also they also have other duties, and in 30% of the cases different museums share the same professional. This extensive research confirms that the Italian debate on museum professions is still ongoing. Among others, one of the least recognized figures is the one of the Registrar. The next chapter will shed light on this crucial position and contribution, especially inside temporary art exhibitions.

“managerial role”, the research intends to include everyone “who has some responsibility and authority over some certain parts of the company (organizational unites) and responds to the director”, occupying an intermediate position between the latter and the operational level.

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

¹³⁵ Ibid, pp. 15-16.

II

The registrar: a phantom limb of the national museum system

2.1 Temporary art exhibitions between logistics and conservation: the pivotal role of the registrar

Temporary exhibitions offer an “experimental ground for museography”¹³⁶ in the same, rather static and defined¹³⁷, museum environment.

Exhibitions are ‘the hypotheses of a modern museum’, [...] also ‘because in the exhibition the distribution of the material has a problematic character and is aimed at striking the psychological sensitivity of the public’¹³⁸. It is thus defined the essence of a continuous dialectical relationship between the exhibition and the museum, where ‘the exhibition is at the museum as the test track is at the road’¹³⁹.

This kind of display opens the art institution and its public to a dynamic cognitive experience: the artworks, selected through a careful and reasoned research, follow an innovative path through the space, in relation to a specific concept and theme¹⁴⁰. The traditional and systematic approach of the permanent collection undergoes a “continuous and uninterrupted ‘earthquake’”¹⁴¹, fostered by the need for experimentation, research, and openness to the new. Nonetheless, in preferring a non-traditional experimental reading of the artworks, contemporary and modern art museums have significantly modified the conventional approach between permanent collection and temporary exhibition. In fact, the latter represents a crucial “tool for cultural enrichment, offering the opportunity to experience a new way of admiring artworks and investigating art history”¹⁴². The *hic et nunc* aspect of exhibitions has an attracting appeal on the public, which has the possibility of enjoying, perhaps for the

¹³⁶ C. G. Argan, *Il pubblico dell'arte*, Firenze: Sansoni, 1982, pp. XII-XIII; “terreno sperimentale per la museografia”.

¹³⁷ F. Pirani, *Che cos'è una mostra d'arte*, Roma: Carocci editore, 2014, p. 37.

¹³⁸ C. G. Argan, *Il pubblico dell'arte*, Firenze: Sansoni, 1982, pp. XII-XIII, here p. XVII.

¹³⁹ F. Pirani, *Che cos'è una mostra d'arte*, Roma: Carocci editore, 2014, pp. 36-37; “le mostre sono ‘le ipotesi di un museo moderno’, [...] anche ‘perché nella mostra la distribuzione del materiale ha carattere problematico ed è rivolta a colpire la sensibilità psicologica del pubblico’. Si definisce così l'essenza di un rapporto dialettico continuo tra mostra e museo, laddove la ‘mostra sta al museo come la pista di collaudo sta alla strada’”.

¹⁴⁰ A. Bonito Oliva, *I fuochi dello sguardo: musei che reclamano attenzione*, Roma: Gangemi editore, 2004, p. 20.

¹⁴¹ F. Pirani, *Che cos'è una mostra d'arte*, Roma: Carocci editore, 2014, p. 37; “un continuo e ininterrotto ‘terremoto’”.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 39; “strumento di arricchimento culturale, offrendo la possibilità di sperimentare un nuovo modo di ammirare le opere ed indagare la storia dell'arte”.

only time in their life, a special event. Though, in the last decades, even the setting of museum collections has presented ephemeral features: artworks can rotate, sparking curiosity among the audience. In any case, “if planned in a smart way, exhibitions are not opposed to the museum, but rather constitute a formidable tool to attract and encourage new visitors to engage with new aesthetic experiences otherwise precluded”¹⁴³. In former President of ICOM Italy and current director of the Royal Palace of Caserta Tiziana Maffei’s words,

exhibitions with a punctual and rigorous scientific value are important opportunities to carry out research activities, to make the public enjoy unreleased works and documents, to build interesting and original interpretative keys, to explore articulated systems of relationships between memory and contemporaneity, and, in the case of museums, to enhance heritages held in the storages, rarely displayed in permanent museum paths. All this must be done in respect of both the value of the contents disclosed and the security of the assets subject to the loan¹⁴⁴.

From the early years of the 20th century, the drive for progress positively affected the means of communication: U.S. and European museums began to circulate their collections for temporary displays. Gradually, this process led to the so-called globalization of art loans, simultaneously raising awareness on the management of collections and the safeguard of the objects during handling and temporary storing¹⁴⁵. It became essential to identify standard models for inventory, documentation, and arrangement of the pieces, so that every art piece would be constantly monitored and universally accessible. New methods of control turned out to be essential to successfully manage the risks, expenses and times related to art loans. Léonie Hénaut

¹⁴³ Ibid, p. 41; “se programmata in modo intelligente, le esposizioni non si contrappongono al museo, ma anzi costituiscono un formidabile strumento per attrarre e invogliare nuovi visitatori a confrontarsi con inedite esperienze estetiche altrimenti precluse”.

¹⁴⁴ T. Maffei, *Prefazione*, in *IN & OUT. Guida pratica al prestito di opere d’arte*, AXA-ART, Roma: 2018, pp. 1-2, here p. 2; “mostre dal puntuale e rigoroso valore scientifico sono importanti occasioni per svolgere attività di ricerca, porre alla fruizione pubblica opere e documenti inediti, costruire interessanti e originali chiavi interpretative, esplorare articolati sistemi di relazioni tra memoria e contemporaneità, e, nel caso dei musei, valorizzare patrimoni custoditi nei depositi, raramente esposti nei percorsi museali permanenti. Tutto questo deve avvenire nel rispetto sia del valore dei contenuti divulgati che della sicurezza dei beni oggetto del prestito”.

¹⁴⁵ S. Daynes-Diallo, H. Perrel, H. Vassal, *Régisseur d’œuvres : enjeux d’un métier émergent et perspectives de professionnalisation*, in “In Situ. Revue des patrimoines”, vol. 30, 2016, p. 3. To demonstrate the increasing scope of art loans, the text explains : “À titre d’exemple, le Centre Pompidou a consenti en 2012 le prêt de 2 954 œuvres (source : rapport d’activité du Centre Pompidou 2012, p. 238), uniquement des prêts à l’étranger”, p. 8; <http://journals.openedition.org/insitu/13705> [last access 31/01/2022].

– researcher in sociology and member of the French National Center for Scientific Research – claims that

the development of preventive conservation [. . .] has led to the emergence of a new occupational group: registrars, and more recently collections managers in the United States. Their task is to ensure that new conservation standards are respected during the packing and transport of works of art, as well as their storage or installation for exhibitions. Similar to the role played by restoration specialists, the work of registrars is now based on formal knowledge (climatology, physics, biology, chemistry of materials and deterioration), allowing them to re-evaluate their activity¹⁴⁶.

The term registrar originates from mediaeval Latin “registrarius”¹⁴⁷, indicating the person charged with keeping a register. As soon as it came to light, “the function of the registrar brutally took on a paramount importance: it became the essential tool for the necessary rationalization of the collections that would make them exploitable, coherent and diffusible”¹⁴⁸. Inside museums, the figure first emerged in the U. S. A. at the end of the 19th century. In 1881, the then U.S. National Museum¹⁴⁹, in Washington D.C., was one of the first to include since its opening a “Registry office”¹⁵⁰. In 1895, George Brown Goode, in charge of the same Museum and assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, published *The principles of museum administration*¹⁵¹. In his publication, Brown Goode clarified that “the value of a collection depends in the highest degree upon the accuracy and fullness of the records of the history of the objects which it contains”¹⁵². Therefore, “a museum specimen without history is

¹⁴⁶ L. Hénaut, *Capacités d’observation et dynamique des groupes professionnels. La conservation des œuvres de musées*, in “Revue française de sociologie”, Vol. 52, No.1, pp. 71-101, here p. 81. The book is cited in H. Vassal, S. Daynes-Diallo, *From Functions to Profession: The Emergence and Rise of Registrar Profession in Europe*, in “Museum International”, 2016, vol. 68, pp. 59-70, here pp. 62-63 (italics is not mine).

¹⁴⁷ The term is the result of the combination of Registrum (register) and -arius (agent).

¹⁴⁸ S. Daynes-Diallo, H. Perrel, H. Vassal, *Régisseur d’œuvres : enjeux d’un métier émergent et perspectives de professionnalisation*, in “In Situ. Revue des patrimoines”, vol. 30, 2016, p. 2 ; “la fonction de régisseur prit brutalement une importance capitale : elle devenait l’outil essentiel de la rationalisation nécessaire des collections qui les rendrait exploitables, cohérentes, diffusables” ; <http://journals.openedition.org/insitu/13705> [last access 31/01/2022].

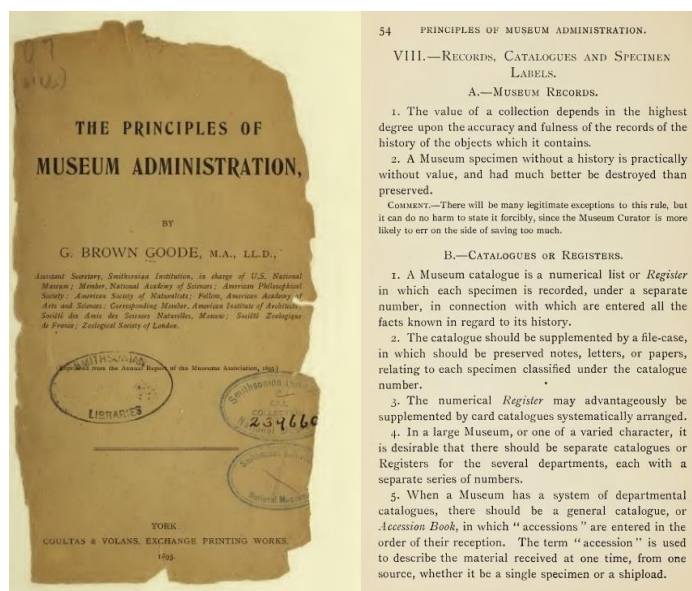
¹⁴⁹ Today, the Museum is called Arts and Industries Buildings and is part of the Smithsonian complex.

¹⁵⁰ S. Tena, *The registrar in collection management: an emerging profession*, in “Blog. Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya”, 14 September 2017; <https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/the-registrar-in-collections-management-an-emerging-profession-1/> [last access 31/01/2022].

¹⁵¹ G. Brown Goode, *The principles of museum administration* (Reprinted from the Annual Report of Museum Associations), New York: Coultas & Volans Exchange Printing Works, 1895; <https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/principlesofmuse00good> [last access 1/02/2022].

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

practically without value and had much better be destroyed than preserved”¹⁵³. If not properly registered, an object belonging to a museum is like any other object. To make it accessible for study and fruition a body of documents is mandatorily required. The profession of the registrar gradually spread and was recognized by art institutions due to the relevance of the duties they perform regarding collection records.



Ill. 8 G. Brown Goode, *The principles of museum administration* (Reprinted from the Annual Report of Museum Associations), New York: Coultas & Volans Exchange Printing Works, 1895, cover and p. 54.

Thirty years later, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston declared that the Registry staff functions were “to control the logistics of works, customs formalities, the management of loans and deposits, and the control of collections inventories, the photographic register and the correct storage of objects”¹⁵⁴. This definition increased the sphere of action of the figure, which became increasingly broad over time. “The tasks imposed by the inventory, relating to management of the reserves, and also to the moving of items, favored the relatively recent creation of the post of registrar”¹⁵⁵.

The profile took different directions depending on the museum’s country of location and its type of management. As elucidated by Hénaut¹⁵⁶, the scale and degree of

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ S. Tena, *The registrar in collection management: an emerging profession*, in “Blog. Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya”, 14 September 2017; <https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/the-registrar-in-collections-management-an-emerging-profession-1/> [last access 31/01/2022].

¹⁵⁵ A. Desvallées, F. Mairesse, *Key Concepts of Museology*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2010, p. 69.

¹⁵⁶ L. Hénaut, *Capacités d’observation et dynamique des groupes professionnels. La conservation des œuvres de musées*, in “Revue française de sociologie”, Vol. 52, No.1, 2011, pp. 71-101, here p. 81.

internal organization of art institutions usually facilitate the division of the position into two roles. The first one concerns the management of the works belonging to the permanent collection, their movement and safeguard inside the museum itself, as well as the management of deposits and all legislative aspects related to acquisitions and donations. The second role takes responsibility for the administration, care and control of incoming loans during temporary exhibitions. In the case in which this segmentation is present, these two figures are respectively called Collection Manager and Exhibition Registrar. The former role can be further subdivided into Collection Manager and Loans or Outgoing Registrar, in which the latter oversees the phases linked to the loan of any object owned by the museum or for which the museum is liable for¹⁵⁷.

Regardless of this specification, the Exhibition Registrar is the profile on which this chapter will focus¹⁵⁸, being the pivot around which the organization of a temporary exhibition rotates and playing an irreplaceable key-leading role in bridging the various professional tasks. Operating for the safety, protection and conservation of the artworks, the registrar is familiar with all the duties performed both by the internal and external staff during the preparation of an exhibition. Being the United States the country in which the profile was born, the figure is undoubtedly more developed there: it is more likely to find all three of these job positions in the same institution. Nevertheless, the post has undergone a great development in Europe as well, especially in the United Kingdom and in France. From the second half of the 20th century, this distribution of roles can also be found in the countries mentioned above.

In 1906, when European museums were not yet aware of this profession, the discussion on the standardization of protocols and technical processes in the U.S. led to the formation of the American Association of Museums (AAM). The publication of *Museum Registration Methods* in 1958 was the result of a continuous further exchange on the topic; constantly revised and updated. In 2020 its sixth edition was issued¹⁵⁹.

¹⁵⁷ Registrarte, *Professione registrar*, in “Registrarte”; <http://www.registrarte.org/p/index.php?page=professione-registrar> [last access 2/02/2022]. In the same website page, it is explained that “the Outgoing or Loans Registrar bears the responsibility for every phase of the transport of an artwork once the direction of the lending museum has given its consent and laid down the conditions regulating the loan”.

¹⁵⁸ From now on, the appellation “registrar” will always refer to the Exhibition Registrar, unless otherwise noted.

¹⁵⁹ J. E. Simmons, T. M. Kiser (edited by), *MRM6: museum registration methods*, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, the AAM Press, 2020.

The increasing attention paid to both the management and the monitoring of collections gave importance to some essential practices that must be carried out during the handling of the artworks. The drafting of condition reports, cataloguing, insurance, placement in storage, and control of micro-climatic conditions became the keywords and key actions for registrars. Nonetheless, with the intensification of the movement of objects, the packaging and shipping methods needed to be observed and supervised, as well as improved and customized for each work of art. In 1979, Marjorie E. Hoachlander published “the first independent research study directed toward the educational needs and interests of museum registrars”¹⁶⁰. Based on the answers of 434 registrars and 100 museum directors working in the United States and in Canada, she drew up a list of duties to be attributed to registrars.

Permanent Collections

- cataloging collection material
- controlling storage inventory
- accessioning and applying to number systems
- processing outgoing loans
- making arrangements for shipping
- filing
- typing

Temporary Exhibitions

- preparing loan agreements
- assigning to number systems
- supervising packing and unpacking
- maintaining and updating records
- making arrangements for shipping
- arranging for insurance coverage
- condition reporting
- filing
- typing

Ill. 9 Profile by Computer of Registrarial Functions Performed in Museums of All Types. M. E. Hoachlander, *Profile of a Museum Registrar: Case Research Project*, Washington, D.C.: Academy for Educational Development, 1979, p. 20.

After five years, in 1984, the U.S. *Code of Ethics for Registrars*, accepted and endorsed by the Registrars Committee of the AAM, described registrars as “specialists in the areas of information management, risk management, and logistics”¹⁶¹. Their “obligations to their museums’ collections, to loaned objects, and to the associated records are paramount”¹⁶². The individual filling this work position has

broad responsibilities in the development and enforcement of policies and procedures pertaining to the acquisition, management and disposition of collections. Records pertaining to the objects for which the institution has

¹⁶⁰ M. E. Hoachlander, *Profile of a Museum Registrar: Case Research Project*, Washington, D.C.: Academy for Educational Development, 1979, Document Resume.

¹⁶¹ Registrar Committee of the American Association of Museums, *Code of Ethics for Registrars*, U. S. A.: 1984, p. 1.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

assumed responsibility are maintained by the registrar. Usually, the registrar also handles arrangements for accessions, loans, packing, shipping, storage, customs, and insurance as it relates to museum material. [...] The primary concerns of registrars are creating and maintaining accurate records pertaining to objects, including those documents that provide legal protection for their museum; ensuring the safety of objects; arranging insurance coverage for objects; and the handling, transporting and control of objects¹⁶³.

In the words of Mart Museum's former registrar Clarenza Catullo, "the Registrar is the professional figure charged by the Museum to manage the practice of loan processing and all the logistic-organizational activities functional to the protection and conservation of the work during all the phases related to the loan"¹⁶⁴. The Exhibition Registrar is liable for each loaned object and its handling: from its place of provenance to its temporary destination, from the time when it is removed from its original position to the time when, after the display, it is there repositioned.

To be more specific, art loans are divided into two main categories: outgoing and incoming. An artwork belonging to the museum in which the registrar operates could be temporarily shipped in the same country or abroad (outgoing loan). On the contrary, the museum could request an artwork, belonging to another subject, for a temporary exhibition (incoming loan). In this last case, "as risk managers, registrars are responsible for determining and arranging for the correct method of handling, packing, transporting, and couriating objects"¹⁶⁵. As mentioned, when the registrar's position was beginning to develop, the profile's primary concern was to build and/or implement precise records for the artworks belonging to the museum's permanent collection and for the ones that were momentarily hosted in its spaces. "Registrars, through the records maintained, are accountable for the objects in custody of their museums and must be able to provide current information on each object, its location, status, and condition"¹⁶⁶. However, as the U.S. *Code of Ethics for Registrars* made it clear, the profile is also liable for the protection and conservation of the artworks and must ensure their legal protection by arranging proper insurance coverages. Precisely

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ C. Catullo, *La gestione del prestito istituzionale*, in *IN & OUT. Guida pratica al prestito di opere d'arte*, AXA-ART, Roma: 2018, pp. 17-23, here p. 18; "il Registrar è la figura professionale incaricata dal Museo di gestire la pratica di elaborazione del prestito e tutte le attività logistico-organizzative funzionali alla tutela e alla conservazione dell'opera durante tutte le fasi connesse al prestito".

¹⁶⁵ Registrar Committee of the American Association of Museums, *Code of Ethics for Registrars*, U. S. A.: 1984, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

because of their relevance at the logistics, administrative and organizational levels, registrars are extremely important, second only to the director of the museum. The registrar must work in concert with “curators, conservators, collections managers, and other museum staff, [...] with exhibition, technical, and security staff”¹⁶⁷. Therefore, the registrar must be able to build and coordinate a stimulating network among all the professionals collaborating for the making of an art exhibition. Being in charge of managing risky circumstances, registrars must be able to identify any potential threat and anticipate complications in order to reduce or avoid them. This makes them proactive figures, able to analyze each possibly dangerous situation for the objects and be in control of every step eventually leading to the display.

In Europe, the first registrars and collection managers appeared in the late 1970s in the UK: the National Gallery established a Registry Department in 1977, while the National Portrait Gallery in 1978 and the Tate in 1979¹⁶⁸. As clarified above, the functions of registration and keeping inventories represent the core mission of the U.S. profile. Though, this aspect is present in the English profile too, to the extent that they are merged into the so-called Anglo-American Model. As a confirmation of their similar features, the 1992 founding charter of the United Kingdom Registrars Group (UKRG) provides a definition of the role highlighting logistics and inventorying tasks.

For the purposes of this Constitution, ‘Registrar’ shall be interpreted as:
Any person working in a museum, art gallery, collection or similar organisation that has a stated remit to collect, preserve, interpret and/or display objects of artistic, historical or scientific importance, and who has a responsibility for carrying out and/or documenting one or more of the following activities:

- Object entry, acquisition and disposal
- Loans management
- Collection care
- Object packing and logistics
- Exhibition installation
- Exhibition tour management
- Location control
- Indemnity and Insurance
- Interpretation and advice on legal and regulatory issues applicable to the sector¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ S. Tena, *The registrar in collection management: an emerging profession*, in “Blog. Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya”, 14 September 2017; <https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/the-registrar-in-collections-management-an-emerging-profession-1/> [last access 31/01/2022].

¹⁶⁹ United Kingdom Registrars Group, *Constitution*, 2014, p. 1; <http://www.ukregistrarsgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/UKRG-constitution-2014.pdf> [last access 31/01/2022].

On the other hand, the European model differs from the Anglo-American one in several respects.

Recognition of the registrar profession in Europe originates in the emergence, in the late 1980s, of various activities dedicated to exhibition production and collection management in museums: ones that arose as a result of culture and heritage jobs becoming deeply specialized, and due to increasing professionalisation that was driven by Anglo-American models of registration¹⁷⁰.

Museums in Europe are “characterized by the dominant figure of the heritage conservator or collections curator”¹⁷¹. They play a major role inside art museums: in many cases, the conservator “supervises the inventorying of collections, documents them and manages lending them for exhibition projects that may request them”¹⁷². After the U.K., France was the second European country to include the position: the Center Pompidou’s collections registry department dates back to 1977, coinciding with the year of its inauguration. Therefore, the registrar is there conceived as an indispensable profile in the museum system from the beginning of the center’s activity, closely followed by the Musée d’Orsay.

From the years 2000, the core tasks of registrars did not change significantly. In fact,

their three main missions, defined [...] by the Observatoire des métiers, remain valid:

- the planning and management of the operations related to the movement of artworks at the technical, administrative and financial levels,
- the supervision and setting, mounting and dismounting of exhibitions for which they are technically responsible,
- the assessment of risks associated with the movement of works by applying preventive conservation requirements and ensuring compliance with security conditions in the context of the exhibitions they implement or the collections they manage¹⁷³.

¹⁷⁰ H. Vassal, S. Daynes-Diallo, *From Functions to Profession: The Emergence and Rise of Registrar Profession in Europe*, in “Museum International”, 2016, vol. 68, pp. 59-70, here p. 60.

¹⁷¹ S. Tena, *The registrar in collection management: an emerging profession*, in “Blog. Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya”, 14 September 2017; <https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/the-registrar-in-collections-management-an-emerging-profession-1/> [last access 31/01/2022].

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ S. Daynes-Diallo, H. Perrel, H. Vassal, *Régisseur d’œuvres : enjeux d’un métier émergent et perspectives de professionnalisation*, in “In Situ. Revue des patrimoines”, vol. 30, 2016, p. 3 ; “ses trois grandes missions, définies au début des années 2000 par l’Observatoire des métiers, restent d’actualité:

- la planification et la gestion des opérations liées aux mouvements d’œuvres sur le plan technique, administratif et financier,
- l’encadrement et la mise en place, le montage et le démontage des expositions dont il a la responsabilité technique,
- l’évaluation des risques liés aux mouvements d’œuvres par l’application des prescriptions de conservation préventive en veillant au respect des conditions de sécurité dans le cadre des expositions qu’il met en œuvre ou des collections qu’il gère”; <http://journals.openedition.org/insitu/13705> [last access 31/01/2022].

As for the European model, the registrar's main areas of responsibility are: the arrangement and organization of incoming and outgoing loans, the monitoring of temporary exhibitions in every aspect concerning the objects, and the evaluation of potentially hazardous situations resulting in the transportation and handling. Specifically, by applying their training and professional experience to the "technical, administrative and financial spheres"¹⁷⁴, Exhibition Registrars must put in place appropriate measures for "preventive conservation [...], security and insurance"¹⁷⁵ for every piece located inside the museum. In any case, the crucial qualification of a registrar is the capability of assessing risk during every step of the loan, as the reports of the European Registrars Conference (ERC) keep pointing out since its foundation in 1998. This year, the ERC22 biennial meeting will take place in Strasbourg and will aim at broadening "the scope of our reflections on the professional challenges that we have to manage and for which we develop specific professional skills"¹⁷⁶. These objectives underline the constant need for a greater specialization in the field. The Anglo-American and French models have played cutting-edge positions in the shaping of the role in other European countries, both at the permanent collection and at the temporary exhibition levels. From the trends cited above, in recent years the figure has leant towards a centralization of the duties performed in three main categories of expertise: the registrar position lies at the crossroads of the technologic, scientific and legal-administrative categories¹⁷⁷. The particularity of the position is that registrar synthesize on themselves the knowledge of all the people called to contribute to the setting up of a temporary art exhibition.

The current figure of the registrar, in both Europe and in the English-speaking world, requires multidisciplinary knowledge and great versatility. It is a highly qualified professional profile that shares a professional curriculum with curators and with conservator-restorers¹⁷⁸.

¹⁷⁴ S. Tena, *The registrar in collection management: an emerging profession*, in "Blog. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya", 14 September 2017; <https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/the-registrar-in-collections-management-an-emerging-profession-1/> [last access 31/01/2022].

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ ERC22, <https://erc2022.org/> [last access 1/02/2022].

¹⁷⁷ S. Daynes-Diallo, H. Perrel, H. Vassal, *Régisseur d'œuvres : enjeux d'un métier émergent et perspectives de professionnalisation*, in "In Situ. Revue des patrimoines", vol. 30, 2016, p. 3 ; <http://journals.openedition.org/insitu/13705>.

¹⁷⁸ S. Tena, *The registrar in collection management: an emerging profession*, in "Blog. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya", 14 September 2017; <https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/the-registrar-in-collections-management-an-emerging-profession-1/> [last access 31/01/2022].

2.2 The registrar position in Italy: a phantom limb

Being born on the field, the registrar's duties have been defined according to the size of the museum structure, its internal organization, resources, and specific needs. Thus, the profile has never performed exactly the same tasks all over the world. For what concerns the Italian museum system,

until now the figure of the registrar inside museums, at least the ones managed by the State, has been shaped by the circumstances or better extruded from the structure itself under the thrust of a pressing necessity, as in the much slower evolutionary process of the living beings that, if they need a limb or an organ, in time (hundreds or thousands of years if necessary) they find it sketched, then formed, perfected and ready for use¹⁷⁹.

According to this logic, small museums still envisage few professionals to execute different tasks, the same ones that in more established institutions are carried out by different individuals and departments. The registrar tasks are performed inside this kind of limited realities as well. However, the individual, or individuals, is/are not formally recognized as covering that position only. The conservator or even the director of the museum could take over the registrar duties because of a lack of human and economic resources.

An outstanding aspect characterizing registrar lies in their interdisciplinarity. Their duties can be spread within the institution, not only under different subjects but even different departments, such as the collection management and the administration ones. Alternatively, the position can be shaped on the museum organization. Art centers have now updated themselves by adapting their standards “to the idiosyncrasy of their countries (for example, in Italy the profession revolves around loans management - the famous *Ufficio prestiti*)”¹⁸⁰. “Despite being, for many years, the flywheel that ‘moves’ the artworks of one of the largest lending countries in the world [namely Italy], [the registrar] often operates behind the scenes and with different and multiple

¹⁷⁹ F. Bonino, K. Spurrell (curated by), *Registrar di opere d'arte. Atti della terza conferenza europea. Approfondimenti sul ruolo e le competenze dei registrar in Europa*, Milano: Silvana editoriale - Registrarte, 2004, p. 183; “finora la figura del registrar all'interno dei musei, almeno di quelli statali, è stata plasmata dalle circostanze o meglio estrusa dalla struttura stessa sotto la spinta di una necessità incalzante, come nel ben più lento processo evolutivo degli esseri viventi che, se abbisognano di un arto o di un organo, nel tempo (centinaia o migliaia di anni all'occorrenza) se lo ritrovano abbozzato, poi formato, perfezionato e pronto all'uso”.

¹⁸⁰ S. Tena, *The registrar in collection management: an emerging profession*, in “Blog. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya”, 14 September 2017 (italics is not mine); <https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/the-registrar-in-collections-management-an-emerging-profession-1/> [last access 31/01/2022].

appellations”¹⁸¹, as a true phantom limb of the national art system.

This reasoning is critically synthesized by Acidini in her intervention during the third European Congress of Registrars in 2002, organized by Registrarte.

It is clear that in any case their tasks [registrars’] were and are carried out in the service of the ordinary administration of the cultural heritage, as well as of extraordinary events: perhaps, however, divided between different figures, belonging to equally different centers of responsibility and therefore at the risk of little or no coordination. [...] registrars operate incognito [...], under different epigraphs, with different degrees of awareness and responsibility. [...] one is struck by the lexical variety with which they define themselves. They are in fact, if working in the public sector, belonging to the Exhibition Office, the Loan Office, the Registration Office, the Research Office; which says a lot about the efforts made, in autonomy and with imagination [...] to have an office able to perform increasingly required and increasingly indispensable functions¹⁸².

In Italy, the figure of the registrar is mentioned for the first time within a Public Administration’s document in the 2001 *Guidelines on technical and scientific criteria and the standards of functioning and development of museums*¹⁸³. Registrars are described as the individuals producing, managing, and cataloguing all the documents related to acquisition, inventory, loan, insurance, transport, and security of the artwork¹⁸⁴. The interdisciplinarity of the position is firmly highlighted as “not happily translatable into Italian due to the fullness of its connecting tasks among the different skills of the consignee, the curator/director, the restorer and the professionals outside

¹⁸¹ F. Bonino, *Introduction by Flaminia Bonino*, in *Registrar di opere d’arte. Atti della terza conferenza europea. Approfondimenti sul ruolo e le competenze dei registrar in Europa*, F. Bonino, K. Spurrell (curated by), Milano: Silvana editoriale - Registrarte, 2004; “pur essendo da anni il volano che ‘muove’ le opere d’arte di uno dei maggiori paesi prestatori al mondo, spesso opera dietro le quinte e con appellativi differenti e molteplici”.

¹⁸² C. Acidini, *Registrar di opere d’arte. Atti della terza conferenza europea. Approfondimenti sul ruolo e le competenze dei registrar in Europa*, F. Bonino, K. Spurrell (curated by), Milano: Silvana editoriale - Registrarte, 2004, p. 183; “è evidente che i suoi compiti venivano e vengono comunque svolti al servizio dell’ordinaria amministrazione del patrimonio culturale, così come di eventi straordinari: magari però suddivisi tra figure diverse, afferenti ad altrettanto diversi centri di responsabilità e quindi a rischi di scarso o nullo coordinamento. [...] registrar operano in incognito negli istituti periferici del Ministero, sotto epigrafi diverse, con gradi diversificati di consapevolezza e di responsabilità. [...] si è colpiti dalla varietà lessicale con cui essi si autodefiniscono. Essi risultano infatti, se nel settore pubblico, appartenenti all’Ufficio Mostre, all’Ufficio Prestiti, all’Ufficio Registrazione, all’Ufficio Ricerche; il che la dice lunga sugli sforzi compiuti, in autonomia e con fantasia [...] per dotarsi di ufficio in grado di adempiere a funzioni sempre più richieste e sempre più indispensabili”.

¹⁸³ Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, *Atto di indirizzo sui criteri tecnico-scientifici e sugli standard di funzionamento e sviluppo dei musei*, Legislative Decree n. 112/98, art. 150 comma 6, made official by the decree of the Ministry of the Cultural Heritage and Activities, 10 May 2001. The translation of the document is from Professione registrar, in “Registrarte” <http://www.registrarte.org/p/index.php?page=professione-registrar> [last access 2/02/2022].

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

the museum”¹⁸⁵. In Italy, the profile was only recently acknowledged inside the national frame of museum professions, but still not at the regulatory level. This implies that the State leaves to the museum the last word on the hiring process and actual recognition of the registrar in its staff. The urge of a legal validation for the registrar post is symptomatic of the importance given to the safeguard of the heritage, a key aspect that characterizes the position itself. “In our Country, a very careful and sophisticated culture of conservation has developed in recent centuries”, which led the Italian cultural heritage to be perceived “as public heritage and as part of a whole that needs to be protected as such”¹⁸⁶. However, the act of moving cultural assets for art displays cannot disregard the need to operate in full compliance with norms. The application of the latter should constantly guarantee the safety standards of the exhibition place and the conservation of the works. It is thus fundamental to verify the need for restorations, activate adequate insurance coverages, check for the correct setting of the spaces, and accompanying all the phases of the loan with supporting records, both written and visual¹⁸⁷. All these tasks are managed by registrars and represent the reason why they cover such a crucial role inside every art museum. The registrar is “responsible for the holding of what we could call the procedural chain, making sure that there are no weak links, which is the moment of risk for the safety, protection and conservation of the works”¹⁸⁸. Therefore, “it is a job that requires not only specific competences but also a deep-seated sense of responsibility, the ability to deal with the unexpected, and a spirit of service and collaboration”¹⁸⁹.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 5; “non felicemente traducibile in italiano per la pienezza dei suoi compiti di raccordo tra le competenze diverse del consegnatario, curatore/direttore, del restauratore e le professionalità esterne al museo”. The translation of the document is from Professione registrar, in “Registrarte” <http://www.registrarte.org/p/index.php?page=professione-registrar> [last access 2/02/2022].

¹⁸⁶ S. Settis, *Battaglie senza eroi. I beni culturali tra istituzioni e profitto*, Milano: Mondadori Electa, 2005, p. 72; “nel nostro Paese si è elaborata negli ultimi secoli una cultura della conservazione molto attenta e molto sofisticata”, “come patrimonio pubblico e come parte di un insieme da proteggersi come tale”.

¹⁸⁷ L. Pacifici, *L'organizzatore di mostre: principi generali della gestione dei prestiti*, in *IN & OUT. Guida pratica al prestito di opere d'arte*, AXA-ART, Roma: 2018, pp. 5-15, here pp. 5-8.

¹⁸⁸ M. Serio, *Introduzione*, in *Registrar di opere d'arte. Atti della terza conferenza europea. Approfondimenti sul ruolo e le competenze dei registrar in Europa*, F. Bonino, K. Spurrell (curated by), Milano: Silvana editoriale - Registrarte, 2004; “al registrar compete in particolare il controllo della tenuta di quella che potremmo chiamare la catena procedurale, evitando che vi siano anelli deboli, ossia momenti di rischio per la sicurezza, la tutela, la conservazione delle opere”. The translation is from Professione Registrar, in “Registrarte”, <http://www.registrarte.org/p/index.php?page=professione-registrar> [last access 2/02/2022].

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., “è un lavoro che richiede non solo specifiche competenze, ma anche solide basi deontologiche, capacità di affrontare gli imprevisti, spirito di servizio e collaborazione”.

2.3 Liaising between the inside and the outside: a virtuous network of collaboration

In their key role, registrars carry out two joint missions: the first related to the exhibitions inside the structure in which they operate, the second focused on the artworks¹⁹⁰. “The function of the registrar [...] thus implies a multi-disciplinarity of knowledge and a high degree of versatility”¹⁹¹: they are characterized by many positive qualities like “those of open-mindedness, creativity, a willingness to communicate and to be actively involved in the promotion of professional values”¹⁹². The temporary nature of exhibitions not only fosters a dynamic relation between the artworks and the professionals – and, ultimately, between the artworks and the public –, but it also stimulates the encounter of multiple and complementary competences. The registrar’s position is located at the heart of the production process eventually leading to a temporary display. Being aware of the vulnerability of the heritage, they play an essential role in coordinating and organizing the workflow for the team to which the construction of the exhibition is entrusted. Their ability in managing potential threats for the artworks – and for their collaborators – together with their mastery in decision-making, make registrars competent in ensuring the protection of every art piece they are liable for¹⁹³.

Their role is in a process of perpetual change? evolution?, as registrars must oversee and work in the midst of a time of profound change in museums - a time in which risk control, polyvalence and adaptability have become indispensable to the collaborative practice of conservation¹⁹⁴.

Inside the museum system, the registrar possesses a wide knowledge on the artworks, on their diversity and conservation conditions. Acting as registrar for a museum signifies managing multidisciplinary competences and skills which encompass

¹⁹⁰ I. Clouteau, *Le Rôle du régisseur et de la régie dans les médiations de production d’œuvres d’art contemporain*, in “Culture & Musées”, n°13, 2009, pp. 161-163, here p. 162.

¹⁹¹ S. Daynes-Diallo, H. Perrel, H. Vassal, *Régisseur d’œuvres : enjeux d’un métier émergent et perspectives de professionnalisation*, in “In Situ. Revue des patrimoines”, vol. 30, 2016, p. 3 ; “la fonction de régisseur [...] implique de ce fait une pluridisciplinarité de connaissances et une grande polyvalence”.

¹⁹² H. Vassal, S. Daynes-Diallo, *From Functions to Profession: The Emergence and Rise of Registrar Profession in Europe*, in “Museum International”, 2016, vol. 68, pp. 59-70, here p. 69.

¹⁹³ S. Daynes-Diallo, H. Perrel, H. Vassal, *Régisseur d’œuvres : enjeux d’un métier émergent et perspectives de professionnalisation*, in “In Situ. Revue des patrimoines”, vol. 30, 2016, p. 6.

¹⁹⁴ H. Vassal, S. Daynes-Diallo, *From Functions to Profession: The Emergence and Rise of Registrar Profession in Europe*, in “Museum International”, 2016, vol. 68, pp. 59-70, here p. 69.

different fields. Leadership, communication and teamwork skills are just some requirements. Other basic qualifications include:

1. Knowledge of art history and museology;
2. Material knowledge of artworks, of their materials, and of the materials and techniques of conservation;
3. Knowledge of preventive conservation and the skills to apply it, i.e. precautions, gestures, and procedures;
4. Basic knowledge and skills relative to public and/or private accounting and administration, legal knowledge of appropriate procedures related to the movement of artworks (e. g. incoming artworks, market and procurements, policies, loans contracts, etc.);
5. Documentation skills pertaining to collection inventory and its technological aspects (IT and CMS: collection management system);
6. Fluency in at least one foreign language¹⁹⁵.

A common aspect found in all the variations of the registrar's position is the centrality of its connection role between the internal and the external staff. The registrar has to exchange with the entire "museum family"¹⁹⁶: directors, restorers and conservators, curators, archivists and researchers, photographers, collectors, patrons, architects, designers, installers, marble workers, blacksmiths, packagers, painters and decorators, transport operators, pedestal-makers, art handlers, framers, brokers and insurers, technical teams such as electricians, plumbers, heaters, etc., reception and surveillance staff, maintenance teams, security officers, customs officers, etcetera¹⁹⁷.

The importance of this figure lies in the role of liaising between the management of the museum, the scientific curators of the collection or exhibition and the practical realization of the exhibition. One of the principal tasks of the registrar consists in fact in collecting information (from the curator, the restorers, and the keepers of the collections), organizing it, and redistributing it to the various interlocutors (shippers, insurers, installers, etc.) to ensure that the complex machine of the loan or the organization of the exhibition runs smoothly¹⁹⁸.

In their all-encompassing and ever-present role, registrars are among the professionals that interact the most with the outside, intended as both the lenders of the artworks and the external team. As a matter of fact, their work starts the moment they receive the list of loans defined by the curator and approved by the Scientific Committee. The

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., here p. 65.

¹⁹⁶ M. Case, *Registrars on Record. Essays on Museum Collections Management*. Washington D.C.: Registrars Committee of the American Association of Museums, 1988, p. 25.

¹⁹⁷ S. Daynes-Diallo, H. Perrel, H. Vassal, *Régisseur d'œuvres : enjeux d'un métier émergent et perspectives de professionnalisation*, in "In Situ. Revue des patrimoines", vol. 30, 2016, p. 3.

¹⁹⁸ Registrarte, *Professione Registrar*, in "Registrarte"; <http://www.registrarte.org/p/index.php?page=professione-registrar> [last access 2/02/2022].

Loan Request - accompanied by the explanation of the scientific project, the Loan Form and/or the Loan Agreement, and the Facility Report of the exhibition site - will be followed by the authorization and signature of the Loan Agreement, the contract stipulated between the borrower and the lender¹⁹⁹. The latter aims at regulating the terms and conditions of the loan; for this reason, it is important that all necessary information is provided, and all the costs generated by the loan request are specified. For instance, the mode of transportation and arrangement of the objects, the security measures, the need for any restoration or conservation treatment (clima box, protective surface in plexiglass, etc.), the construction of a new frame, the expenditures related to an eventual courier, and so on²⁰⁰. All these costs are incurred by the requesting museum, in which the exhibition will take place. An added value of individual covering the registrar position is the ability to establish a fruitful dialogue with lenders, be them public entities, like museums, or private subjects, like collectors. After having agreed on the obligations concerning the loan, registrars (and project managers, if the institution envisages them) will be giving instructions on every aspect related to budget, couriership, insurance, condition reports and other activities to be carried out before the mounting and final opening of the exhibition.

The complex process of organizing an exhibition requires different activities and interlocutors. Starting from loans-related operations, every step put into practice by the organizing entity will require specific skills in addition to those of the registrars. These last are shared by different professionals working inside the museum or temporary co-operating with them. As an example, Ivan Clouteau²⁰¹ – former researcher in Information and Communication Sciences-Museology option at the Avignon University – remarks that

the conservation conditions of artworks necessarily require shared knowledge in various fields, principally those of conservation, documentation, restoration and museum organization. Today the work of the registrar cannot be understood without the concept of task sharing as an organizational tool of all institutions²⁰².

¹⁹⁹ L. Pacifici, *L'organizzazione di mostre: principi generali della gestione dei prestiti*, in *IN & OUT. Guida pratica al prestito di opere d'arte*, AXA-ART, Roma: 2018, pp. 5-15, here p. 7.

²⁰⁰ F. Pirani, *Che cos'è una mostra d'arte*, Roma: Carocci editore, 2010, p. 42.

²⁰¹ I. Clouteau, *Comment penser l'erreur en régie d'art contemporain*, in "CerOArt", n. 3, 2009, p. 9; <https://journals.openedition.org/ceroart/1181#toc> [last access 2/02/2022].

²⁰² S. Tena, *The registrar in collection management: an emerging profession*, in "Blog. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya", 14 September 2017; <https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/the-registrar-in-collections-management-an-emerging-profession-1/> [last access 31/01/2022].

Probably, in Europe the professionals interacting the most with registrars are conservator-restorers and curators. Particularly, external conservators-restorers cooperate with registrars for some of the activities they conduct within the art institutions. In sharing areas of competency and responsibilities, this “duo of preventive conservation”²⁰³ combine their know-how and exchange information, reaching a high level of documentation regarding both the loans themselves but also the preparation for the safeguard during handling and installation.

As Delsault-Lardy and Vassal pointed out, in ‘Acteurs et compétences’ (2000), ‘registrars and curator-conservators must work together [...] and share the responsibility with respect to data gathering on works and their accessibility’. In fact, this professional pairing has already become a general rule in Europe²⁰⁴.

In support of the above assumptions, the series of interviews that follows will specifically highlight the importance of the registrar position inside a temporary exhibition and the relevance of cooperation. After an internship at Mart’s Collection Management and Exhibition Coordination office and followed the mounting and dismantling of different exhibitions, the acquaintance of Clarenza Catullo has made possible these stimulating conversations.

Even if the registrar coordinates the exhibition process and makes sure that, in every step of the handling and of the conservation measures, all the procedures meet certain standards²⁰⁵, sharing knowledge with external professionals is crucial. This exchange encompasses several levels of the production process, if not all of them, leading to the temporary exhibition: the security during transport, the installation and storage inside the museum spaces, the architectural concept and project, the choice of lighting, the construction of the exhibition design, etc.

Luisa Mensi works as external conservator-restorer at Castello di Rivoli, Turin; at the same time, she carries out her freelance activity both at national and international level.

²⁰³ S. Daynes-Diallo, H. Perrel, H. Vassal, *Régisseur d’œuvres : enjeux d’un métier émergent et perspectives de professionnalisation*, in “In Situ. Revue des patrimoines”, vol. 30, 2016, p. 6 ; “binôme de la conservation préventive”.

²⁰⁴ S. Tena, *The registrar in collection management: an emerging profession*, in “Blog. Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya”, 14 September 2017; <https://blog.museunacional.cat/en/the-registrar-in-collections-management-an-emerging-profession-1/> [last access 31/01/2022].

²⁰⁵ M. E. Tittoni, *Introduction*, in *Registrar di opere d’arte. Atti della terza conferenza europea. Approfondimenti sul ruolo e le competenze dei registrar in Europa*, F. Bonino, K. Spurrell (curated by), Milano: Silvana editoriale - Registrarte, 2004.

The registrar is the pivot of the museum. He/she is the pivotal figure around which all the others revolve, from the director to the cleaning staff, through the administrative etc. He/she is the professional figure who pulls the strings of all the activities. [...] The registrar is the one who deals more closely with the logistics and coordinates the various professional figures who cooperate during the life of the museum: the setting, the handlings, the restorations, the loans, from transports to restorers etc. Often, especially in Italy but not only, [...] the registrar figure covers a wide range of activities²⁰⁶.

Their multidisciplinary know-how is evident in the coordinative and intersectoral characterization of the profile.

Even if it is not yet fully recognized in Italy, it is a very interesting role because it ranges from archival-theoretical and coordinative aspects, dealing with curators, directors and conservators, to more practical aspects, regarding logistics: [the registrar] must have knowledge on crates, transports, wide-ranging preparation on cultural heritage legislation²⁰⁷.

As conservator-restorer, Mensi witnessed several times the intersection and convergence of her duties with the registrar's. The restorer may have to partly cover the tasks of the registrar, as she did more than once. She was not only in charge of the proof of the state of conservation of the artworks, but also oversaw the inspection and handling of the works inside and outside their crates. However, some skills must be possessed by both profiles. Mensi states, "at the same time, if necessary, the registrar must be able to correctly read a condition report and compare it with the current state of the work"²⁰⁸.

Concerning safety, Antonella Cimarolli operated as Marshal Chief of Corpo di Vigilanza Notturna S.r.l. in Rovereto and, from 2005 to 2019, she was head of security of Mart Museum in Rovereto.

Until 2006, the figure of the Registrar was not recognized within the Museum and there was no exchange between the figure of the head of security and the registrar. [...] In 2006, Catullo arrived at the Museum, and, at the time, there was no specific figure at the security level overseeing the mounting/dismounting and exchanging with the registrar, so we joined forces and studied a profile together²⁰⁹.

The main task of the latter was to supervise the security measures to be taken inside the exhibition sites with the aim of guaranteeing a global high level of security, being constantly present and active. Thus, the collaboration between Cimarolli and Catullo

²⁰⁶ L. Mensi, *Interview*, 2 December 2021; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ A. Cimarolli, *Interview*, 9 December 2021; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

gave light to a new professional position, responsible for the security in the whole process of the exhibition setting. Thanks to the information shared by the registrar for what concerns all the external professional temporarily working inside Mart Museum, this figure had full control of the people accessing the site. Cimarolli, as well as Mensi, states that the registrar is the key professional of the organization of an exhibition. However,

among the various professionals working in an exhibition, the figure of the registrar is not well known; only the most important museums have one, but not all of them. [...] The registrar [...] must be an extremely precise person, professional and aware of his/her work, since he/she has to deal with loan insurance, tenders for transport and transport itself, he/she coordinates everything within the exhibition setting and is an important as well as fundamental figure²¹⁰.

For Cimarolli, Clarenza Catullo “was a professional who feared no rivals, very precise, fussy, responsible for herself and her collaborators, with a considerable cultural background and coming from well-known and important working experiences”²¹¹. The two of them established a fruitful collaboration: “we shared a precise and professional style, which allowed us to operate by increasing the safety standards adopted up to that time, that is before the year 2006, and to reach objectives far above average”²¹².

Additionally, registrars should also have a wide knowledge of the museum spaces, including any potential weak point and constraint of the facility. They should be aware of the weight that a certain floor of the museum can carry and distinguish the load-bearing walls and the plasterboard ones. Thus, the field of action of registrars overlaps with the one of the external architect or exhibition designer too: they must exchange in many phases of the exhibition project. Raffaele Cipolletta is an architect working in Italy and abroad.

I obviously also collaborate with the registrar. I approach our work [together with this figure] from the creation of the projects to the plant engineering, the illumination and the air-conditioning system, since in certain situations special thermo-hygrometric conditions are required. With Clarenza [Catullo] and those who, like her, follow this part of development of the project, collaboration is very frequent²¹³.

Every information related to the setting of the exhibition must be exchanged by the

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ R. Cipolletta, *Interview*, 1 February 2022; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

registrar with the architect and all the professionals that need it. For example, the lighting technician must work in close collaboration with both the designer of the exhibition and the registrar. Claudio Cervelli is an illumination technician and has worked with Catullo too.

The registrar is an extremely important figure in the museum because he/she provides information about incoming works. One of the essential information for me is to know whether the work has undergone a recent restoration, has been conserved in storage for years or if it comes from completely different climate conditions from ours. In all these cases, the work is more delicate. [...] The registrar is the person who acts as technical interface with the works of art²¹⁴.

Transport enterprises need to be constantly in contact with the registrar as well, since the latter provides them all crucial information regarding the lender, the artworks and the means of transportation required. Leonardo Carrer has worked at APICE Venezia since 1982, the year of its foundation. As President of one of the leading national transport companies, he has developed a deep knowledge on the functioning of museums, both at the national and international level, and on the centrality of the figure of the registrar.

Speaking of the figure of the registrar and the registrar office,

foreign museums and private institutions are all equipped with trained staff in this field, usually they all have attended training/specialization courses that at an international level are not lacking, while in Italy, since these figures are not always present [...], the lack of precise and often very late answers to our demands implies a waste of energy that then is reflected both in the execution times and in the operating costs. Hence the relevance of the figure of the Registrar as a counterpart²¹⁵.

However, artworks cannot be moved without an adequate insurance protection. Thus, the registrar must extend a specific coverage for every art loan of the temporary exhibition. Claudio Bertani is the managing director of AGE Broker S.r.l. and always needs to establish a dialogue with the museum registrar to have all the information

²¹⁴ C. Cervelli, *Interview*, 3 December 2021; “il registrar è una figura estremamente importante nel museo perché fornisce le informazioni delle opere in entrata. Una delle informazioni che per me è fondamentale sapere riguardo l’opera è se ha subito un recente restauro, se è stata conservata in deposito per anni, se arriva da un clima completamente diverso dal nostro. [...] Il registrar è la persona che fa da interfaccia tecnica con le opere d’arte.

²¹⁵ L. Carrer, *Interview*, 15 December 2021; “i musei ed i privati stranieri sono tutti dotati di personale formato in questo ambito, di solito sono tutte figure che hanno frequentato corsi di formazione/specializzazione che a livello internazionale non mancano, mentre in Italia non esistendo sempre queste figure [...], la mancanza di risposte precise e spesso molto tardive alle nostre richieste comporta un dispendio di energie che poi si riflette sia nei tempi di esecuzione sia nei costi di gestione. Da questo l’importanza della figura del Registrar come controparte”.

about the artworks and their value, as well as visual records of the piece²¹⁶. In fact, condition reports are always accompanied by general and detailed photographs of each specific artwork. Usually, this task is carried out by the restorer-conservator, since it is the figure who understands better the state of conservation of the work and its weaknesses; though, in some cases the registrar could decide to make a double documentation: once again, the two profiles overlap.

On other occasions, high-quality photographs of the artworks are shot by a professional. Matteo de Fina is a freelance photographer who works with graphic designers for the publication of the exhibition catalogue.

I also collaborate with the registrar, because it often happens that, as in Palazzo Grassi, the piece arrives, and I have to photograph it for the catalogue. So, I join this figure while he/she carries out the checking operations and once he/she has made sure that the conservation status has not been altered by the transport, I take the photographs to be included in the catalogue. However, it happens that the color in an artwork comes off or there is damage during transport: at that point, a restorer is called to stabilize the work²¹⁷.

For the wide range of their responsibilities, skills and tasks, registrars are the leading figures of the museum and cannot be a phantom limb of the national museum system. The heterogeneity of their missions makes these figures the liaisons between internal and the external professionals, coming together for the making of a temporary art exhibition. Registrars cover a privileged position in the museum: holding the reins of the organization, their field of action and competences range from the legal-administration level to the technical-logistics and the conservation ones. Despite gaining recognition in recent years, the profession of registrar in Europe has yet to reach its full potential. In Italy, the State should grant them the importance they deserve also from a normative point of view; all museums should include this position, playing an irreplaceable role. Clarenza Catullo has a decades-long expertise as registrar. The evolution of her career demonstrates the great development that the Italian museum system has undergone in the last forty years.

²¹⁶ C. Bertani, *Interview*, 5 December 2021.

²¹⁷ M. de Fina, *Interview*, 31 January 2021; “collaboro anche con il registrar, perché spesso capita che arrivi il pezzo, come è successo recentemente a Palazzo Grassi, e io lo debba fotografare per il catalogo. Quindi affianco in qualche modo questa figura nelle operazioni di controllo e una volta che si è assicurato che lo stato di conservazione non sia stato alterato dal trasporto, faccio le fotografie da inserire nel catalogo. Tuttavia, capita che nel trasporto si stacchi del colore o ci siano danni: a quel punto si chiama un restauratore per stabilizzare l’opera”.

I started working at Palazzo Grassi s.p.a. as personal assistant to the art director Pontus Hultén and I was not aware of what I was doing as the organization was then being put together. In the long run, thanks to Pontus and the other collaborators such as Germano Celant and Ida Gianelli, I started developing the position of exhibition manager. I was in charge of all the shows at Palazzo Grassi. Since then, something changed: we are now more aware of roles inside museums, but professional careers are still unknown both in the academic and museum world²¹⁸.

What is interesting is that Catullo's professional journey took its start when the registrar did not exist as a professional position in Italian museums. "I came to know about this role while at Palazzo Grassi and working on major international loans"²¹⁹: there, she had the chance to meet registrars acting as couriers for the artworks and developed a keen interest on the profession. At the Venetian Palazzo Grassi, the duties and tasks she carried out as exhibition manager were, at least in part, commonly attributed to the registrar in other countries. For this reason, meeting with personnel connected to foreign museums was a key aspect for her decision to become a registrar. She then worked at Mart Museum for six-teen years as the only person in Italy employed with a public call for a registrar.

The continuous exchange with external personnel and the relevance she gave it is one of the leitmotifs of her profession: acting as exhibition manager, "at Palazzo Grassi I was the center of the overall collaborations with all external suppliers of any kind, from architects to light designers, publishing company.... anything"²²⁰. On the other hand, at Mart, "I was in contact only with those suppliers directly connected with my position, so conservators, art handlers, shippers, insurance brokers"²²¹. Albeit in a different way, both working positions allowed her to learn from external professionals and grasp the best from every situation:

this proximity with external professionals was very important for my career as a major skill for a registrar is to know how to do everything but doing nothing but what is necessary. I learnt a lot from all of them and I am very grateful for what we did together²²².

²¹⁸ C. Catullo, *Interview*, 6 April 2022.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Ibid.*

Together with the director and the curator, the registrar is the internal figure that is more in contact with self-employed individuals and private firms that come from the outside of the museum. Being adaptive profiles, registrars should always take advantage from the transformative quality of their position. As deeply analyzed, this allows them to fit into different museum fields of action and possess a multi-disciplinary knowledge.

I would look for somebody extremely steady. [...] It has to be somebody who does not panic, who very methodically goes about the job of recording, notifying the authorities when necessary, dealing calmly with the insurance companies. I really think that the registrar, with the exception of the director, is the most critical position in the museum.

Dr. David W. Steadman, Galleries of the Claremont Colleges, Claremont, California²²³.

2.4 The phenomenon of outsourcing (core) museum tasks for temporary art displays

It has now become clear that to implement the making of a temporary exhibition, the museum internal system needs to cooperate with external subjects, providing continuous high-quality resources and standards to its public. In general,

all projects in museums require resources. Resources may be thought of as people, time, money, equipment, consumables or combinations of these. They may be sourced internally from the museum itself, or externally from other suppliers or supporters²²⁴.

In this process of combining strengths and skills, the staff of the museum enlists the help of experienced external professionals and consultants: “a simple definition of a consultant is ‘a person or firm providing professional and objective assistance to organisations for a fee’”²²⁵. These figures are able to bring their know-how inside the reality of the institution, carrying out all the activities for which the museum needs further collaboration or does not envisage internal personnel. Externalization “is often justified as a means to better manage an institution by utilizing its human and financial resources in the most efficient ways possible”²²⁶. Moreover, freelancers possess a more

²²³ M. E. Hoachlander, *Profile of a Museum Registrar: Case Research Project*, Washington, D.C.: Academy for Educational Development, 1979, p. 28.

²²⁴ T. Ambrose and C. Paine, *Museums Basics. The International handbook*, London and New York: Routledge, 2018, p. 452.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ J. Harrison, *Outsourcing in Museums*, in “International Journal of Arts Management”, Vol. 2, No. 2, Winter 2000, pp. 14-25, here p. 16

varied occupational background: “one benefit that consultants bring is experience gained from many different situations, and through this experience they can help to identify approaches to problem-solving that may not be achievable internally”²²⁷. To mention very few and non-exhaustive scenarios which may arise during the setting-up of an exhibition: a skilled art handler might be helpful when it would come to understand how to properly lift a heavy sculpture or move a delicate piece; an architect would know better, by collaborating with the registrar and the head of the exhibition setting, how to balance weights along the floor and the walls; the head of security would know how to manage a situation of crisis, having developed a strong expertise in critical thinking and a deep knowledge on the exhibition spaces; a lighting technician would be aware of the rules governing the illumination of different types of works and materials. This unique level of know-how can only be gained on the ground and, if distributed, “the individual cognitive capital becomes a source of re-generation of value both individual and collective, both internal and external with respect to the organized system”²²⁸. Knowledge can be shared through exchange processes between the internal and the external staff to enrich not only the individual experience but also the whole museum system.

Independently from the field of work, human resources represent a discriminating variable for the achievement of high-quality propositions, users’ satisfaction, and excellent performance of the overall organization. As a matter of fact, they are the repositories of knowledge and thus constitute the most critical dimension for the museum-company. In this perspective, Knowledge Based Theory (KBT)²²⁹ allows to orient and motivate the decisions of the management from a strategic point of view. “Good decisions require the application of the knowledge relevant to those decisions”²³⁰: KBT justifies human resources’ adoption of certain analysis and research processes by referring to cognitive and immaterial variables representing the

²²⁷ T. Ambrose and C. Paine, *Museums Basics. The International handbook*, London and New York: Routledge, 2018, p. 452.

²²⁸ V. Cavaliere, S. Lombardi, *Le determinanti organizzative e individuali nei processi di utilizzo della conoscenza condivisa. Un’analisi esplorativa nei musei della Toscana*, in *I valori del museo. Strumenti e prospettive manageriali*, B. Sibilio (ed. by), Milano: Franco Angeli, 2015, pp. 172-196, here p. 174; “il capitale cognitivo individuale diviene fonte di ri-generazione di valore sia individuale sia collettivo, sia interno che esterno al sistema organizzato”.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, here p. 174-178.

²³⁰ R. M. Grant, *Knowledge and Organization*, in *Managing Industrial Knowledge: Creation, Transfer and Utilization*, I. Nonaka, D. J. Teece, London: SAGE Publications, 2001, pp. 145-169, here p. 156.

key resources for the museum's competitiveness. "Knowledge, with its processes of generation, sharing and application, is presented as a particularly strategic asset in sectors, such as the one of museums, in which the emotional cognitive and intangible component of the production process prevails"²³¹. Aiming at keeping alive past and present knowledge, and transmitting it to future generations, museums are considered as the protectors of cultural heritage and, by extension, their staff too.

The organization of temporary exhibitions inside a museum is the activity bringing together the highest number of professionals, intended as internal staff and freelancers. Each of them owns a great wealth of knowledge, acquired while working in similar situations and, for external staff, in different institutions. To make the museum system constantly evolving, the latter must create the proper conditions to convert the knowledge from individual heritage to collective one, through the implementation of opportunities for social interaction that could lead to the exchange or the transmission of experiences, ideas, and personal opinions²³². These processes are respectively called Knowledge Sharing (KS)²³³ and Knowledge Transfer (KT)²³⁴, and take the form of actions through which an individual disseminates relevant information to other subjects and, in some cases, also the other way around. KS and KT contribute to strengthen trust and sense of belonging of museum workers; in turn, this encourages innovation processes, fostering and improving the organization's efficiency and level of expertise. The encounter between internal and external professionals should be fruitful and stimulating: external support should not be simply regarded "as complementing the museum's existing staff expertise, but also as professional development and training for staff who can work alongside and with the consultant or

²³¹ V. Cavaliere, S. Lombardi, *Le determinanti organizzative e individuali nei processi di utilizzo della conoscenza condivisa. Un'analisi esplorativa nei musei della Toscana*, in *I valori del museo. Strumenti e prospettive manageriali*, B. Sibilio (ed. by), Milano: Franco Angeli, pp. 172-196, here p. 176; "la conoscenza, con i suoi processi di generazione, condivisione e applicazione, si presenta come un asset particolarmente strategico nei settori, come quello dei musei, in cui prevale la componente emozionale, cognitiva e immateriale del processo produttivo".

²³² This could help the exhibition staff in at least two complementary ways: internal and external personnel could connect and bond; a stimulating work environment could facilitate the exchange of information and help avoiding potentially risky situations.

²³³ V. Cavaliere, S. Lombardi, *Le determinanti organizzative e individuali nei processi di utilizzo della conoscenza condivisa. Un'analisi esplorativa nei musei della Toscana*, in *I valori del museo. Strumenti e prospettive manageriali*, B. Sibilio (ed. by), Milano: Franco Angeli, pp. 172-196.

²³⁴ D. Paulin and K. Suneson, *Knowledge Transfer, Knowledge Sharing and Knowledge Barriers - Three Blurry Terms in KM*, in "The Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management", Volume 10, Issue 1, 2012, pp. 81-91.

consultancy team”²³⁵, here including self-employed individuals and private firms. By offering their know-how in different areas of operation, internal staff can learn from and at the same time share knowledge with independent workers: if both parties learn something, the process is a win-win. This successful cross-pollination prevents the emergence of issues such as the one described by Max Hebditch, former director of the Museum of London: “outsourcing skills may be fashionable, but we cannot buy knowledge of collections or the ability to interpret them, this must be nurtured from within”²³⁶. Indeed, “outsourcing is a necessary, desirable and widespread practice in the cultural and heritage community”²³⁷ and has therefore touched almost every aspect of the production process. This strategy has now taken over also core positions, i.e., mandated activities²³⁸, which “include curator (the guest curator is equivalent to temporarily outsourcing a position), exhibit research, design and production, education, preparation and conservation”²³⁹. In the context of the making of a temporary display inside a permanent institution, the importance of cooperation between professionals, combining forces, competences and experiences is decisive. In this, the registrar acts as the link, the linchpin, between inhouse personnel and freelancers.

When organizing a temporary exhibition, art institutions must consider three main equally important aspects:

- the needs of the public using the museum and its visitor services and facilities
- the needs of the collections available for the public
- the range of services supporting the museum and its collections - managerial, curatorial, administrative²⁴⁰

where “collections” would also include works in temporary custody of the museum, i.e., incoming loans. The relevance of temporary displays in permanent museums has been analyzed: they can be considered as one of the most powerful means of communications of museums.

²³⁵ T. Ambrose and C. Paine, *Museums Basics. The International handbook*, London and New York: Routledge, 2018, p. 452.

²³⁶ M. Hebditch, *Museums and the Contract Culture*, in “Museums Journal”, Vol. 92, n. 12, 1992, p. 32-34, here p. 30.

²³⁷ J. Harrison, *Outsourcing in Museums*, in “International Journal of Arts Management”, Vol. 2, No. 2, Winter 2000, pp. 14-25, here p. 16.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, here pp. 14-25.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, here p. 20.

²⁴⁰ T. Ambrose and C. Paine, *Museums Basics. The International handbook*, London and New York: Routledge, 2018, p. 314.

An exhibition is a communication medium based on objects and their complementary elements, presented in a predetermined space, that uses special interpretation techniques and learning sequences that aim at the transmission and communication of concepts, values and/or knowledge²⁴¹.

The democratization of museums has made temporary displays a widespread practice. For their nature and characteristics, they represent a form of visual communication in which artworks are showed and their analysis is provided through the aid of the whole layout. Art exhibitions have the merit of establishing a direct contact between the visitor and the artwork: an exhibition space is where any individual, independently from age, social and economic conditions, alone or as part of a group, has the chance to see the pieces and, thanks to specific display techniques, to communicate and engage with them. However, in entering a museum exhibition, visitors only see “the end product of a long chain of linked organized processes and activities carried out sometimes in sequence and sometimes simultaneously”²⁴². In representing choral and collective events, temporary exhibitions are not built by individuals but by a cohesive and skilled team of professionals. The latter “are trained in different museum jobs and can fulfil their role of protecting knowledge and research, interacting with the public and managing collections”²⁴³. In fact, even though the term “temporary exhibition” is singular, it must not be forgotten that it is conceived, developed, and created by an ensemble of brilliant minds, both working full time for the museum or for a fixed period. In the making of an art display, certain figures must coordinate the whole development and production process, by encouraging a constant dialogue between the parties involved. According to the size and resources of the museum, these can be the project manager, the registrar, the director, the curator, the exhibition manager, the architect, or the designer of the display. In any case, the registrar, overseeing all the procedures involved in the movement of a work of art, must be aware of every step of the creation process in order to coordinate the external professionals.

“Exhibitions are the material outcome of a combination of many diverse skills, and much knowledge, expertise, and experience, coupled with taste and even sensibility.

²⁴¹ Y. Herreman, *Display, Exhibits and Exhibitions*, in *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*, ICOM, Paris: ICOM, 2004, pp. 91-103, here p. 91.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ Robert-Hauglustaine A-C., *The Role of Museums in the Twenty-first Century*, in *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*, Murphy B. L. (ed. by), New York, Routledge, 2016, p. 11.

The participation of different specialists will be necessary to achieve this”²⁴⁴. It is crucial to plan exhibitions with an adequate advance: in Mottola Molfino and archaeologist Cristiana Morigi Govi’s opinion “all museums in the world know at least four years in advance what exhibitions they will make. Italy still operates in much shorter time”²⁴⁵. The process starts as soon as the scientific project of the curator²⁴⁶ and the Scientific Committee of the museum has been approved by the director. Exhibitions do not have the constraint to follow “the museum’s overall display policy and storyline, and they offer visitors the chance to see something new within a specific time span”²⁴⁷. In some ways, this makes each of them a unique and closed universe in the museum life. Thus, the curator is in charge for selecting the artworks, making a preliminary inventory, and subdividing the space into thematic sections. In this initial phase, meticulous planning, scheduling, and budgeting are crucial to achieve the best result. It is needless to say that a good management and an effective use of resources - people, time, capital, equipment, materials - facilitates the implementation of the project. Thus, planning must also include a study on feasibility. Factors that need to be considered are:

- 1 The objects to be displayed: availability, conservation and security issues.
- 2 The space available: size; access possibilities, including during installation and for disabled visitors when the exhibition is open.
- 3 Available staff resources: in-house staff, outside contractor or consultant, or a combination of the two.
- 4 Timing: within the museum’s overall programme of exhibitions, events and other activities, time requirements for planning and installing.
- 5 Cost: estimated project budget required, including construction, transport, publicity, maintenance and dismantling.
- 6 Who should be the core exhibition team, and how this should be organized²⁴⁸.

Once the plan has been authorized by the director, the production process begins. The external exhibition designer is hired through tender or direct award. In both cases, this figure must submit to the curator and the Scientific Committee a design proposal

²⁴⁴ Y. Herreman, *Display, Exhibits and Exhibitions*, in *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*, ICOM, Paris: ICOM, 2004, pp. 91-103, here p. 95.

²⁴⁵ A. Mottola Molfino, C. Morigi Govi, *Lavorare nei musei*, Torino: Umberto Allemandi, 2004, p. 124; “tutti i musei del mondo sanno almeno quattro anni in anticipo quali mostre faranno. L’Italia opera tuttora con tempi molto più brevi”.

²⁴⁶ Curators can be in-house or external to the museum structure as well. For the purpose of this thesis, they are considered part of the organization.

²⁴⁷ Y. Herreman, *Display, Exhibits and Exhibitions*, in *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*, ICOM, Paris: ICOM, 2004, pp. 91-103, here p. 92.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, here p. 95.

transcribing the scientific plan into the spaces of the museum. At the same time, the registrar will get in touch with the lenders, being them public institutions, foundations, or private collectors, in order to refine and digitalize all loans-related information²⁴⁹. An estimate of the costs is calculated as well; the budget must take into account many expenditure items.

Expenditure items for the budget of an art exhibition			
ORGANISATION	Net	VAT	Gross
Costs related to the scientific planning of the exhibition			
Drafting of the scientific project			
Curators' remunerations			
Remuneration for the curatorship of the catalogue			
Research assistants			
Studies, research, documentation			
Accommodation, refund of travel expenses and others			
Total scientific project			
Insurance			
Captive insurance			
Insurance of the works			
Total insurance			
Transport, packaging, couriers			
Transport of the artworks, construction of the packaging, packing operations, loading and unloading, portorage			
Operations Fine Arts, customs clearance, armed escort			
Trips, accommodation and daily allowance of couriers			
Total transport			
Setting up			
Planning of the exhibition design			
Consultancies and advice for the exhibition setting			
Design and implementation of graphics			
Implementation of the exhibition setting			
Showcases and panels			
Design and implementation of control systems for temperature and humidity conditions			
Design and implementation of lighting systems			
Total setting up			
Total organisational costs			
MANAGEMENT			
Staff for exhibition services			
Reception staff			
Custodial staff			
Bookshop staff			
Total management costs			
PUBLISHING			
Iconographic research, photographic campaign, and reproduction rights			
Essays			
Cards of the works			
Translations			
Graphic designing			
Printing of the catalogue			
Purchase of copies of the catalogue			
Total publishing			
PROMOTION			
Press office activities			
Design and implementation of advertising material			
Printing and shipping of invitations			
Leaflet distribution			
Inaugural event organization			
Website			
Dynamic advertising (on buses, subways)			
Billposting			
Advertising on radio and television			
Advertising on monthly, periodicals and daily newspapers			
Guided tours for institutional partners and sponsors			
Contingencies and others			
Total promotion			
OVERALL TOTAL			

III. 10 F. Pirani, *Che cos'è una mostra d'arte*, Roma: Carocci Editore, 2010, pp. 97-98. Translation is mine.

²⁴⁹ The curator and the Scientific Committee should provide the registrar the list of the artworks. This should be extremely detailed, with as much technical specifications as possible.

From this chart, it is possible to deduce which and how many professionals are needed to organize an exhibition inside a museum. Yani Herreman, researcher and professor at the National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography in Mexico City, divides them into “categories of staff”²⁵⁰, including administrative (board of members, director, project manager), professionals (curators, conservators, designers, registrars, education specialists), technicians (photographer, lighting engineer, sound engineer) and craftspeople (preparators, electricians, painters and decorators, blacksmiths, mounting team, framers, security engineer).

Accordingly, in the budget overall costs are defined together with specifications on the tasks to be externalized. This will facilitate tenders and direct awards, since the following phase consists in the identification of external companies for the transports, the insurance, and the construction of the setting-up. In public museums, if the fee to be granted to the potential contractor exceeds a certain amount – which depends on many factors –, then invitations to tender are compulsory and in some cases the museum also must publish it on the Electronic Market of the Public Administration (MEPA). On the contrary, private museums are not bound by these rules and can award the contract to companies of their choice. External professionals are far more involved in the setting-up of an exhibition, even if they always have reference figures inside the museum. As it will become clear, depending on the task they are called to carry out, they interact with the internal professionals of reference, in which the registrar represents the production process and the curator the scientific one. This also happens for complementary activities related to the exhibition itself, such as the creation of the catalogue and the educational services.

An art exhibition is a creative process which result is a cognitive experience, a reading proposal consisting in a set of relationships between objects that are selected and displayed according to a certain order²⁵¹. To put in place an efficient exhibition-machine, it is crucial to deeply understand the roles and tasks of each external professional. Designing an exhibition setting is a complex operation that requires extensive preparation. Professionals working for it, can rely on their high level of

²⁵⁰ Y. Herreman, *Display, Exhibits and Exhibitions*, in *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*, ICOM, Paris: ICOM, 2004, pp. 91-103, here p. 96.

²⁵¹ F. Pirani, *Che cos'è una mostra d'arte*, Roma: Carocci editore, 2014, pp. 48-50.

expertise and, by joining forces, create a stimulating common ground. In this way, the resulting team possesses the right combination of theory and practice: the knowledge on architectural and construction techniques, history of art, conservation and restoration procedures, communication methods, risk-management, and problem-solving approaches. Even if external companies and freelancers often change between one exhibition and another because of legal constraints, their contribution is relevant and valuable. Thanks to Knowledge Transfer (KT) and Knowledge Sharing (KS), internal staff should learn from every situation and actively participate in every circumstance. Ultimately, exhibitions not only make the public encounter and interact with the artwork, but they also represent an opportunity for learning history and history of art from a new and different perspective. “We know that an object has different meanings according to the context in which it is located, its relations with other objects, the position where it is displayed, the colors that surround it and even the labels that are used”²⁵². Without architects and designers, technicians, and craftspeople, it would not be possible to have a corresponding full-sized equivalent of the curators’ scientific project.

The sixteen interviews that will follow were made to one internal professional and fifteen different individuals working as self-employed or inside private companies. Their interventions play a fundamental role in understanding and proving the importance of the contribution of each single individual working for the organization of an exhibition. From the broker to the exhibition guide, from the art handler to the framer, everyone is, even if temporarily, part of the “museum family”²⁵³ and constitutes an irreplaceable link of the production process’ chain.

²⁵² Y. Herreman, *Display, Exhibits and Exhibitions*, in *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*, ICOM, Paris: ICOM, 2004, pp. 91-103, here p. 93.

²⁵³ M. Case, *Registrars on Record. Essays on Museum Collections Management*. Washington D.C.: Registrars Committee of the American Association of Museums, 1988, p. 25.

III

Externalization in temporary art exhibitions: who does what?

3.1 Raffaele Cipolletta, Architect and Exhibition Designer, Mario Bellini Architects, Milan

Architects and exhibition designers oversee the creation of the overall exhibition layout project. Raffaele Cipolletta works both as self-employed and collaborator of the Mario Bellini Architects studio in Milan. According to Cipolletta, architects should always keep in mind that exhibition settings must be conceived for two different macro categories of public: for art experts but also for people who do not have a deep knowledge of art. Due to the role he covers, he explains that his professional figure coordinates many of the individuals involved in the production process and needs to be aware of the issues that may arise.

His work starts as soon as the curators has decided on the display itinerary and provides him specific requests related to sequences, relationships, and positions of the works. Plant engineering aspects are crucial as well, including air conditioning systems. In fact, unless every work is provided with its own clima box²⁵⁴, thus protected by the external environment, “climate control inside exhibition is fundamental”²⁵⁵ and must be constantly monitored. Thanks to Facility Reports and site visits, architects and exhibition designers are able to consider issues associated with video surveillance and security too: if, by chance, some plasterboard walls obstruct the view of the cameras, the setting will need to be rethought. Since Cipolletta is responsible for the final display in terms of the layout, he must closely work with different internal professionals, such as curators and registrars, but also contractors and suppliers from the outside. Collaboration with craftspeople is sometimes necessary and crucial:

when the setting becomes articulated, then you must reason with all the people involved. For the exhibition on Giotto²⁵⁶ we used a steel cover; so, in that case we reasoned with the blacksmith [...] choices were shared with the curators and the museum. In some cases, it happens that heavy works have to be displayed (sculptures, pieces of architectures) and therefore safe supports are created for them and for the visitors. [...] complex structures cannot be improvised on site but must

²⁵⁴ A definition of clima box will be provided in Giacomo Andrea Doria’s interview, see 3.3.

²⁵⁵ R. Cipolletta, *Interview*, 1 February 2022; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

²⁵⁶ “Giotto, L’Italia”, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2015-2016, for further information: <https://www.italian-architects.com/it/mario-bellini-architects-milano/project/exhibition-design-giotto-litalia> [last access 1/02/2022]; <https://bellini.it/portfolio-articoli/giotto-litalia/> [last access 1/02/2022].

be conceived and shared with all the people involved (the lender, the curator, the museum etc.)²⁵⁷.



Ill. 11 Installation view of the exhibition “Giotto, L’Italia”, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2015-2016, ph. Marco Covi.

When it comes to creating the layout project for exhibitions, Bellini Architects studio mostly works on direct award. In fact, Italian public tenders are reverse ones and with long-term payments. For important exhibitions lasting several months, Cipolletta’s work begins much earlier, and his team can get paid even a year after the assignment. “In tenders, the one who makes the lower price wins, not the one who works better. Professionals and workers should be chosen for the quality of their work and not for how little they ask to be paid”²⁵⁸. This aspect could compromise the result since the selected firm would try to optimize their time and resources.

International projects are subject to public tenders too, but requirements and conditions are different. Bellini studio won the tender for the Department of Islamic Arts at the Louvre, whose spaces were inaugurated in September 2012 and currently host 18.000 works. There, they were responsible for the design of the building and the layout of the exhibition. The construction site and the whole intervention lasted seven years.

²⁵⁷ R. Cipolletta, *Interview*, 1 February 2022; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; “per le gare, vince chi fa il prezzo più basso e non chi lavora meglio. I professionisti e le maestranze vanno scelti per la qualità del lavoro e non per quanto poco chiedono di essere pagati”.

It is true that, more often in temporary exhibitions, spaces must be flexible, allow maximum freedom in organizing exhibitions and modulate the space. In other cases, some spaces are dedicated to specific works and so the ‘dress’ is sewn on those ones. For the Pavilion of Islamic Arts, the project was born for a 12 meters-high work representing the draft of a mosaic. So, the building we created [...] had a point where it rose twelve meters because it was designed for that specific work, in relation to a series of expedients, due to the fact that the latter needed to be seen from the beginning of the exhibition tour²⁵⁹.



Ill. 12 Louvre Museum, Department of Islamic Arts, ph. Raffaele Cipolletta.

The tender for the renovation of the National Gallery of Victoria²⁶⁰, in Melbourne, Australia, was also won by Bellini Studio. On that occasion, the building was designed and revised according to future exhibition settings. It is important to cite the following episode in order to highlight the multiplicity of variables, difficulties and risks that may spring up when designing/redesigning an exhibition space, and the relevance of collaboration among professionals. The planned expansion included the conversion of an underground parking area into exhibition halls. The parking was made of reinforced concrete and the pavement was covered with 5-centimeter-thick tar. The architect and their team closely collaborated with conservator-restorers; in-depth analyzes revealed the presence of some petroleum releases, which would have damaged oil works. Consequently, a series of treatments was carried out to remove the tar and make the area impermeable.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. For further information: <https://www.promozioneacciaio.it/cms/it5836-museo-del-louvre-padiglione-arti-islamiche.asp#> [last access 1/02/2022].

²⁶⁰ For further information: <https://prova.bellini.it/portfolio-articoli/national-gallery-of-victoria/> [last access 1/02/2022].

In Cipolletta's experience, a frequent unexpected issue is related to artworks' dimensions. On the centenary of its birth, the Italian car manufacturer FIAT sponsored the organization of the exhibition "The Triumphs of the Baroque: Architecture in Europe, 1600-1750"²⁶¹ in Palazzina di Stupinigi, Turin. A very large painting was borrowed, and its location was conceived for a specific space. The team was aware of the size of the painting, but not of the frame; the work could not fit through the Palazzina's doors. On the same occasion, the curators decided to put on display a capital of the Guarino Guarini Chapel, just destroyed by the fire involving the Holy Shroud.

I went to the Chapel, accompanied by the fire brigade (the area was under seizure for investigation), to recover an original capital. Among the rubble, we recovered a marble piece [...]. To support it, a shaped base in iron was designed and the capital was exhibited at 2.5 meters high (the piece weighed about 30 kilograms)²⁶².

When museums ask to deal with heavy and large works, it is important for the staff to be qualified and to know how to handle the objects and move around the space. For instance, they must not make dust nor vibrations, they must only use materials suitable for the contact with certain artworks and avoid materials with different acidity that may damage the works.

On other occasions, Raffaele Cipolletta also witnessed some episodes in which couriers requested the work to arrive still packed at the room where it would be eventually installed. Though, not having received in advance the measures of the crate, it could not fit the doors. Another size issue occurred in Palazzo Grassi when owned by the FIAT group. During the exhibition "Renaissance. From Brunelleschi to Michelangelo"²⁶³, the curator wanted to display a print depicting the model of a wooden architecture. The two alternatives were to hang it on the wall or to place it inside a showcase; in both cases, "a specific lighting that must be below 50 lux"²⁶⁴ would have been used. What was not considered was the fact that in the 18th century the print had been bound inside a book. Therefore, the book itself had to be put on display on a horizontal plane. The issue was that it could not because the weight of the pages would have broken the binding. This

²⁶¹ For further information on the exhibition: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/991592> [last access 1/02/2022].

²⁶² R. Cipolletta, *Interview*, 1 February 2022; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

²⁶³ "Renaissance. From Brunelleschi to Michelangelo", Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 1994; <http://www.arcl.uniroma1.it/saggio/Raccolta/32dallaterra/32dallaterra.Html> [last access 27/03/2022]; <https://www.polliceilluminazione.it/progetto/palazzo-grassi-veneziam-rinascimento-da-brunelleschi-a-michelangelo/> [last access 27/03/2022].

²⁶⁴ R. Cipolletta, *Interview*, 1 February 2022; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

is a striking example confirming that all issues should be investigated first, but there is often no sufficient financial support.

The most recent exhibition setting on which Cipolletta worked was “Realismo Magico”²⁶⁵, in Palazzo Reale, Milan, opened from 19 October 2021 to 27 February 2022. In spring 2021 a series of preparatory meetings with internal and external staff was set up. On that occasion, many aspects of technical and aesthetic nature were analyzed and evaluated to make the most appropriate choices with regards to the exhibition layout. The color of the walls is a fundamental element, guiding the visitors through the rooms. The decision on the latter usually comes from a “cultural choice”²⁶⁶ which, in this specific case, was linked to the shades of the works in display. The color of burnt coffee was chosen to make the visitor’s attention focus on the works and avoid any distraction. To understand the relevance of the combination of colors inside a temporary display, a crucial example must be mentioned. For this exhibition, three artworks had to be juxtaposed on the same wall. Though, coming from different collections, one of them had 40 centimeters of white passe-partout, while in the other two there was no space between the canvas and the frame. “White color demeans the work. On the brown painted wall, only the passe-partout stood out: in that case, we shaped the light directing it on the piece, for we were not allowed to change neither the frame nor the passe-partout”²⁶⁷. The resulting effect gives less importance to the frame in highlighting the canvas itself.



Ill. 13 Installation view of “Realismo Magico”, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2021-2022, ph. Eleonora Savorelli.

²⁶⁵ For further information: <https://bellini.it/portfolio-articoli/realismo-magico/> [last access 1/02/2022].

²⁶⁶ R. Cipolletta, *Interview*, 1 February 2022; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

In other cases, a light source can be placed towards a specific detail, to emphasize a certain aspect of the work, following the curator's instruction. By doing so, the public is more likely to pay greater attention to a specific detail. To accurately manage the lighting system, the architect must constantly dialogue with the lighting engineer. Lights must not dazzle and create a soft atmosphere. The visitor should not notice the source of light since they should not be intrusive and disturb the exhibition's narrative. "As always, every situation must be studied and resolved in relation to the opportunities"²⁶⁸.

3.2 Claudio Bertani, Managing Director, AGE S.r.l., Bologna

AGE Broker is responsible for managing and drawing up the loans policy, ensuring artworks on behalf of the borrower. Insurance coverages are crucial documents that legally allow the protection of the artistic heritage. With his 30-years' working experience, Claudio Bertani sets up competitive and high-level insurances for collectors, museums, and temporary exhibitions organizers. The role of AGE is to put in place effective negotiations with companies to obtain the best insurance premium that can guarantee specific conditions. For art exhibitions, these policies should always provide safeguard for any type of loss or damage to the objects, the packaging, and the set-up equipment. It is the requesting museum that sets the insurance specifications: it may require the works to be protected against fires, robberies, or other claims.

The process starts when the registrar asks to different brokers for the quotation of a loan policy. AGE participates in both on-call tenders and public ones, which are published on the MePA, the Public Administration electronic Market, the central for public bodies releasing calls for tenders.

The public museum, according to Public Procurement Law, can make direct awards within the economic provided parameters. [...] When an exhibition's premium is below the legal limits for direct award, the museum publishes the request on the MePA. We must fill out the forms and declarations of adequacy; afterwards, we make the offer. If, on the other hand, a public tender is called and the museum invites more than one broker, then the museum publishes the list of works and the duration of the loan and chooses according to the lowest price²⁶⁹.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ C. Bertani, *Interview*, 5 December 2021; "il museo pubblico, in base alla legge sugli appalti, può fare affidamenti diretti entro i termini economici previsti. [...] Quando c'è una mostra il cui premio sta sotto i limiti di legge per l'affidamento diretto, il museo pubblica la richiesta sul MePA. Noi dobbiamo

Private entities are not obliged to make public tenders and can directly contact a specific company to ask for a quotation. In any case, the insurance company's offer depends on various factors, namely the works and their values, the duration of the coverage and the transport. Among others, AGE works with Musei Civici di Venezia Foundation (MUVE), Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, Musei di Torino Foundation, Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, and Museion Foundation, Bozen. Sometimes, AGE also makes policies for foreign entities, especially when some artworks travel abroad. For the exhibition "L'Art de la fête à la cour des Valois"²⁷⁰, taking place this year at the Château de Fontainebleau, AGE was requested to make some insurance coverages by RMN - Grand Palais, the French Réunion des Musées Nationaux. Some loans from the Uffizi and the National Central Library of Florence were requested. RMN previously collaborated with AGE, so they asked them for a quotation, since their broker in France could not provide all the guarantees requested by both the Uffizi and the Library. French museums are not bound to public tenders, so RMN could specifically assign the task to AGE. The pieces going to France will stay there for three months: the value of the works lent by the Uffizi is 4 million while the ones owned by the National Library are worth 20 million. When artworks are transported, handled, and displayed, accidents are relatively frequent: Bertani mentions that during the last-year storm in Venice, a canvas by Tiepolo got wet because of the infiltration of water through the walls of the building. Thanks to the insurance managed by AGE, the painting was cleaned and restored. Earthquakes, thunderstorms, and wetting are natural and unforeseeable.

Other damages can be caused by nails breaking, defective products and materials, or by people falling on the works. In Russia and Rome, some visitors stumbled on the works and caused real damages. In these cases, exceptional measures need to be promptly adopted. Firstly, brokers raise a complaint to the insurance company. Supporting documentation must be included in the condition reports, such as before

compilare i moduli e le dichiarazioni di adeguatezza; successivamente facciamo l'offerta. Se, viceversa, viene indetta una gara pubblica e il museo invita più broker, allora il museo pubblica la lista delle opere e la durata del prestito e sceglie in base al prezzo più basso".

²⁷⁰ For further information on the exhibition: <https://www.chateaudefontainebleau.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/www.chateaudefontainebleau.fr-communique-de-presse-expo-valois.pdf> [last access 09/04/2022].

and after pictures of the damaged artwork. It is important to attach these documents in order to understand whether the damage has occurred during transport or storage. Afterwards, the insurance company gives an assessment and makes the offer, depending on whether the casualty was insured or not.



Ill. 14 Installation view “I pittori della luce. Da Caravaggio a Paolini”, Spazio Cavallerizza, Lucca, 2021-2022; ph. Finestre sull’Arte.

Brokers do not have internal experts in charge of analyzing damages, unlike insurance companies. As regards value estimations, in the case of contradictory procedures between the company and the broker, the two parties would need to appoint different experts to make an evaluation of the piece.

At the moment, AGE has about forty ongoing insurance coverages, in Italy and abroad. “In Venice, we insured the exhibition celebrating the 1600 years of the city²⁷¹ for almost 200 million euros. Years ago, we even insured some Canaletto’s works for 800 million”²⁷². Recently, AGE insured the pieces for “I pittori della luce”²⁷³ in Lucca, with a ceiling of 60 million and loans coming from various public and private lenders.

²⁷¹ “VENETIA 1600. Births and rebirths”, Palazzo Ducale, Venice, 2021-2022; For further information on the exhibition: <https://palazzoducale.visitmuve.it/en/mostre-en/mostre-in-corso-en/venetia-1600-births-and-rebirths/2021/04/21207/exhibition-2/> [last access 12/03/2022].

²⁷² C. Bertani, *Interview*, 5 December 2021; “a Venezia abbiamo assicurato la mostra per i 1600 anni per quasi 200 milioni. Anni fa abbiamo persino assicurato delle opere di Canaletto per 800 milioni”.

²⁷³ “I pittori della luce. Da Caravaggio a Paolini”, Spazio Cavallerizza, Lucca, 2021-2022; for further information: <https://www.turismo.lucca.it/en/i-pittori-della-luce> [last access 12/03/2022].

3.3 Giacomo Andrea Doria, Charged of Exhibition Set-ups, OTT ART, Venice

As OTT ART, we are the builders of the exhibition settings in an operational and executive sense. [...] What I do, and OTT ART does, consists in an empirical discipline, which was created on the field, starting from different needs and experiences. We talk about architecture, engineering, lighting, graphics, conservation, and protection of the artistic good²⁷⁴.

Having a background in architecture, Giacomo Andrea Doria is responsible for the setting up of art exhibitions on behalf of OTT ART. His broad competences are an added value that allows him to better interact with the cultural product. Heterogeneity is a key feature in OTT ART's team, which is composed by a plurality of professionals, including commercial and administrative figures. With every exhibition setting, the first approach is guided by common sense, which finds its correspondence in the design and construction of a particular layout. In fact, "creating processes that could fix all exhibitions is not correct: a solution that can work for an exhibition can be completely incorrect for another one. Experience is thus important"²⁷⁵.

Sometimes, the architect's project is not accurate, focusing more on the aesthetic concept than on the technical issues. In those cases, the theoretical solutions need to be mitigated and reformulated, at least in part, for the feasibility of the project. On other occasions, the exhibition designer may specify construction techniques or structural materials to be used, but often the technical-executive part is entirely left to OTT ART. When participating in public tenders, the technical quality and research for the best constructive solution can really make the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful application. When OTT ART is required to propose a series of materials for an exhibition setting, then solid modelling programmes are used in order to have a visual equivalent of the final result.

The layout of an exhibition hides a relevant technical know-how that we are involved in developing. In addition to 3D modelling with specific software, followed by the technical office, an important prototyping part is put in place. We can also say that each of our products is prototypical since each exhibition and museum have a unique exhibition setting. [...] This is also the beauty [of my job]:

²⁷⁴ G. A. Doria, *Interview*, 7 February 2022; "in quanto OTT ART, siamo i realizzatori di allestimenti in senso operativo ed esecutivo. Quello di cui mi occupo e si occupa OTT ART è una disciplina empirica, che si è creata sul campo partendo da necessità ed esperienze diverse. Si parla di architettura, di ingegneria, di illuminotecnica, di grafica, di conservazione e tutela del bene artistico".

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*; "creare processi che vadano bene per tutte le mostre non è corretto: una soluzione che può funzionare per una mostra può essere totalmente scorretta per un'altra. L'esperienza in ciò è importante.

every time it is a new adventure²⁷⁶.

Technical solutions may be the same, but they always change with respect to the exhibition space and the needs of the artworks. When it comes to the organization of a temporary exhibition, OTT ART's interlocutor and filter is the designer. Depending on the dynamics of the exhibitions and the team, it may happen that the project is not scrupulously delineated. Some of the aspects that are left out could be necessary for OTT ART to carry on with the construction of the layout; a key aspect here is to prevent possible structural/technical issues as far as possible. OTT ART takes charge of communicating with the registrar or the curator of the exhibition to know the specifics of determined pieces: where it will be located, when it will arrive at the museum and in what conditions, if it weighs more than expected, and so on. "If certain information is missing, the work cannot be displayed, and since we are the final piece and cog of the machine, we perform the role of controlling that everything is working"²⁷⁷.



Ill. 15 Exhibition view of "VENETIA 1600. Births and rebirths", 2021-2022, Venice, ph. MUVE Foundation.

OTT ART works both for public and private institutions. In Venice, the team

²⁷⁶ Ibid.; "l'allestimento nasconde un know-how tecnico importante che noi ci occupiamo di sviluppare. Oltre alla modellazione 3D con software specifici, che vengono seguiti dall'ufficio tecnico, c'è una parte di prototipazione importante. Possiamo anche dire che ogni nostro prodotto sia di tipo prototipale. [...] È questo anche il bello: ogni volta è un'avventura nuova".

²⁷⁷ Ibid.; "se certe informazioni mancano, l'opera non può essere esposta, ed essendo noi l'ultimo tassello ed ingranaggio della macchina, ci sentiamo ricoperti da questo ruolo di controllore che tutto funzioni".

collaborates with all the structured museum realities: for MUVE Foundation, they were in charge of the layout of “VENETIA 1600. Births and rebirths”²⁷⁸. In Palazzo Grassi, they studied together with architect Tadao Ando the hanging system of the artworks for every exhibition he personally designed. For the Guggenheim Collection, they create both temporary exhibition settings and frames of the pieces belonging to the permanent collection. They also collaborate with the Venice Biennale, Ocean Space (Thyssen Bornemisza Academy), Cini Foundation, Le Stanze del Vetro, and the Espace Louis Vuitton.

In Milan, they work with Brera’s Academy, Prada Foundation, Castello Sforzesco, and the Duomo Museum, for which they created the permanent exhibition setting. In Rome, they work for the Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome (MACRO) and Galleria Borghese, for which they acted as lighting suppliers for Damien Hirst’s exhibition and realized the illumination system by collaborating with the appointed external lighting designer.



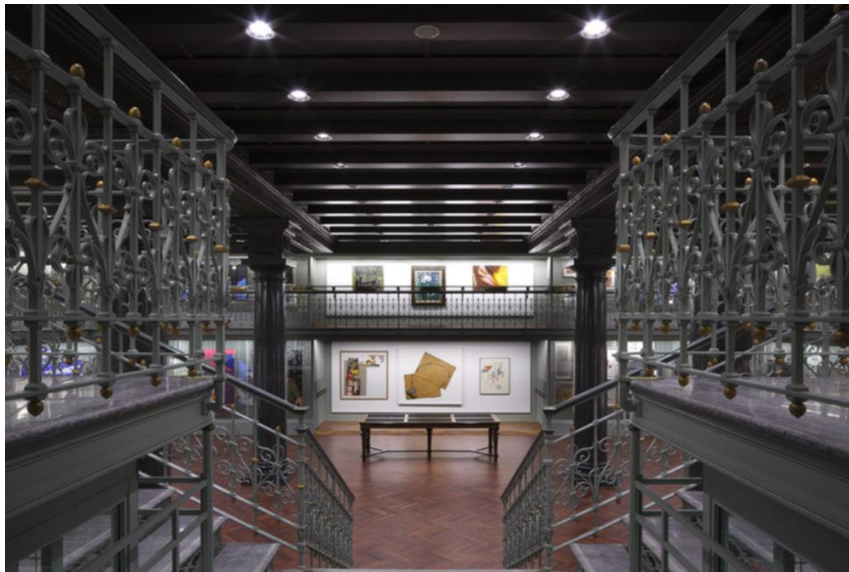
Ill. 16 Installation view “Damien Hirst - Archaeology now”²⁷⁹, Galleria Borghese, Rome, 2021; ph. Alberto Novelli. © Galleria Borghese - Ministero della Cultura © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved DACS 2021/SIAE 2021.

The company is also making its way inside the market of art storage for public and private entities, such as banks and foundations. “We have set up a huge visible depot

²⁷⁸ For further information on the exhibition: <https://palazzoducale.visitmuve.it/en/mostre-en/mostre-in-corso-en/venetia-1600-births-and-rebirths/2021/04/21207/exhibition-2/> [last access 12/03/2022].

²⁷⁹ For further information: <https://galleriaborghese.beniculturali.it/en/exhibition/damien-hirst/> [last access 11/03/2022].

on sliding racks in the vault of the Gallerie d'Italia in Piazza Scala [Milan], with the collaboration and the design of Michele de Lucchi”²⁸⁰.



Ill. 17 Caveau²⁸¹, Gallerie d'Italia, Milan, ph. Gallerie d'Italia.

OTT ART also operates in foreign museums: they are currently working for the Musée de la Marine in Paris, since they won the international tender. Before that, they built some exhibition layouts at the Musée de la Monnaie and Musée Jacquemart-André. In the United States, they contributed to the 2013-2014 exhibition “Venetian Glass by Carlo Scarpa: The Venini Company, 1932-1947”²⁸² at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and in Atlanta they built a section of the High Museum of Art.

In addition to the exhibition setting, we design and produce our workhorse product: the clima box. It allows us to be known in the [museum] sector worldwide [...]. It consists of air-conditioned showcases also suitable for transport. This type of showcase, reduced in size and similar to an exhibition frame, is used to ensure the safety of the work and its preservation from the point of view of relative humidity²⁸³.

²⁸⁰ G. A. Doria, *Interview*, 7 February 2022; “abbiamo allestito nel caveau delle Gallerie d'Italia a piazza Scala un enorme deposito a vista su rastrelliere scorrevoli in collaborazione e su progetto di Michele de Lucchi”.

²⁸¹ For further information: <https://www.gallerieditalia.com/en/milano-en-2/the-vault/> [last access 11/03/2022].

²⁸² For further information on the exhibition: <https://lestanzedelvetro.org/en/exhibitions/venetian-glass-by-carlo-scarpathe-venini-company-1932-1947/> [last access 11/03/2022].

²⁸³ G. A. Doria, *Interview*, 7 February 2022; “oltre alla mostra intesa come tale, progettiamo e realizziamo un prodotto che è il nostro cavallo di battaglia: il clima box. Questo ci permette realmente di essere conosciuti nel settore in tutto il mondo [...]. Si tratta di teche climatizzate espositive adatte anche al trasporto. Tale tipo di vetrina, ridotta nelle dimensioni e assimilabile ad una cornice espositiva, serve per assicurare la sicurezza dell'opera e la sua conservazione dal punto di vista dell'umidità relativa”.

Clima boxes are entirely designed by OTT ART and made by master craftsmen who possess a unique know-how and work with high-quality raw materials. The process is carried out with extreme accuracy, thanks to the latest control technologies. A specific office is dedicated to the last check of the products and their testing. The manufactured outputs are sometimes also assembled there, their compliance sheet is drawn up and they are verified in all their parts. Only then they can be transferred to the exhibition site. “This control process, ISO 9001 certified, concerns both clima boxes and showcases, captions, lighting equipment, that is everything we design, build and deliver to the customer”²⁸⁴.



Ill. 18 Installation view of the exhibition “Venetian Glass by Carlo Scarpa: The Venini Company, 1932-1947”, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2013-2014; ph. Le Stanze del Vetro.

OTT ART’s display cases travel all over the world thanks to their resistance and outstanding features. The British Library requires their works to be kept on display inside our own products when travelling to Italy and being temporarily stored there, and this fills us the firm “with pride and a sense of responsibility”²⁸⁵. The clima boxes designed by OTT ART are made of metal materials, which ensures an excellent air tightness: the company was charged with building the case for Leonardo Da Vinci’s Auto portrait when moved from the Turinese Royal Library to the Royal Palace of Venaria.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.; “questo processo di controllo, certificato ISO 9001, riguarda sia il clima box che le vetrine, le didascalie, gli apparati d’illuminazione, ovvero tutto quello che progettiamo, costruiamo e consegniamo al cliente”.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.; “di orgoglio e responsabilità”.

The materials used were metal, glass for the front and wood for the outer cover. Since “wood is a breathable material that, even if painted, makes humidity migrate from the outside to the inside and vice versa”²⁸⁶, it needs to be reinforced with more resistant materials. Similarly, plexiglass is not appropriate for clima boxes: “it is not excellent in air tightness, especially on its technical joints. Being it subject to temperature variations, it can create spaces and small openings when moved, and therefore an air passage”²⁸⁷. For these reasons, OTT ART studied other types of materials to substitute the ones already in use, aiming at finding the best solution to preserve the art piece. Once the products are finished, the company has them tested by external bodies, such as the CNR (National Research Council and the Politecnico of Turin), to verify they are impeccable. “Only in this way can we rest easy in thinking that a piece like a preparatory cartoon by Michelangelo or an artwork by Antonello da Messina is conserved inside one of our products, to be ensured to the future”²⁸⁸.

When questioned about any complicated situation during exhibition settings, Doria states that he never sees particular technical difficulties: “in my opinion, everything can be overcome with preparation and experience, and with the adequate budget”²⁸⁹. The last Venice Biennale of Architecture saw OTT ART following the installation of Giuseppe Penone’s “The Listener” at the Arsenal. Together with the artist himself, they analyzed the case step by step. First, they hypothesized the flotation of the work, but realized it would have been safer to secure it. “The technical feasibility went hand in hand with the artistic thinking. I directly exchanged with Penone, whom I have a very good relationship with. We took inspiration from the structure of Venetian architecture”²⁹⁰. Doria decided to palisade the bottom and create a metal plate to fix the tree to. It was then surrounded by tree branches to hide the metallic part. To do so, OTT ART also studied the difference in the height of the tide.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.; “il legno è un materiale traspirante che, anche se verniciato, fa migrare l’umidità dall’esterno all’interno e viceversa”.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.; “non è eccellente nella tenuta all’aria, soprattutto sulle sue giunte tecniche. Essendo un materiale molto soggetto alle variazioni di temperatura, questo muovendosi può creare spazi, piccole feritoie, e quindi passaggio d’aria”.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.; “Solo così possiamo dormire tranquilli nel pensare che un’opera come un cartone preparatorio di Michelangelo o un Antonello da Messina sono all’interno di un nostro prodotto, per essere assicurati al futuro”.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.; “per me tutto può essere superato con la preparazione e l’esperienza, e con budget corretto”.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.; “la possibilità tecnica è andata di pari passo con il pensiero artistico. Mi sono confrontato direttamente con Penone, con cui ho un ottimo rapporto. Abbiamo preso ispirazione dalla struttura delle architetture veneziane”.



Ill. 19 Installation view of Giuseppe Penone, “The Listener”²⁹¹, 17th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia 2021; © Ph. Sebastiano Pellion di Persano, courtesy of Vuslat Foundation and Giuseppe Penone.

Among the most significant episodes, Doria remembers the 2019-2020 exhibition “EMILIO VEDOVA”²⁹² (see Ill. 20) at Palazzo Reale, Milan, curated by Germano Celant. “On a project by Alvisi Kirimoto Studio, we created a big exhibition area and a spatial structure, for which it is true the saying ‘less is more’”²⁹³. He explains that, from an architectural point of view, it was a simple exhibition in its shapes, yet extremely bold in its realization.

Giacomo Andrea Doria was responsible for the creation of different clima boxes to protect some works by Da Vinci. Regarding the drawings that travelled to Venaria, included the Auto portrait, Doria was the only one, inside the exhibition site, who could handle them. Inside the monumental complex of the Pilotta, in Parma, he designed the showcase for “La Scapigliata”. “Every time, I seem to create an empathic bond with

²⁹¹ For further information: <https://gagosian.com/news/2021/05/21/giuseppe-penone-the-listener-international-architecture-exhibition-la-biennale-di-venezia/> [last access 11/03/2022].

²⁹² For further information on the exhibition: <https://www.palazzorealemilano.it/mostre/emilio-vedova> [last access 11/03/2022]; <https://www.behance.net/gallery/92403927/Emilio-Vedova-Palazzo-Reale-Milan-Visual-Identity> [last access 11/03/2022].

²⁹³ G. A. Doria, *Interview*, 7 February 2022; “mi piace ricordare, seppur conclusa, soprattutto nel rispetto del curatore purtroppo mancato poco tempo fa, la mostra di Vedova, curata da Germano Celant a Palazzo Reale (2019-2020), per cui abbiamo realizzato su progetto dello studio Alvisi Kirimoto questo enorme setto espositivo e una struttura spaziale, per cui è proprio vero il detto “less is more”. Una mostra che dal punto di vista architettonico era semplicissima nelle forme, ma arditissima nella realizzazione”.

such works. Very strong emotions, which I remember with great pleasure”²⁹⁴.

At the moment of the interview, OTT ART was working for the exhibition concerning the production of Fontana Arte at Le Stanze del Vetro, in the Venetian Cini Foundation, as well as for some pavilions and temporary displays that rotate around the Venice Biennale, open from April 2022. Moreover, the company was also awarded the Egyptian section of Castello Sforzesco in Milan and the setting up of Palazzo Davanzati in Florence, both through public tender.



Ill. 20 Installation view “EMILIO VEDOVA”, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2019-2020; ph. Vedova Foundation.

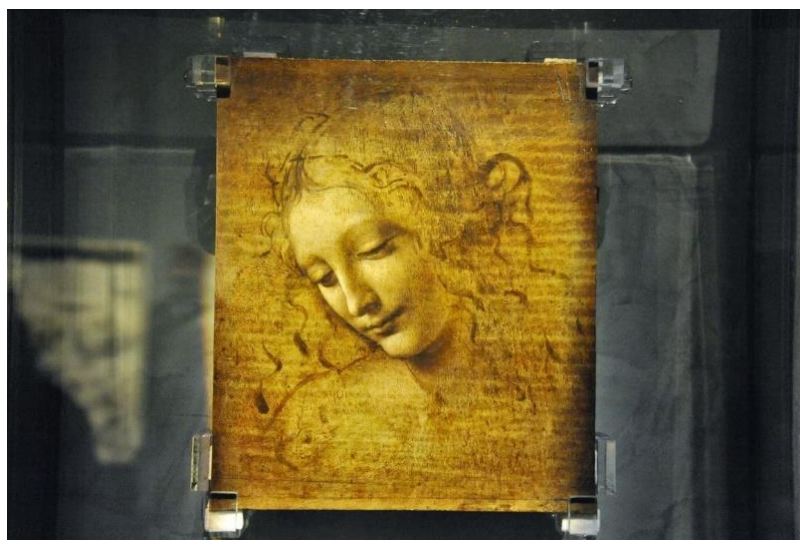
An important aspect of exhibition layouts regards the ways of destroying the materials used to build supporting structures, walls and showcases. Doria asserts: “unfortunately, in this discipline reuse is not in vogue and it is a shame. Temporary exhibitions have an important part of materials that is properly disposed of, but not recycled. This is an important reflection to make”²⁹⁵. However, this behaviour has a logical basis: if a glass case of a certain size coming back from an exhibition had to be stocked in storage, it would incur huge costs. “The costs encountered by the customer are enormously higher than to dispose of it [the structure] and redo it from scratch”²⁹⁶. From Doria’s point of view, temporary exhibitions should take a more sustainable turn by “using

²⁹⁴ Ibid.; “ogni volta mi sembra di creare un legame empatico con tali opere. Sono emozioni molto forti, che ricordo con molto piacere”.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.; “purtroppo, in questa disciplina il riutilizzo non è in voga ed è un peccato. Le mostre temporanee hanno una parte importante di materiale che viene correttamente smaltito, ma non riutilizzato. Questa è una riflessione importante da fare.”

²⁹⁶ Ibid.; “i costi in cui si imbatte il cliente sono enormemente superiori rispetto a smaltirla e rifarla ex-novo”.

creativity to change shapes and colors but keeping what is available!”²⁹⁷. A smart example is the Basilica Palladiana in Vicenza, where the exhibition “The factory of the Renaissance”²⁹⁸ is currently open. According to the need, the metallic walls can be remodelled to create new paths; “this is a nice reuse system, but it also depends on economic and contractual dynamics”²⁹⁹.



Ill. 21 Leonardo Da Vinci, La Scapigliata, Pilotta, National Gallery of Parma;
ph. Michele Squeri.

3.4 Filippo Trevisanello, Framer, Cornici Trevisanello, Venice

Cornici Trevisanello is a small artisanal shop situated in the heart of the Venetian lagoon. Founded by the father of Filippo Trevisanello, the latter started working there more than thirty years ago and, together with his sister, they now run the family business. “I liked the idea of the laboratory, also because when I was still studying, I often came by. For me it was easy to fit in under his guidance [Trevisanello’s father], even though I moved a little away from his mentality trying to adapt myself to present times”³⁰⁰.

During his working hours, Trevisanello operates in two different laboratories: one

²⁹⁷ Ibid.; “usando la creatività per mutare le forme e i colori, ma mantenendo quanto a disposizione!”.

²⁹⁸ For further information on the exhibition: <https://www.mostreinbasilica.it/en/rinascimento> [last access 1/04/2022].

²⁹⁹ G. A. Doria, *Interview*, 7 February 2022; “questo è un bel sistema di riutilizzo, ma che dipende anche da dinamiche economiche e contrattuali”.

³⁰⁰ F. Trevisanello, *Interview*, 15 December 2021; “mi piaceva l’idea del laboratorio, anche perché nel periodo in cui studiavo passavo spesso da qui. Per me è stato facile inserirmi sotto la sua guida, anche se mi sono staccato un po’ dalla sua mentalità cercando di adeguarmi ai tempi”.

dedicated to construction – where he works what he calls “wood with fur”³⁰¹ – and the other where he assembles and decorates the frames. Depending on the needs of the customer, he can modify already-existing frames, or design and make brand new ones. Due to the nature of the collaborations he performs within art institutions, he exclusively works on direct award. Among others, in Venice he collaborates with the Guggenheim Collection, Palazzo Grassi, Gallerie dell’Accademia, Cini Foundation, the Marciana National Library, the State Archive, and the Oriental Art Museum.

In the past, he also collaborated with a conservator-restorer who took care of the artworks belonging to Guggenheim’s collection and the ones on temporary loan, both for the premises of Venice and New York. Their working relationship soon became a friendship, and Trevisanello had the chance to travel throughout Italy, Spain, and China. He stayed four months in China to help the aforementioned conservator. There, a 12x2 meters artwork had to be displayed and the conservator required assistance to fix it. The staff of Guggenheim New York, who organized the exhibition, called for support, and asked him to stay. The display travelled to Beijing, Shanghai, Moscow and Bilbao. Trevisanello brought a suitcase of tools with him: “when you are abroad with museums, there is no time to go in search of things, time is tight: having everything at hand is easier and simpler”³⁰². His suitcase contained Japanese paper, transformers, and things that could come in handy. A great advantage when working on exhibition is having the wit of transforming tools, giving them a different use. Any object that can be modified or used in different ways can be useful. In these cases, practical experience on the field is fundamental. Additionally, getting to know different staff and museum systems not only stimulates open mindedness, creativity, and imagination, but facilitates a better management of risks for every professional involved.

“Every exhibition is a new experience. You always learn something new, working with new people, between restorers and couriers”³⁰³. For instance, from paper conservators, Trevisanello learnt how to implement the floating method technique: even if works are not provided with passe-partouts, some space between the glass and work itself is

³⁰¹ Ibid.; “il legno con il pelo”

³⁰² Ibid.; “quando si è fuori con dei musei, non c’è il tempo di andare in cerca delle cose, i tempi sono ristretti: se si ha tutto sottomano è più facile e semplice.”

³⁰³ Ibid.; “ogni mostra è una nuova esperienza. Si apprendono sempre cose nuove, lavorando con persone nuove, tra restauratori e accompagnatori”.

necessary. In fact, the glass must never touch the artwork, otherwise it would damage it. For this reason, restorers and conservators use Japanese paper and natural glue, creating small hinges that momentarily fix the piece and are reversible.

As it has become clear, temporary exhibitions also bring with them oversights and accidents, that can suddenly occur. Trevisanello remembers that he was asked to fix Mario Merz's Igloos since they arrived at the exhibition space with broken glasses. He was able to find some sheets of glass and, after exchanging with Merz's assistant, he thought about the best possible solution to replace the damaged ones. Another unforeseen issue occurred when someone from the setting up staff unintentionally ruined the frames he specifically constructed for that display. He was immediately requested to intervene to assess the damage and decide if the frame could be fixed or if it was necessary to build a new one.

The process leading to the realization of a frame starts with a dialogue between the curator and the framer. "You must find a compromise between the curators' idea and what you can actually do. According to the available materials, sizes, needs and requirements, a 'draft' is made"³⁰⁴. When Palazzo Grassi was managed by FIAT, Gae Aulenti was the leading architect and exhibit designer. Filippo Trevisanello remembers that she used to listen to craftspeople and ask for practical advice. If there had been any issue, the team would try to solve it together. Working with different professionals means constantly finding an agreement between aesthetics and feasibility, an agreement that can satisfy every party involved. The level of trust placed in Trevisanello by Aulenti allowed him to have a certain degree of autonomy in creating some frames. Once, Gae Aulenti asked him to bring to the Palazzo some frame samples to come up with some ideas. When Aulenti was handed one of the frame samples, she erupted in a defiant "'How about this' before breaking the sample and putting it back together in a different shape. This happened for the paintings by Picasso. From that gesture, I imagined the frame"³⁰⁵. In Palazzo Grassi, for the 2002 exhibition "From

³⁰⁴ Ibid.; "bisogna riuscire a trovare questo compromesso tra l'idea dei curatori e quello che si può fare. In base ai materiali a disposizione, alle grandezze, alle esigenze e necessità si realizza una 'bozza'".

³⁰⁵ Ibid.; "'facciamo così': l'aveva rotto e trovato una nuova forma per la cornice. Questo è successo per i quadri di Picasso di cui ti parlavo. Da quel gesto, io dovevo immaginare la cornice".

Puvis de Chavannes to Matisse to Picasso. Toward Modern Art”³⁰⁶, Trevisanello created three frames for three paintings by Picasso: “The Pipe of Pan”, a version of the harlequin and a portrait of Olga.



Ill. 22 Pablo Picasso, “The pipe of Pan”. On the left: the frame made by Filippo Trevisanello; ph. The amazing popping eyes. On the right, the original frame; ph. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée National Picasso-Paris) / Adrien Didierjean © Succession Picasso 2021.

Since the artworks cannot exit the museum during the setting up, when required the framer has to be present at the opening of the crates. In this way, he can take all the necessary measurements and, once back to the laboratory, create some ad-hoc frames for that specific exhibition. Then, Trevisanello brings them to the exhibition space and lets the art handlers mount them. Lenders need to be informed and the personnel cannot intervene without their approval. Contrary to what usually happens, the three Picasso canvases were kept in the new frames and, at the moment of the transport back to the lending museum, the original frames were returned to Musée Picasso together with the paintings.

In 2004, Filippo Trevisanello worked on the frames for Christo and Jeanne-Claude’s exhibition³⁰⁷ at Contini Gallery, Venice. On that occasion, he was offered a dedication on the catalogue and a postcard signed by the artists. Inside his workshop, he keeps the catalogues and souvenirs of most of the exhibitions in which he collaborated.

³⁰⁶ For further information on the exhibition: <https://www.exibart.com/venezia/fino-al-16-vi-2002-da-puvis-de-chavannes-a-matisse-e-picasso-verso-larte-moderna-venezia-palazzo-grassi/> [last access 20/03/2022].

³⁰⁷ For further information on the exhibition: <https://www.continiarte.com/exhibition/christo-jeanne-claude/> [last access 20/03/2022].



Ill. 23 Installation view of Christo & Jeanne-Claude's solo exhibition, Contini Gallery, Venice, 2004, ph. Contini Arte.

On the occasion of Leonardo Da Vinci's exhibition at Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, a clima frame was commissioned in Rome for the Vitruvian Man, and Trevisanello created an ad-hoc frame around it.



Ill. 24 Installation view, Leonardo Da Vinci, "Vitruvian Man", Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, ph. Corriere del Veneto.

When the amount of work is substantial, Trevisanello needs to receive the required information with sufficient notice, for he carries out these assignments with no assistance. For "Henri Cartier-Bresson. Le Grand Jeu"³⁰⁸ opening in March 2020, Palazzo Grassi's staff meetings started in September 2019. By December, he asked to

³⁰⁸ For further information: <https://www.palazzograssi.it/en/exhibitions/past/henri-cartier-bresson-le-grand-jeu/> [last access 20/03/2022].

define all the frames to be create, so that he could get organized and deliver all of them by January and February. The frames were about 250. He needed time to get the design approves, find the right materials, make the frames, and assemble them. “I managed to make forty frames at a time and then take them to Palazzo [Grassi]. Once they were all there, I started to mount them. For the upstairs exhibition consecrated to Youssef Nabil³⁰⁹, I made the frames for the photographic portraits”³¹⁰.



Ill. 25 Exhibition view “Henri Cartier-Bresson. Le Grand Jeu”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2020-2021, ph. courtesy of Palazzo Grassi.

3.5 Andrea Orlando, Painter and Decorator, Fratelli Orlando S.n.c., Venice

Andrea Orlando’s family-run company has been working for Palazzo Grassi for 37 years. Their duties consist in painting, decorating, and constructing some of the exhibition spaces during the setting up, as well as performing extraordinary maintenance work for the whole structure. Depending on the curatorial and architectural project, they can be asked to build plasterboard walls with the aim of modifying the space distribution. “This is not an ordinary job”³¹¹: on one occasion, the

³⁰⁹ “Youssef Nabil. Once Upon a Dream”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2020-2021; for further information: <https://www.palazzograssi.it/en/exhibitions/past/youssef-nabil-once-upon-a-dream/> [last access 20/03/2022]. I personally interviewed the artist: <https://artslife.com/2021/01/19/youssef-nabil-intervista-sotto-pelle/> [last access 21/03/2022].

³¹⁰ F. Trevisanello, *Interview*, 15 December, 2021; “entro dicembre avevo chiesto di definire tutto il lavoro da fare per organizzarmi nei mesi di gennaio e febbraio per consegnarlo: erano circa 250 cornici. Mi serve il tempo di procurarmi i materiali, realizzare le cornici, montarle. Avevo calcolato che mi servivano due settimane per montare le opere e 1 mese e mezzo per lavorarci. Mi sono quindi organizzato in modo che ne facessi quaranta e le portavo a palazzo e così via. Una volta che erano tutte lì, ho iniziato a montarle. Per la mostra al piano di sopra di Youssef Nabil, ho fatto le cornici per i ritratti”.

³¹¹ A. Orlando, *Interview*, 6 December 2021; “non è un lavoro ordinario”.

firm was asked to cover a whole room with 5500 sheets of carbon paper put upside down. On the other hand, for the display dedicated to the Pharaohs³¹², in 2002-2003, Orlando and his father painted and shaped some polystyrene to create the illusion of pyramids. Being Palazzo Grassi a private foundation, Andrea Orlando's company works on direct assignment since 1984. At that time, a great restoration was undertaken by FIAT, followed by another one when the Palazzo was purchased by François Pinault in 2005. The latter decided to keep the same teams of external professionals, trusting the choices previously made.

During FIAT and Agnelli family's management, Andrea Orlando recalls the display dedicated to the Thrones of Boston and Ludovisi, but also the ones of Van Gogh and Dalí. The exhibitions organized by FIAT were challenging, also due to the fact that Gae Aulenti was the leading architect.

My first day of work was the 7th of January 1991. I worked on the layout of the exhibition about the Celts³¹³. To date, except for the exhibition on the Renaissance³¹⁴, I've contributed to the making of all of them. It is a really exciting job. Starting from the installation with carbon paper I mentioned before, to throwing paint from the bucket directly to the wall, until using wrapping paper as wallpaper on indication of Urs Fischer³¹⁵.

Working inside exhibitions is "magical"³¹⁶ and exciting for Andrea Orlando. During the years, he built different structures for different purposes. For the exhibition of Lucio Fontana's pieces³¹⁷, he created a fake wall and framed a painting in the plasterboard itself. "Another very fun job was for the Mask of Tutankhamun's room,

³¹² "The Pharaohs", Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2002-2003; for further information: <https://www.exibart.com/venezia/fino-al-25-v-2003-i-faraoni-venezia-palazzo-grassi/> [last access 22/03/2022].

³¹³ "The Celts", Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 1991; for further information: http://www1.adnkronos.com/Archivio/AdnAgenzia/1991/03/12/Spettacolo/GRANDI-MOSTRE-I-CELT-LA-PRIMA-EUROPA-IN-PALAZZO-GRASSI_115800.php [last access 25/03/2022].

³¹⁴ "Renaissance Venice and the North Crosscurrents in the Time of Bellini, Dürer and Titian", Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2000; for further information: http://www1.adnkronos.com/Archivio/AdnAgenzia/1999/07/19/Cultura/PALAZZO-GRASSI-GRANDI-MOSTRE-IL-RINASCIMENTO-A-VENEZIA_134900.php [last access 25/03/2022].

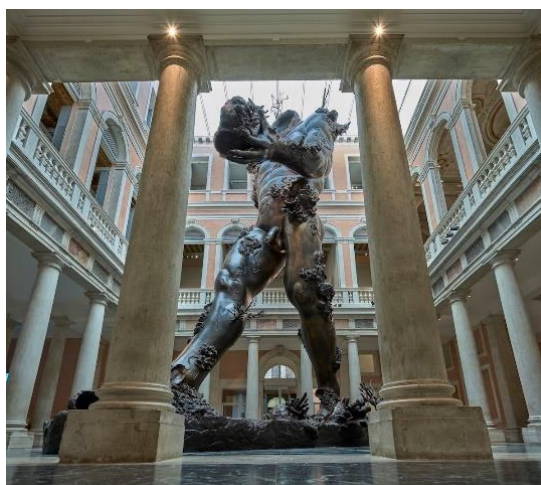
³¹⁵ A. Orlando, *Interview*, 6 December 2021; "il mio primo giorno di lavoro è stato il 7 gennaio del 1991 e ho lavorato all'allestimento della mostra sui Celti. Ad oggi, tranne la mostra sul Rinascimento, ho lavorato a tutte le mostre. È un lavoro davvero appassionante. A partire dall'installazione con la carta carbone che ho menzionato prima, al dover tirare il colore con il secchio sul muro, fino al dover mettere la carta da pacchi come se fosse carta da parati su indicazione di Urs Fischer".

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*; "è qualcosa di magico".

³¹⁷ "From Nature to Art. Lucio Fontana", Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 1960.

whose walls were completely covered with gold leaf”³¹⁸.

As part of the craftspeople category, Orlando’s company is among the first ones to arrive at the exhibition site and the last ones to leave. When displays are already on view, Orlando’s company is often requested to make retouches twice a month during the night, especially for the ones attracting a great number of visitors. Thanks to his position, Andrea Orlando happened to witness the installation of some artworks. For “Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable”, Damien Hirst’s solo exhibition³¹⁹, he saw the erection of the 18-meter-high statue in polystyrene called “Demon with Bowl”³²⁰. The body of the demon was built and brought there in pieces; since there was no space for scaffolds, specialized art handlers, climbed down the Palazzo with ropes, earning the nickname “spider-men” among the authorized personnel.



Ill. 26 Installation view of Damien Hirst’s “Demon with Bowl” for the exhibition “Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2017; ph. Prudence Cuming Associates, © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2019.

Inside Palazzo Grassi’s organizational system, the Exhibition Office is responsible for the external team management. However, Orlando sometimes also exchanges with couriers and artists themselves. In addition to registrars, he meets with curators, artists who personally design the space, and construction managers who coordinate the external teams, including painters, carpenters, electricians. When the artist is not

³¹⁸ A. Orlando, *Interview*, 6 December 2021; “un altro lavoro molto divertente è stata la stanza con la maschera di Tutankhamon e abbiamo tappezzato tutta la stanza di foglia d’oro”.

³¹⁹ For further information about the exhibition: <https://www.palazzograssi.it/en/exhibitions/past/damien-hirst-at-palazzo-grassi-and-punta-della-dogana-in-2017-1/> [last access 1/04/2022].

³²⁰ The time-lapse video of the installation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zt0zjGQduYw> [last access 1/04/2022].

responsible for the design of the exhibition, he also talks to the architect responsible for the setting up.



Ill. 27 Installation view of the Mask of Tutankhamun's room, "The Pharaohs", Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2003. The showcase was built by the blacksmith Giorgio Bacciolo³²¹, and the wall was decorated by Orlando's company; ph. Bacciolo's company portfolio.

3.6 Giorgio Bacciolo, Blacksmith, Bacciolo Gelsomino e Figli S.r.l., Venice

Bacciolo Gelsomino e Figli is a family business that has been active for 63 years. Since he was a child, Giorgio Bacciolo accompanied his father on construction sites. The company started working inside the museum field by tightening a collaboration with the Naval Historical Museum of Venice, for which a series of showcases was designed and built. As a first request, the director commissioned Bacciolo a complex project: an 8-meter-long, 6-meter-high, and 2-meter-wide display case. Among others, Bacciolo collaborated with the Venetian Museum of Natural History, Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, and the Bodmer Foundation in Geneva with Mario Botta. Additionally, he brought his know-how to Moscow, London, Paris, Kronach, and Monte Carlo. The company was then hired by Palazzo Grassi. As a general rule, during the setting up of an exhibition Bacciolo first meets with the architect responsible for the design of the spaces, including the showcases. In this first phase, a good understanding is crucial:

³²¹ See subchapter 3.2.6. Giorgio Bacciolo, blacksmith, Bacciolo Gelsomino e Figli S.r.l., Venice.

“ideas are refined in cooperation”³²². In the case of Palazzo Grassi, Bacciolo is contacted by the Exhibition Office, which introduces him and his team to the exhibit designer. Successively, he receives the drawings of the project to discuss and reflect on the feasibility of the structures within its remits. When an agreement is reached, Bacciolo provides the material, assembles, and disassembles it. Though, Bacciolo’s background and skills are also evident and useful in other matters concerning permanent constructions inside the same Palazzo.

One of the most significant interventions in recent years, as a symbol of our service outside the various exhibition layouts, is that, in order to facilitate the lifting inside the building, we hid two radio-controlled hoists with a capacity of 20 tons behind some demountable 6 meters long and 1,5 meters wide canopies (that were installed to shield the light coming from the skylight above the atrium)³²³ [see Ill. 28].

Giorgio Bacciolo’s extensive experience allows him not only to produce cases and metal structures, but also to think and design specific handling systems, such as the one for Palazzo Grassi. Thanks to it, the lifting movements on the upper floors are completely electrified. Besides the practical utility of this permanent and long-lasting project, the recurring costs of building brand new scaffoldings each time are no longer to be faced. The conception of such a system requires skills that can only be gained through field experience, that range from engineering to architecture to the more practical ones of the craftsman blacksmith. “I bring inside the museum my experience in knowing different materials, in addition to those I manufacture myself, such as glass, plexiglass, wood, purely mechanical devices, electrical devices, etc.”³²⁴.

Bacciolo also creates air-conditioned showcases. In 2004, the Martin Bodmer Foundation, in Geneva, commissioned Mario Botta the restoration of its spaces. The two underground floors needed some showcases, and four companies were selected to provide some models. “My sample was simple, aesthetically beautiful, practical in the opening since instead of locks I used electromagnets to be controlled by the

³²² G. Bacciolo, *Interview*, 7 December 2021; “le idee vengono affinate assieme”.

³²³ *Ibid.*; “uno degli interventi più significativi degli ultimi anni, come emblema del nostro servizio al di fuori dei vari allestimenti è che abbiamo pensato, per facilitare i sollevamenti all’interno del palazzo, di nascondere dietro ai velari 6 x 1,5 m smontabili (i quali erano stati installati per schermare la luce proveniente dal lucernario sopra all’atrio) due paranchi radiocomandati della portata di 20 quintali”.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*; “io porto la mia esperienza di conoscenza di diversi materiali oltre a quelli fabbrili come il vetro, plexiglass, legno, congegni puramente meccanici, dispositivi elettrici ecc, all’interno del museo”.

conciierge”³²⁵. If a case had opened, the remote control would have sent a warning to the control room. On the same occasion, Bacciolo also built a 8-meter-long and 50-centimeter-wide case for the longest Egyptian papyrus in the world, which measured 10 meters in length and was referred to as “The Book of the Dead”. Together with his son, he designed a series of showcases for temporary exhibitions as well, characterized by a specific system whose functioning is similar to car jacks. They installed a worm engine for each case that allows to raise the glass case by 18-20 centimeters, since its weight is significant. Presently, the Foundation owns about 180 thousand books as well as a drawing by Leonardo da Vinci.



Ill. 28 The velarium in fiberglass designed by Tadao Ando, ph. Palazzo Grassi - Punta della Dogana.

For every project, the company takes care of the conception phase in the workshop, giving importance to the structural, functional, and mechanical design. They prefer taking charge of this aspect too, since they “work down to one thousandth of a millimeter, while other competitors or design studios are mainly concerned with the aesthetics”³²⁶. In the making of an exhibition, the know-how brought by craftspeople is as important as the one provided by curators and architects: “we try to face the needs, [...] and to give a professional advice, for the interests of the curator, the artist, and the artwork itself. We often provide crucial and necessary insights to solve issues of

³²⁵ Ibid.; “il mio campione era semplice, esteticamente bello, pratico nell’apertura perché anziché usare serrature ho usato degli elettromagneti controllati dalla portineria [...], abbiamo certificato temperatura e umidità controllate”.

³²⁶ Ibid.; “lavoriamo al millesimo di millimetro, mentre invece ci sono altri competitor o studi di progettazione che si occupano prevalentemente del lato estetico”.

various kind”³²⁷. Particularly, when the artist is the designer of the layout, exchanging with the latter gives Bacciolo the opportunity to deepen the knowledge of its the artist’s work, thus allowing him to conceive and create systems that reflect even more the artistic poetics and pieces that are displayed.



Ill. 29 Exhibition view of “The Etruscans”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2000-2001; ph. Piero Castiglioni and Francesco Venezia Archive.

The firm has worked on direct assignments for Palazzo Grassi from the 1994 exhibition “Renaissance. From Brunelleschi to Michelangelo”³²⁸. The architectural project was conceived by Mario Bellini Architects Studio and Bacciolo was asked to reproduce on a bigger scale a piece of metal sheet. “They were so beautiful that people touching them mistook them for leather: that treatment was made possible thanks to a particular waxing technique”³²⁹ developed by Bacciolo himself. So far, twenty-six exhibitions in Palazzo Grassi required the expertise of his company, which started working there almost at the same time as Orlando’s firm, the painter and decorator aforementioned³³⁰. “We always meet with the Orlando’s, the painters, to talk about our long cyclical collaboration. In our craft world, you must have passion, willingness,

³²⁷ Ibid; “si cerca di affrontare le esigenze, practice [...] cercando di fornire una consulenza, per gli interessi del curatore, dell’artista del museo e dell’opera in sé. Spesso forniamo spunti cruciali e necessari per risolvere problematiche di vario genere”.

³²⁸ For further information on the exhibition: <http://www.arc1.uniroma1.it/saggio/Raccolta/32dallaterra/32dallaterra.Html> [last access 27/03/2022] and <https://www.polliceilluminazione.it/progetto/palazzo-grassi-veneziam-rinascimento-da-brunelleschi-a-michelangelo/> [last access 27/03/2022].

³²⁹ G. Bacciolo, *Interview*, 7 December 2021; “erano talmente belle che le persone toccandole le scambiavano per cuoio, era stato possibile arrivare a quel trattamento con una particolare tecnica di ceratura”.

³³⁰ See subchapter 3.2.5. Andrea Orlando, painter and decorator, Fratelli Orlando Snc, Venice.

genius, and inventiveness”³³¹.

An exhibition of which Bacciolo has a particularly vivid memory is the one consecrated to the Etruscan civilization (see Ill. 29)³³². The company signed the employment contract in August 2000 and finished working on the 21st of November. The exhibition opened the day after: for the thirty-six rooms “we created a hundred cases, a floating pavement, and some channels for the lights”³³³.



Ill. 30 Exhibition view “Dalí”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2005; ph. © Oscar Tusquets Blanca.

In Palazzo Grassi, other exhibitions involving Bacciolo’s creations were the solo-show of Salvador Dalí³³⁴ (see Ill. 30), in 2005, and “Luogo e Segni”³³⁵ (see Ill. 31), in 2019, at Punta della Dogana. For the latter, the company developed seven cases with tinted windows, in which some specific thermohygro-metric conditions needed to be guaranteed.

One of Bacciolo’s extra-territorial commissions happened in 2002, when the Italian artist Fabrizio Plessi won the international competition organized by the fashion company Loewe in Kronach, Germany (see Ill. 33). Plessi chose the blacksmith’s

³³¹ G. Bacciolo, *Interview*, 7 December 2021; “ci troviamo sempre con gli Orlando, gli imbianchini a parlare della nostra lunga collaborazione ciclica. Nel nostro mondo dell’artigianato, bisogna avere passione, voglia, genialità e inventiva”.

³³² “The Etruscans”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2000-2001; for further information: <https://www.exibart.com/venezia/fino-al-1-vii-2001-etruschi-venezia-palazzo-grassi/> [last access 16/04/2022].

³³³ *Ibid.*; “abbiamo realizzato cento teche, un pavimento galleggiante, e dei canali per la luce”.

³³⁴ “Dalí”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2005; for further information: <https://www.exibart.com/venezia/fino-al-16-i-2005-dali-venezia-palazzo-grassi/> [last access 16/04/2022].

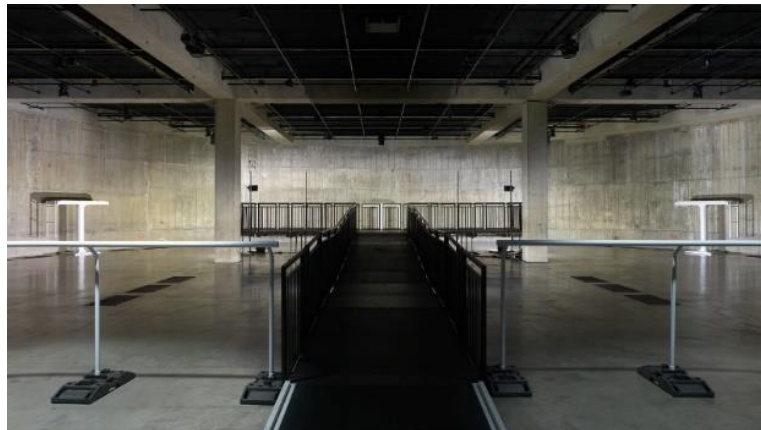
³³⁵ For further information: <https://www.palazzograssi.it/en/exhibitions/past/luogo-e-segni/> [last access 16/04/2022].

company to create an imposing outdoor electronic sculpture developing the theme of water and fire, using air-conditioned televisions for the first time³³⁶. Giorgio Bacciolo personally took care of producing the work, which was “10 meters high, 5 meters wide, and 3 meters deep, with about twenty televisions on one side. Inside it, a heat pump was set to get the heat out during winter and the cold during summer”³³⁷.



Ill. 31 Installation view of Hicham Berrada, “Mesk-Elli” at “Luogo e Segni”, Punta della Dogana, Venice, 2019; courtesy the artist and kamel mennour; © Palazzo Grassi, ph. Delfino Sisto Legnani and Marco Cappelletti.

To conclude, for the first exhibition of Anne Imhof in the UK, which took place in 2019 at Tate Modern and was titled “Sex”³³⁸, Bacciolo’s company oversaw the shaping of the metal structure, which constituted an integral part of the exhibition setting.

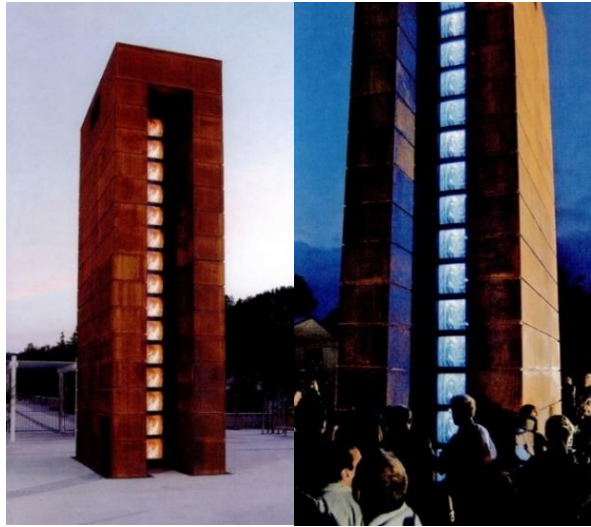


Ill. 32 Tate Modern, London, Exhibition “Sex”, Anne Imhof, 2019, ph. Brotherton-Lock.

³³⁶ Contini Arte, *Fabrizio Plessi. Biografia, bibliografia, esposizioni*, December 2020; <https://www.continiarte.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Plessi-Fabrizio-Bio-ITA.pdf> [last access 16/04/2022].

³³⁷ G. Bacciolo, *Interview*, 7 December 2021; “alta 10 metri, larga 5 metri e profonda 3, con da un lato una ventina di televisori. Dentro c’era una pompa di calore che faceva caldo d’inverno e freddo d’estate”.

³³⁸ “Sex”, Tate Modern, London, 2019; for further information: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/anne-imhof> [last access 16/04/2022].



Ill. 33 Installation view, Fabrizio Plessi's "Plessi-Turm" by day and by night. © Fabrizio Plessi.

3.7 Leonardo Carrer, President and CEO, APICE S.C.r.l., Venice

APICE guarantees a series of integrated services exclusively dedicated to the protection of artworks during handling, transport, exhibition, and storage using means, resources, and technologies of the highest quality. With its four operational branches in Milan, Venice, Florence and Rome, the firm's duties range from the first meeting with the lender, be it private or public, to the end of the requested service. The latter can consist in carrying out just one phase of the process, such as an internal handling or a shipment, or in taking care of the whole process until the building and mounting of the exhibition. Leonardo Carrer was one of the founders of APICE back in 1982. At that time, there were no large transport companies which only focus was art. APICE was among the first to deal with the museum system. At that time, exhibitions were rarely organized in Italy; the market was composed of antique dealers, galleries, and auction houses. "The real entrance of art exhibitions in Italy by institutions in a consistent way began in the early 90s. Now we cooperate very little with auction houses, though APICE Milan works with Christie's and Sotheby's"³³⁹.

Since President Leonardo Carrer's branch is located in Venice, it mainly collaborates

³³⁹ L. Carrer, *Interview*, 15 December 2021; "Il vero ingresso delle esposizioni in Italia fatte da istituzioni in maniera importante è iniziato all'inizio degli anni '90. Ora collaboriamo pochissimo con le case d'asta, anche se la nostra consorziata di Milano lavora con Christie's e Sotheby's".

with nearby public and private art institutions: MUVE Foundation, Mart, Guggenheim Collection, Marsilio, Sole24Ore and Silvana Editoriale. For this reason, they work both through calls for tenders and direct assignments.

Usually, the organizing body gets in contact with APICE and asks for a quotation. If accepted, the subject issues an official assignment. Besides its four Italian divisions, APICE developed a rich international network. Their correspondents form an accredited web of renowned collaborations and operate in the most important museums all over the world.

Through these correspondents we can transport every artwork to any part of the world. The same goes for transports from a foreign country to Italy: The Metropolitan Museum in New York ships through one of our correspondents, Masterpiece International³⁴⁰. The latter asks us for a collaboration for the transport to Italy and a contact is established. The necessary procedure is refined to ensure that the artworks arrive from New York to the designated Italian venue³⁴¹.

It rarely happens that a coordination by APICE from a foreign country to another one is needed. However, when it is the case APICE oversees the entire process. A private client contacted the firm to request a transport from New York to Paris. APICE takes care of assisting the two transport companies entrusted by APICE to make respectively the pickup in New York and the delivery in the French capital. This continuous contact with both Italian and foreign museums allowed Leonardo Carrer to experiment different realities and made him notice great differences with respect to the organizational structure of art organizations. In foreign ones, an internal department is specifically dedicated to the handling of artworks and people working inside it possess specific skills. The figure of the registrar is always present, even though “in Italy [it] does not officially exist. Progress is being made but we are still far from the international situation”³⁴². In Italy, it can happen that the person in charge of coordinating the transport company has other duties, which means it is not completely aware of the issues that may arise. In this case, for APICE it is a little more difficult

³⁴⁰ For further information: <https://masterpieceintl.com/> [last access 1/04/2022].

³⁴¹ L. Carrer, *Interview*, 15 December 2021; “attraverso questi corrispondenti noi trasportiamo tutte le opere in qualsiasi parte del mondo. Stesso discorso vale per i trasporti dall'estero all'Italia: il Museo Metropolitan di New York spedisce attraverso un nostro corrispondente, come la Masterpiece. Quest'ultima ci richiede una collaborazione per la spedizione in Italia e si stabilisce questo contatto, si affina l'iter necessario per fare in modo che le opere arrivino da New York alla sede italiana designata”.

³⁴² *Ibid.*; “ancora ufficialmente non esiste. Si stanno facendo dei passi avanti ma siamo ancora molto distanti dalla situazione internazionale”.

and laborious to build the operation.



Ill. 34 Apice's storage in Milan; ph. Filippo Romano, RivistaStudio³⁴³.

According to the client's request, APICE can take care of different steps related to exhibitions: being a structured company, it is able to perform any practical operation associated with art handling. One of them is the possibility to store artworks for a limited amount of time. In fact, APICE has storages in Venice, Milan, Rome and Florence. "We keep there the works of some museums that are carrying out renovations of the internal rooms, but of course they are temporary deposits"³⁴⁴. In Venice, a surface of about 4,000 square meters is dedicated to this last service, while another 1,000 square meter is occupied by the offices and related services. The structure hosting APICE's company is of recent construction and was specifically designed for its needs. Therefore, it is equipped with sophisticated security and climate control systems. Every artwork entering APICE Venezia is inventoried, catalogued, and inserted into a database from which its location inside the structure is traced and identified, as well as all data referring to it.

The plurality of services proposed also results in the collaboration between APICE and its affiliated companies. APICE's technicians specialized in design, programming, restoration, photography, and logistics cooperate with the afore mentioned OTT ART,

³⁴³ C. Mazzoleni, *Come si spostano le opere d'arte*, in "Rivista Studio", 7 March 2018; <https://www.rivistastudio.com/arte-nelle-casse/> [last access 9/03/2022].

³⁴⁴ Ibid.; "abbiamo nei nostri depositi opere di alcuni Musei che stanno eseguendo delle ristrutturazioni di sale interne ma naturalmente sono depositi temporanei".

creating “synergies”³⁴⁵ that unify transport, accrochage, and setting up. APICE and OTTART worked together in one of the exhibitions that Leonardo Carrer recalls: in the Sala delle Cariatidi, Palazzo Reale, Milan, a temporary display paid homage to Emilio Vedova³⁴⁶. The two companies took care of all the exhibition-related operations, from the setting up, to the transport, to the accrochage: “this allowed us to make a better planning and programming of the employed resources and a better economic result oriented to the expenses; it was satisfying for the commissioner too”³⁴⁷. Another exhibition built together was “The Factory of the Renaissance”³⁴⁸ in the Basilica Palladiana, Vicenza. There, APICE oversaw the transport and accrochage, while OTTART was responsible for the design and execution of the supports for the works.



Ill. 35 Exhibition “The Factory of the Renaissance”, Basilica Palladiana, Vicenza, 2021-2022; ph. Artsupp.

APICE also offer their clients an insurance coverage: an open contract ties the firm

³⁴⁵ L. Carrer, *Interview*, 15 December 2021; “disponiamo di tecnici di progettazione, programmazione, restauro, fotografia e logistica, attraverso un’altra nostra Società l’OTTART possiamo creare delle sinergie che uniscono trasporto, accrochage e allestimento. OTTART si occupa di allestimenti Museali temporanei e Permanenti a livello Internazionale nonché di predisposizione di staffe dedicate per il montaggio di qualsiasi opera servendosi anche dell’ausilio di attrezzature come lo Scanner 3D per le rilevazioni”.

³⁴⁶ “EMILIO VEDOVA”, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2019-2020; for further information: <https://www.fondazionevedova.org/en/node/176> [last access 1/04/2022].

³⁴⁷ L. Carrer, *Interview*, 15 December 2021; “questo ci ha permesso una migliore pianificazione e programmazione delle risorse impiegate e un migliore risultato economico ai fini della spesa quindi soddisfazione anche per il committente”.

³⁴⁸ “The Factory of the Renaissance”, Basilica Palladiana, Vicenza, 2021-2022; for futher information: <https://www.mostreinbasilica.it/en/rinascimento> [last access 1/04/2022].

with Lloyd's of London that, through the stipulation of a policy, allows APICE to issue real-time coverages for all the services performed. Carrer asserts that in the formulation of risk percentages composing the insurance premium, the risk of theft is one of the lowest: the artworks for which the firm is responsible are renowned masterpieces and thus have become of low interest to be sold after the theft. "Who would steal a Caravaggio?"³⁴⁹. On the other hand, the highest percentage of risk is linked to small unforeseen damages that can happen during handling, for which they always have "a plan B and C"³⁵⁰.

Depending on the resources, time, distance, and requests by the two parties involved, namely the lender and the borrower, transport can be by ground, air, and sea. The latter is the least used for two main reasons: it is the most expensive, also from an insurance point of view, and the slowest in terms of time. If the duration of transport increases, then the risk of damages becomes greater. In the case of air transport, APICE monitors the whole chain of transport, "from nail to nail". The company's staff is in possession of certifications/authorizations allowing them to access all airport and custom areas until the works are stored into the aircraft hold³⁵¹. Some of the authentications Carrer mentions are the ENAC (Italian Civil Aviation Authority), the IATA (International Air Transport Association), and the AEOF (Authorized Economic Operator for custom simplification and security certificate), issued by the competent authorities. Most works whose height is up to 160 centimeters travel in the holds of passenger airplanes, while those with larger dimensions travel on air cargos. For what concerns transport by ground, APICE's trucks vary in size and scale but they all possess the same climate control characteristics for internal temperature and humidity, as well as pneumatic suspension and tail lift. The quality of the means of transport is as important as the skills of the handling team. "All our personnel is selected and carefully trained with both theoretical and practical courses", acquiring a high level of expertise and competences through the years. When asked what an APICE art handler brings at the moment of a handling, Carrer replies: "the necessary equipment and documentation

³⁴⁹ Ibid.; "chi ruberebbe un Caravaggio?".

³⁵⁰ Ibid.; "un piano B e C".

³⁵¹ Ibid.; "per il trasporto Aereo abbiamo la possibilità di monitorare tutta la catena del trasporto 'da chiodo a chiodo' con il nostro personale essendo in possesso di Certificazioni/Autorizzazioni che ci permettono di accedere in tutte le aree aeroportuali e doganali fino all'introduzione delle opere nella stiva dell'aereo".

relating to the works to be collected or moved, and most importantly the right concentration on the operation to be carried out”³⁵².



Ill. 36 Two APICE art handlers in Palazzo della Signoria, Florence; ph. Apice’s Facebook Profile.

3.8 Antonella Cimarolli, Marshal Chief of Security of Mart Museum, 2005-2019, Rovereto

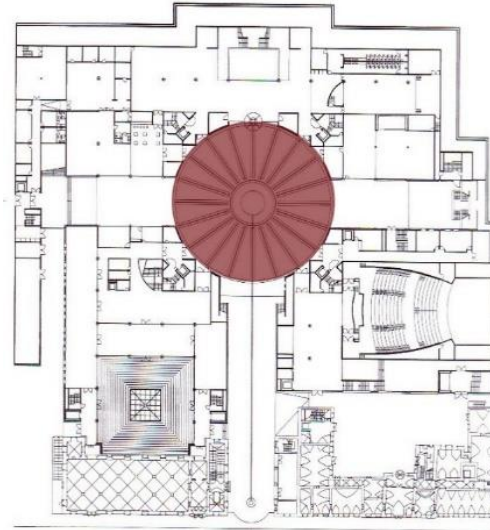
Antonella Cimarolli was the Head of Security of Mart Museum from 2005 until 2019. Her first experience inside an important exhibition was in September 2005, for the one titled “From Goya to Manet, from Van Gogh to Picasso. The Phillips Collection, Washington”³⁵³. The latter enhanced the Museum attendance, with a daily average of 5.000 visitors. In Cimarolli’s opinion, the person covering the role of Chief of Security inside a museum must have a comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of the structure in order to better manage all the activities. This is a key aspect that allows to handle any contingency that may occur. This figure must be very familiar with “internal and external, perimetral ones, weak and sensitive points of the museum’s structural security, escape routes etc.”³⁵⁴. It is also crucial to have an all-encompassing

³⁵² Ibid.; “le attrezzature necessarie più la documentazione relativa alle opere da ritirare o movimentare e cosa più importante di tutto la Concentrazione sulla operazione da fare”.

³⁵³ “From Goya to Manet, from Van Gogh to Picasso. The Phillips Collection”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2005; for further information: <http://www.giornaledelgarda.info/mart-di-rovereto-tn-da-goya-a-manet-da-van-gogh-a-picasso-the-phillips-collection-2005/> [last access 1/04/2022].

³⁵⁴ A. Cimarolli, *Interview*, 9 December 2021; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

knowledge of the internal personnel to be coordinated and exchange information on the various exhibitions and events that can be organized, such as gala dinners and book presentations. This triad of main tasks consists in knowing the structure, knowing the personnel, and being able to coordinate the surveillance body which, in the case of Mart Museum, exclusively operated there and was highly trained.



Ill. 37 Map of the architectural project of Mart Museum, 2011; ph. Progettazione urbanistica³⁵⁵.

The Head of Security of a museum moves within this triad – Cimarolli explains – but also deals with much more:

the set-up of video surveillance during the construction of exhibitions, the control and functioning of all systems related to video-surveillance, fire-fighting, intrusion detection, the internal administrative part of the Control Room, the continuous training and quality control of internal staff and, in my specific case, the management of the Company Certification, being responsible for the production of all the company's certified forms and, above all, for the operational assignment tasks³⁵⁶.

The surveillance body of Mart Museum operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The security company of which Antonella Cimarolli was part won the public tender for the security of Mart Museum on several occasions. Currently, the new contract has been taken over by a different security firm. Every four years, tenders for security are renewed. When a different company wins, the staff already working inside the museum is dismissed by the previous firm and transferred to the new one. The personnel is thus

³⁵⁵ For further information: <https://progettazioneurbanistica.wordpress.com/2011/05/14/sintesi-esercitazione-1-5/> [last access 1/04/2022].

³⁵⁶ A. Cimarolli, *Interview*, 9 December 2021; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

allowed to keep the same job, though its employer changes. In Cimarolli's case, her team and she have always been linked to the same institute because it always won the tender. It was the first institute to enter the museum in 2002, when it opened to the public in its new premises.

Cimarolli defines Mart as a "cathedral in the middle of the desert"³⁵⁷. She explains that the Trentino region, namely Trento and Rovereto, have never been areas of artistic culture, as Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples, and Milan. If built in one of these cities, Mart Museum "would undoubtedly have had more interaction with other museums, more visibility and it definitely would have been much more visited"³⁵⁸. She explains that founding Mart was a challenge for Gabriella Belli, and until the end of her direction "it was something really exciting and explosive, since very important exhibition were organized, and she left a great cultural heritage"³⁵⁹.

Antonella Cimarolli's main tasks during the setting up of exhibitions consisted in actively following the opening and closing of the crates. She was in charge of verifying the actual presence of the artwork inside the crate, and then, when the exhibition was over, she sealed with stamp and signature the successful closing of the crate. In this way, she could certify that during transport no tampering by third parties had taken place until the arrival to the lender. During the setting up, one of the most delicate aspects is the actual handling of the artworks: "it is another dangerous and sensitive moment, since there could be damage, theft, breakages, and therefore I also supervised the handling of the works until the accrochage"³⁶⁰. Cimarolli was also liable for the daily inventory: she had to record all the opened and closed crates, all the artworks on wheeled tables available to restorers and couriers for the drafting of condition reports, the ones against the wall and the ones already hung, installed or in their showcases.

Personally, I loved the moment of the setting ups because it gave me deep emotions, very different ones with respect to when visiting the exhibition itself. I had the opportunity to enjoy the preview of a painting, to be able to see it in all its beauty and in all its facets; often I stopped for a long time to admire the back part of the works, since in that point, its life is traced³⁶¹.

During the opening, all the figures collaborating to the display "perform a kind of

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

ceremonial, gathering all around the crate”³⁶². An emblematic case occurred when Mart Museum received the entire collection conserved by the Israel Museum for the exhibition “Impressionists and post-impressionists. Masterpieces from the Israel Museum in Jerusalem” in 2008-2009³⁶³. Since the Museum was renovating its spaces, a two-years travelling exhibition around Europe was conceived.

That was the most important experience of my professional life inside a museum: working with the Israelis means confronting with the world leaders in terms of safety and precision on the job. I remember a detail of the crates of their works, since they differed from the standard and usual models that we were used to see. Their crates opened laterally on the side, at most two works were stored, and they were pulled sideways, therefore there was no need to put down the crate for its opening³⁶⁴.

Since no standard concerning materials and typology is established for crates, each museum takes the measures it deems appropriate and necessary for the conservation of its artworks during transport. European and United States’ crates have a common opening method: usually, the crate is laid on the floor and opened frontally. However, each crate can have different characteristics, depending on the artwork or artworks contained.

When asked about the most complicated and dangerous armed escort that she oversaw, Cimarolli mentions a travelling exhibition that had to arrive at Mart from the Cantini Museum in Marseille. The night before the departure for Rovereto, there had been a theft inside the exhibition. The intent was to steal three works by Klimt, though luckily only one piece was subtracted. The morning after the theft, Cimarolli and a colleague of hers went to the French border to pick up the artworks. It was an intense escort, because there was the suspicion that “along the route from Ventimiglia to Rovereto, there could have been an assault to recover the other two masterpieces that fortunately had not been the object of the theft”³⁶⁵. Another unforgettable experience was to escort the top artworks for the exhibition dedicated to Antonello da Messina³⁶⁶, together with Mart’s registrar Clarenza Catullo, from Sicily to Mart Museum. They arrived at the

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ For further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/impressionists-and-post-impressionists-masterpieces-from-the-israel-museum-in-jerusalem-138670> [last access 2/04/2022].

³⁶⁴ A. Cimarolli, *Interview*, 9 December 2021; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ “Antonello da Messina”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2013-2014; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/antonello-da-messina-138691> [last access 2/04/2022].

museum with the works-symbols of the whole display, on the same day of the inauguration. As for this case, “setting ups have a starting time, but not an ending one”³⁶⁷ and for security reasons, the guard is the first one to enter and the last to leave the exhibition site. For Cimarolli, one of the bright sides of working so late is “being able to privately see the artworks, in the fascinating silence that surrounds the Museum at night”³⁶⁸.



Ill. 38 Exhibition view of “Antonello da Messina”, Mart Museum, Rovereto 2013-2014, ph. Mart, Archivio fotografico e Mediateca.

The great number of people involved in the making of a temporary display in a museum makes it challenging to supervise the whole process. Some companies composing the external staff during setting ups exclusively work in museums and exhibition space, while other ones also operate on other fronts, such as removals and booths set-ups at fairs. “If you work with already-trained personnel, the climate is more serene and you create a kind of trust between security and handlers, even though there must be a continuous and always active supervision by the security manager”³⁶⁹.

Cimarolli recently moved to Switzerland, where she oversees the security of a private collection. There, safety standards are higher than in Italy, and craftspeople working in museum spaces are more prepared. In fact, “for each professional figure, precise requirements are demanded, and their formation is fundamental, followed by a special apprenticeship, which in Italy, unfortunately, does not exist yet, or not for all

³⁶⁷ A. Cimarolli, *Interview*, 9 December 2021; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

sectors”³⁷⁰. Specifically, national security bodies do not provide specific training courses for the staff working in museum institutions, “not to mention the ones following exhibition setting ups or carrying out an armed escort for artworks”³⁷¹.



Ill. 39 Exhibition view of “Modigliani Sculptor”, 2010-2011; ph. Mart Museum, Photo Archive and Media Library.

Thinking about some of the in-the-making display that Cimarolli personally witnessed, she mentions “Mitomacchina. The history, technology and future of car design”³⁷² in 2006-2007; “Il Modo Italiano. Italian design and the avant-garde in the 20th century”³⁷³ in 2007 with Guy Cogeval who at the time was directing the Musée d’Orsay in Paris. “An exhibition that I will always remember is ‘Modigliani Sculptor’³⁷⁴ [see Ill. 39]: I recall that for the loans of this display Belli and Catullo flew to the States for a week, looking for heads”³⁷⁵.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid.; “tanto meno specializzato nel seguire gli allestimenti delle mostre o a svolgere scorte delle opere d’arte”.

³⁷² For further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/mitomacchina-the-history-technology-and-future-of-car-design-138683> [last access 2/04/2022].

³⁷³ For further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/il-modo-italiano-italian-design-and-the-avant-garde-in-the-20th-century-138636> [last access 2/04/2022].

³⁷⁴ “Modigliani sculptor”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2010-2011; for further information on the exhibition: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/modigliani-sculptor-138775> [last access 2/04/2022].

³⁷⁵ A. Cimarolli, *Interview*, 9 December 2021; “una mostra che ricorderò sempre è ‘Modigliani Scultore’: ricordo che per i prestiti di questa mostra la Dssa Belli con la Dssa Catullo sono volate negli States, una settimana alla ricerca di teste”.

In 2012, Paco Cao³⁷⁶ wanted his works to be hung on the back, and each Friday he organized some scientific aperitifs at Casa Depero. Under the direction of Cristiana Collu, Cimarolli mentions “The war which is coming is not the first one. Great War 1914-2014”³⁷⁷. In 2018-2019, the exhibition “Margherita Sarfatti. Novecento Italiano in the World”³⁷⁸ was organized when Gianfranco Maraniello was the director.

3.9 Alessandra Zambaldo and Isabella Bellinazzo, freelance professionals and external Conservator-Restorers for Mart Museum, Verona and Rovereto

Alessandra Zambaldo and Isabella Bellinazzo’s studio is based in Verona; for this reason, they mainly work between Trentino and Veneto. They have collaborated with Mart since 2015 through calls for tender: their tasks vary depending on the museum needs in that specific moment. They may be asked to monitor artworks for temporary exhibitions and verify the state of conservation of pieces stored in the museum. As regards to incoming loans, they check them the first time as soon as they arrive at the museum, then during the exhibition and lastly when they are sent back to the lender. When the works are in place and the display has started, they periodically dust and check them to ensure that there is no change nor damage in their state. “The work must return to its original place in the same conditions in which it has arrived inside the museum”³⁷⁹. They carry out a thorough examination of the artworks and prepare a condition report, which serves as the basis for understanding the level of degradation of the artifacts. The continuous assessment of the works is a typical activity of the museum, because handlings are more frequent and represent a critical moment. It is therefore fundamental, also for insurance purposes, that every work has its own conservative document, i.e., the condition report, that follows it during the whole

³⁷⁶ “ETERNAL REST. Depero Edition”, Casa Depero, Rovereto, 2012-2013; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/paco-cao-eternal-rest-depero-edition-138785> 138730 [last access 2/04/2022]. The exhibition was the result of Paco Cao’s residency on the occasion of the exhibition “The magnificent obsession”, Mart Museum, 2012-2014; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/the-magnificent-obsession-138862> [last access 2/04/2022].

³⁷⁷ “The war which is coming is not the first one. Great War 1914-2014”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2014-2015; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/the-war-which-is-coming-is-not-the-first-one-great-war-1914-2014-138730> [last access 2/04/2022].

³⁷⁸ “Margherita Sarfatti. Novecento Italiano in the World”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2018-2019; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/margherita-sarfatti-novecento-italiano-in-the-world-138754> [last access 2/04/2022].

³⁷⁹ A. Zambaldo and I. Bellinazzo, *Interview*, 14 December 2021; “l’opera deve ritornare nel suo luogo originale nelle stesse condizioni con cui è arrivata dentro al museo”.

exhibition process.



Ill. 40 Isabella Bellinazzo drawing up condition reports for the exhibition “Forgery in art. Alceo Dossena and Italian Renaissance sculpture”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2021-2022; ph. Mart Museum Instagram account.

As professional freelance restorers, Zambaldo and Bellinazzo also carry out duties that are not related to museums, such as tests on the artworks to evaluate the need for a restoration or a maintenance operation. These procedures allow them to make targeted interventions according to the necessities of the work for museums, ecclesiastical bodies, private individuals, and banks. As part of their tasks for Mart, they were recently sent as couriers by the institution to Guggenheim Bilbao to follow the works for the solo exhibition of Richard Artschwager³⁸⁰ (see Ill. 41). “The Guggenheim is a museum that moves in a particular way”³⁸¹. The internal staff showed them how they design the layouts: they still built models reproducing in scale the works on paper, which are installed inside it to analyze the spaces and the thematic associations.

With respect to Italian museums, Guggenheim Bilbao “spread the time for constructing the exhibition layout over a much longer period, and they have several teams tasked with different responsibilities”³⁸². When asked about the differences in

³⁸⁰ “Richard Artschwager”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2019-2020; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/richard-artschwager-138832> [last access 2/04/2022]. “Richard Artschwager”, Guggenheim Bilbao, Bilbao, 2020; for further information: <https://www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/exhibitions/richard-artschwager#themes> [last access 2/04/2022].

³⁸¹ A. Zambaldo and I. Bellinazzo, *Interview*, 14 December 2021; “il Guggenheim è un museo che si muove in modo particolare”.

³⁸² *Ibid.*; “hanno un’organizzazione diversa perché spalmano su un tempo molto più lungo il periodo di allestimento, hanno più squadre che se ne occupano e con incarichi molto separati”.

terms of internal and external engagement of staff inside Italian and foreign museums, the two conservators-restorers recall a courier telling them that institutions abroad have “a more committed attitude”³⁸³. In Italy, there are few museums with internal restorers, and often it is just one individual dealing with the whole permanent collection and temporary exhibitions, hence the need to temporarily hire external conservators and restorers. Though, “if you occasionally work in a museum, you only see the works at certain times, without being able to grasp their whole history”³⁸⁴. On the other hand, an internal restorer working inside the same institution for ten years, “begins to acquire a history, a path, to know the vicissitudes of the works and is able to better calibrate both interventions and maintenance”³⁸⁵. In this way, the eyes of the professional would be more trained on the works and over time they would also familiarize with the archives. This latter aspect would give the conservator-restorer the skills to optimize the time, since when an intervention is made it is mandatory to always write a report. The professional would be quicker to compare condition reports belonging to the same work but dating to different years, in order to see if any changes in its state of preservation have arisen. “It is a kind of work that from the Museum internal point of view would be more fruitful”³⁸⁶.



Ill. 41 Exhibition view of “Richard Artschwager”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2019-2020. Artworks © 2020 Richard Artschwager/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Ph. Luca Meneghel.

³⁸³ Ibid.; “un atteggiamento più impegnato”.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.; “se tu lavori a spot in un museo, vedi solo in certi momenti le opere, senza riuscire a cogliere quella che è tutto il loro storico”.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.; “comincia ad acquisire una storia, un percorso, a conoscere le vicissitudini delle opere ed è in grado di calibrare meglio sia gli interventi che le manutenzioni”.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.; “è un tipo di lavoro che dal punto di vista interno al Museo sarebbe più proficuo”.

For Bellinazzo and Zambaldo, every exhibition leaves a positive memory, as well as working inside Mart Museum's storage. Dealing with works ranging from the 19th century to present times, the pieces preserved in the collection vary for materials, techniques, and experimentations. "We restorers get attached to everything: the moment you solve the problem, you get attached. The goal you must achieve is what satisfies you in so many years. And despite everything and with all the difficulties, we are still in love with our work"³⁸⁷.

3.10 Luisa Mensi, self-employed and external Conservator-Restorer for Castello di Rivoli, Turin

Luisa Mensi works at Castello di Rivoli, Turin, as external conservator, and restorer. She also carries out her private activity, being employed through both calls for tenders and direct assignments. However, the last ones are less challenging: the bureaucratic effort that tenders require is significant.

The last collaboration with Mart Museum and Clarenza Catullo dates to some months ago. Mensi was contacted for an intervention on the painting "La Casa del Mago" by Fortunato Depero. The loan of the latter, which had crucial importance for the exhibition "Depero and his Casa d'Arte from Rovereto to New York"³⁸⁸, was at risk because of a misunderstanding between the transport enterprise and the lender. "In addition to the professional role related to the assessment of the conservation conditions, the assignment also had a 'diplomatic' aspect aiming at reassuring the lender about the guarantees for the loan"³⁸⁹. This aspect highlights the trust of the lender placed in the professional conservator, who takes responsibility for the handling.

Mensi works for public and private institutions, at national and international level. Regarding their management, she says she did not find great differences. "Positive and negative situations are to be similarly found all over the world. Paraphrasing Blade Runner: 'I've seen things that you people wouldn't believe' not only in Italy but also

³⁸⁷ Ibid.; "noi restauratori ci affezioniamo a qualsiasi cosa: nel momento in cui risolviamo la problematica, ci affezioniamo. L'obiettivo che devi raggiungere è quello che ti appaga in tanti anni. E nonostante tutto e con tutte le difficoltà, noi siamo ancora innamorate del nostro lavoro".

³⁸⁸ "Depero and his Casa d'Arte from Rovereto to New York", Casa Depero, Rovereto, 2021-2022; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/depero-and-his-casa-d-arte-from-rovereto-to-new-york-152440> [last access 3/04/2022].

³⁸⁹ L. Mensi, *Interview*, 2 December 2021; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

abroad”³⁹⁰. She is familiar with the reality of private galleries and collaborates with big international ones. Among others, she worked for Gagosian New York for the retrospective of Piero Manzoni and the exhibition on the environments of Lucio Fontana when Valentina Castellani was the director.



Ill. 42 Installation view of the exhibition “Posing Modernity: The Black Model from Manet and Matisse to Today”, Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, 2018 – 2019; ph. Eddie José Bartolomei, courtesy the Wallach. Manet’s *La Nègresse* painting is the one hanging on the right.

It happens that conservator-restorers act as couriers, being among the most prepared to check the artworks’ condition on arrival and at departure from the borrowing institution.

Among the collaborations in small international realities, one of the most interesting was accompanying, in 2018 as a courier, the painting by Manet entitled *La Nègresse*, owned by Pinacoteca Agnelli, to a small New York reality, that is the Wallach Art Gallery of Columbia University which is a space created to give voice to the exhibition projects of the young doctorates of Columbia. The exhibition³⁹¹ [see Ill. 42], which revolved around Manet’s *Olympia* and the figures of black models in the second half of the 19th century, then had a second stop at the Musée d’Orsay³⁹².

Luisa Mensi opened her VAT in 1988. For her, the negative side of being a self-employed is that, even after many years of work “nothing is certain”³⁹³. However, a

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ “Posing Modernity: The Black Model from Manet and Matisse to Today”, Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, New York, 2018-2019; for further information: <https://wallach.columbia.edu/exhibitions/posing-modernity-black-model-manet-and-matisse-today-le-mod%C3%A8le-noir-de-g%C3%A9ricault-%C3%A0> [last access 3/04/2022].

³⁹² L. Mensi, *Interview*, 2 December 2021; see Appendix for full interview and Italian translation.

³⁹³ Ibid.; “niente è sicuro”.

positive and very interesting aspect has been brought to Mensi's attention by a friend of hers, who operates as a museum curator. Working for various institutions gives Mensi the chance to take part in different realities and thus have a broader vision. Developing an active collaboration with registrars is crucial for her work, so much that in 2008 she was invited in Basel to the round table "Museums and Living Artists: Potentially Clashing Interests?"³⁹⁴ organized by the European Registrars Conference (ERC).

Mensi deploys her experience also as an expert for the assessment of damages and commercial depreciation of artworks. She collaborates with two insurance companies: AXA ART and Arte Generali. "The damages that one encounters can be of various nature, from traumatic to climatic to the ones caused by man, voluntarily or involuntarily (accidental or vandalic)"³⁹⁵. In these cases, the burden of proof, that is proving the good state of preservation, is always charged to the owner. When this kind of accidents happen inside exhibitions, registrars are responsible for opening and managing the claim together with their reference figures, the conservator-restorer, the legal advisor, and other professionals that can be involved. Anyways, for each incoming loan a condition report is drawn up at the moment of its arrival. To evaluate the damage, the institution can appoint a *super partes* figure, the conservator-restorer, so as to protect both the lender and the borrower's interests.

In a perspective of preservation and protection of the artworks, Luisa Mensi immensely loves her work. "Despite the objective difficulties, the fragmented work, the lack of bureaucratic ease, that of restorer-conservator is a job that I still do with great enthusiasm"³⁹⁶.

3.11 Claudio Cervelli, freelance Lighting Designer, Vicenza

Claudio Cervelli is a self-employed and self-taught lighting technician based in Vicenza, Veneto. He works for public museums, foundations, galleries, and private collectors. He collaborated with Mart Museum for eleven years; when the then director

³⁹⁴ For further information on the conference: <http://www.registrarte.org/p/index.php?page=vi---basilea-2008> [last access 2/04/2022].

³⁹⁵ L. Mensi, *Interview*, 2 December 2021; "i danni che uno incontra essere di varia natura, da quelli traumatici a quelli climatici ai danni causati dall'uomo volontariamente o involontariamente (accidentali o vandalici)".

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*; "nonostante le oggettive difficoltà, lavoro parcellizzato, mancanza di facilità burocratica, quello di restauratrice-conservatrice è un lavoro che faccio ancora con grande entusiasmo".

Gabriella Belli first contacted him “she only had 150 lamps to illuminate the whole museum; we bought almost 800 lamps and created the current lighting system of the museum”³⁹⁷. One of the exhibitions with which Mart Museum was inaugurated was called ‘Mitomacchina’³⁹⁸, in 2006, and the now President of Mart Vittorio Sgarbi was invited as a guest.

On that occasion, a car had been stuck at customs for a week. It had to enter the museum through an external door with a 25-meters crane; the car was lowered to the floor with a platform and pushed in because it could not be turned on. Once positioned, I adjusted the lights. All this happened while Sgarbi was visiting the first five exhibition rooms. We were in the last room of the second floor of Mart, still there with the scaffoldings, the lights, and the handling staff³⁹⁹.

Cervelli was still working at Mart Museum when, in 2010, the artworks belonging to the Phillips Collection arrived from the United States. He was able to witness the opening of some crates and the revelation of the artworks, which he finds a unique and inexplicable moment. He was present when restorers drew up the condition report with extreme precision: “this gives you the opportunity to exchange with restorers for various issues. Registrars live this on the agenda, but we are often either not allowed in the room or we start working at the end of the opening of the crates”⁴⁰⁰.

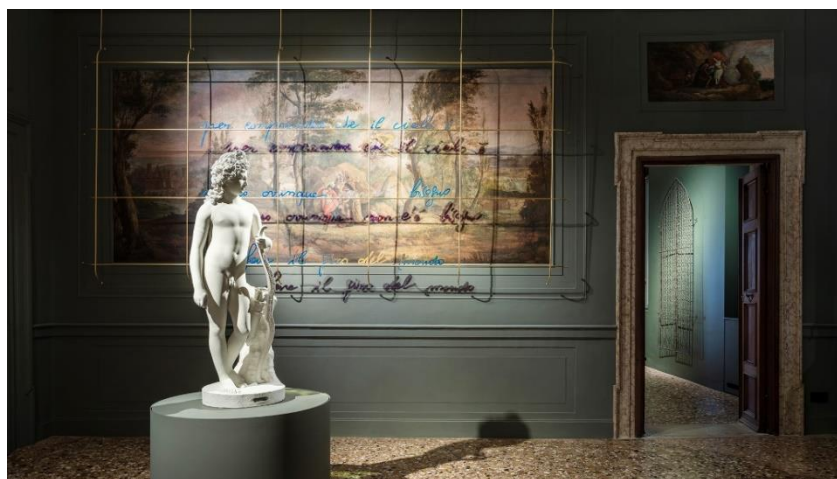
Thanks to the acquaintance of Gabriella Belli, the former director of Mart Museum, he was responsible for the design of the lighting system for Palazzo Maffei, Verona, in which Belli acts as curator. Cervelli works for collectors as well since oftentimes, temporary exhibitions gather artworks belonging to private collections. It can happen that the collector, when visiting the display, realizes that the works are illuminated in a completely innovative way. Thus, Cervelli is requested to reproduce the same lighting experience in the collector’s house.

³⁹⁷ C. Cervelli, *Interview*, 3 December 2021; “aveva solo 150 fari per illuminare il museo intero; ho quindi fatto comprare quasi 800 fari creando l’attuale sistema illuminotecnico del museo”.

³⁹⁸ “Mitomacchina. The history, technology and future of car design”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2006-2007; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/mitomacchina-the-history-technology-and-future-of-car-design-138683> [last access 2/04/2022].

³⁹⁹ C. Cervelli, *Interview*, 3 December 2021; “in quell’occasione, ci era arrivata una macchina che era stata ferma una settimana in dogana: doveva entrare da una porta esterna con una gru alta 25m, con il pianale la si faceva scendere al piano e la vettura doveva entrare dentro a spinta perché non la si poteva accendere. Una volta posizionata, io ho aggiustato le luci. Tutto questo è stato fatto mentre Sgarbi stava visitando le prime cinque sale delle sale espositive. Noi eravamo nell’ultima sala del secondo piano del Mart, ancora lì con i trabattelli, le luci e gli addetti alla movimentazione”.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*; “ti dà la possibilità di confrontarti con i restauratori per varie problematiche. I registrar vivono questo all’ordine del giorno ma a noi spesso o non viene permesso di essere in sala o subentriamo al termine dell’apertura delle casse”.



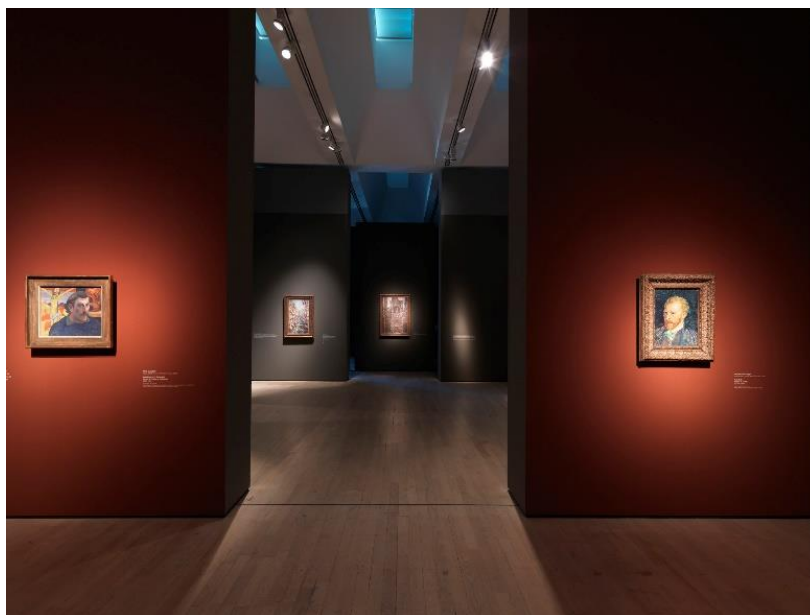
Ill. 43 Installation view, Palazzo Maffei, Verona, 2022; ph. Luca Rotondo.

When asked about the main phases of his work inside an exhibition, Cervelli explains that he first needs to receive the project of the display: the plan with the different sections, renderings, and all necessary technical data. Whenever possible, Cervelli exchanges with the curator, the director of the museum and the architect to better understand the emotion that they want to convey, the mood they want to insert into the exhibition. The passion Cervelli puts into his work results from his constant desire to learn more about the artists he must “shed light on”. He was recently asked to illuminate the display “Joaquín Sorolla. Light Painter”⁴⁰¹ (see Ill. 45) at Palazzo Reale, Milan. Every time he receives the assignment of an illumination project, he gathers information on the artist’s life, with the aim to best express the potential of lights. By doing so, he also studies the period in which the artist operated, the types of colors used and consequently the possible issues the works could suffer from.

During his working experience abroad, Claudio Cervelli has understood that much importance is given to teamwork. A much greater care is given to the organization of an exhibition, while this aspect is often missing in Italy. To confirm this thought, he recounts that during crucial gatherings, all the professionals involved in the exhibition are asked to be present, from the Scientific Committee to the external teams. Cervelli collaborated with small French museums and art institutions located in Switzerland, Spain, Egypt, Poland, and Czech Republic. “These projects are often requested by a director or a curator who, coming from Italy, looks for trusted people inside its team.

⁴⁰¹ For further information: <https://www.palazzorealemilano.it/mostre/pittore-di-luce> [last access 5/05/2022].

They are not very easy jobs: many high-level professionals are present abroad”⁴⁰². As an example, in France, the lighting system is considered fundamental for the success of the display. When Cervelli illuminated the works of the Impressionists coming from the Musée d’Orsay⁴⁰³ at Mart Museum, he had the chance to discuss with the then Director of the Parisian Museum, Guy Cogeval. The latter explained to him that the museum possesses an annual budget exclusively dedicated to research in lighting sources.



Ill. 44 Exhibition View “A revolution in looking. Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Masterpieces from the Musée d’Orsay”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2011; ph. Mart Museum, Photo Archive and Media Library.

Claudio Cervelli is self-taught: “I am a lighting designer who earned his place on the field”⁴⁰⁴. Thanks to his experience, he became part of the Italian Association of Lighting Design (AILD), and he was invited to a working group by the Italian Standardization Body (UNI). With UNI, Cervelli and his team are planning on how to become a lighting designer in the future, that is the professional qualifications, knowledge and preparation required.

⁴⁰² Ibid.; “sono progetti che spesso ti vengono chiesti da un direttore o un curatore che, essendo italiano, vuole nella sua squadra di lavoro delle persone di fiducia. Non solo lavori facilissimi: all’estero ci sono delle professionalità di altissimo livello”.

⁴⁰³ “A revolution in looking. Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Masterpieces from the Musée d’Orsay”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2011; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/a-revolution-in-looking-impressionist-and-post-impressionist-masterpieces-from-the-musee-dorsay-138770> [last access 5/04/2022].

⁴⁰⁴ C. Cervelli, *Interview*, 3 December 2021; “io sono un lighting designer che si è conquistato il suo posto sul campo”.

Cervelli mainly works with directly awarded contracts, even in the case of Italian public museums, where public tenders are not always mandatory. He is currently working at Castello di Miramare, Trieste, for which he designed the whole lighting system of the new Scuderie. In this case, he was directly awarded the tender because his project was found interesting and winning. In 2021, he also worked at the Alto Garda Museum (MAG) in Riva del Garda, where 120 lamps are now illuminating the permanent collection. As a freelancer, Cervelli asserts that his best-selling system is the word of mouth: his great expertise made him known in the art circuit and let him meet relevant people who spread the word about his know-how. His activity as a self-employed individual is based on relationships. “Tomorrow you could lose even the most important and loyal customer: as I am a freelancer, she/he is a free customer”⁴⁰⁵.



Ill. 45 Exhibition view of “Joaquín Sorolla. Light Painter”, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2022; ph. Artema.

Another key aspect of his work is that he constantly needs to be informed and kept up to date on the different lighting systems belonging to the economic, medium, and top range in order to satisfy every client. For instance, ERCO is one of the most important lighting systems in the world and provides one of the highest levels of illumination. Many of the most renowned museums in the world are illuminated by this German enterprise. Cervelli has been working with ERCO for a long time as a freelancer collaborator. “I don’t work exclusively with them because they provide high-end

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.; “anche il cliente più importante e fidelizzato lo potresti perdere domani: come io sono un libero professionista, lui è un libero cliente”.

products that cost a lot and only ‘rich’ museums, or art foundations can afford them”⁴⁰⁶. This is the reason why it is important to understand the economic availability of the customer: in this way, Cervelli would be able to propose the best solutions between renting or buying the necessary light sources.

In structured Italian and foreign museums, the average time for the realization of an exhibition is two or three years. Sometimes, the exhibition space is ready to be set up; alternatively, it is required to build everything from scratch. In this second case, Cervelli starts working at least one year before in order to make all the technical inspections and measurements. In addition, it is crucial for him to establish a dialogue with the architect and understand the lighting issues that may arise. For temporary displays,

the audience is placed in front of an object hung on the wall and it gets some feelings. I must make sure that that object is well lit and that it can be seen clearly. In an ecological perspective on which our thinking must align, I have to make sure the work is perfectly preserved, and the light is not damaging it, for it must be seen by all future generations. There are three types of works referred to lighting: 1) insensitive objects; 2) low sensitivity objects; 3) very high sensitivity objects⁴⁰⁷.

ICOM legislation has provided guidelines and standards for each of these three levels. Together with other professionals like conservator-restorers, Cervelli needs to understand to which category every object that must be illuminated belongs. Paper is one of the most sensitive materials because it can easily turn yellow. He explains that old volumes are yellow because of infrared and ultraviolet rays (UVA), which tend to change the color of paper and irremediably damage it. Today, LED (Light Emitting Diode) illumination has solved all these issues since it is considered a cold source of light. Cervelli explains that when it comes to illuminating a sculpture in bronze or stone sculptures, light source is not an issue. Though, for canvases the light source cannot to exceed 150 lux, while for paper, textile, and organic materials the maximum is 50 lux.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.; “non lavoro solo con loro perché hanno prodotti di alta gamma dal costo importante e se li possono permettere i musei o le fondazioni d’arte ‘ricchi’”.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.; “il pubblico è messo di fronte a un oggetto che è stato messo a parete e ne ricava delle sensazioni. Io devo fare in modo che quell’oggetto sia ben illuminato e che si possa vedere bene. In un’ottica ecologista a cui il nostro pensiero si deve allineare, io devo fare in modo che l’opera venga mantenuta perfetta e che la luce non la danneggi, perché deve essere vista da tutte le prossime generazioni. Le tipologie di opere previste riferite all’illuminazione sono tre: 1) oggetti insensibili; 2) oggetti a bassa sensibilità; 3) oggetti ad altissima sensibilità”.

3.12 Olivier Maupas and Dario Zannier, freelance Graphic Designers, Milan

Olivier Maupas and Dario Zannier are freelance graphic designers with their own studios. Maupas founded Olivier Maupas Graphic Design S.a.s., while Zannier created Studio Indaco S.a.s. They met in Milan when they were both working at a publishing house. After some time, they both moved to Studio Gregotti and Associates, under the supervision of Pierluigi Cerri.



Ill. 46 Exhibition view of “Bonalumi 1958-2016”, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2018; ph. Dario Zannier Portfolio.

Maupas explains that, among other activities, he takes care of the graphic design of exhibitions. He usually gets called by the foundation or the museum. The project guidelines are defined with the curator. Then, a strategy for visual communication is developed: graphics, signs, captions, explanatory panels in the rooms are created. The graphic designer can also conceive the design of the exhibition catalogue, or this task can be outsourced to another firm. Zannier asserts that in some cases he oversees the visual communication. However, certain institutions have their own communication department. Thus, external graphic designers must exchange with the internal team. For instance, the Venice Biennale, in which Zannier covered the role of art director for some years – and designed the iconic logotype⁴⁰⁸ –, has a Catalogue Office and a Setting-up Office. The technical side of the project is elaborated by the graphic

⁴⁰⁸ The logotype Zannier designed for the Venice Biennale: <https://dariozannier.myportfolio.com/la-biennale-di-venezia-logotype> [last access 18/03/2022].

designer and these offices, while the creative one is usually followed by the curator. Maupas and Zannier exclusively work on direct awards. The latter explains that past experiences are what connected him to private and public institutions: it often happens that the curator already collaborated with him and asks for his help. In Rome, he was assigned the graphic project of some exhibitions at the Coliseum and at the Papal Stables at the Quirinale. In Milan, Zannier worked for some displays, among which: the retrospective on Gae Aulenti⁴⁰⁹ at Triennale Design Museum; in Palazzo Reale, he curated the graphics of the 2018 exhibition “Bonalumi 1958 - 2016”⁴¹⁰ (see. Ill. 46); for Prada Foundation, he was commissioned some exhibition catalogues⁴¹¹ even though he was not in charge of the graphics inside the exhibition itself. Although he was not responsible for the communication and the graphics of the exhibition, he still had “plenty of room for action: [...] there must be a clear reference, but then I almost have total freedom inside [the catalogue]”⁴¹².

In Venice, Zannier remembers the 2003 exhibition “The Pharaos”⁴¹³ as “probably the most important exhibition I have worked on”⁴¹⁴, since it was one of the first graphics he signed with its own name. With the management of Pinault, he curated the graphic design of “Rome and the Barbarians, the Birth of a New World”⁴¹⁵, which dates to 2008.

⁴⁰⁹ “Gae Aulenti: Objects, Spaces”, Triennale Design Museum, Milan, 2013; for further information on the graphics: <https://dariozannier.myportfolio.com/gae-aulenti-gli-oggetti-gli-spazi-catalogue> [last access 10/03/2022]; information on the exhibition: <http://www.arte.it/calendario-arte/milano/mostragae-aulenti-gli-oggetti-e-gli-spazi-3555> [last access 10/03/2022].

⁴¹⁰ “Bonalumi 1958-2016”, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2018; for further information: <https://mazzoleniart.com/bonalumi-1958-2013-the-retrospective-at-palazzo-reale-milan/> [last access 18/03/2022].

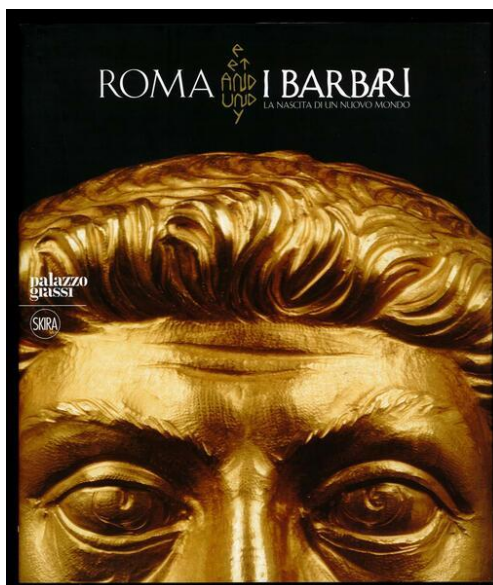
⁴¹¹ An example is the “K” book for Prada Foundation, 2020: <https://dariozannier.myportfolio.com/k-book> [last access 18/03/2022].

⁴¹² D. Zannier, *Interview*, 17 December 2021; “molto margine d’azione: [...] di sicuro deve esserci un richiamo, ma poi all’interno ho libertà quasi totale”.

⁴¹³ “The Pharaos”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2002-2003; for further information: <https://www.exibart.com/venezia/fino-al-25-v-2003-i-faraoni-venezia-palazzo-grassi/> [last access 22/03/2022].

⁴¹⁴ D. Zannier, *Interview*, 17 December 2021; “forse la mostra più importante a cui ho lavorato”.

⁴¹⁵ “Tome and the Barbarians: The Birth of a New World”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2008; for further information: <https://www.palazzograssi.it/en/exhibitions/past/rome-and-the-barbarians-the-birth-of-a-new-world/> [last access 18/03/2022].



Ill. 47 Cover of the exhibition catalogue “Rome and the Barbarians: The Birth of a New World”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2008; ph. Palazzo Grassi.

On the other hand, Maupas mainly worked in some Venetian private museums, included the same Palazzo Grassi and Cini Foundation. He also collaborated with municipal bodies like the Civic Aquarium of Milan, for the display of Omar Galliani’s works⁴¹⁶, and the Triennale Museum for the display dedicated to Dominique Perrault⁴¹⁷.

Certainly, Palazzo Grassi and Cini Foundation were two very important realities for me, but I do not deal exclusively with exhibitions. According to the current definitions I am an art director, even if for me this is an overused word which means everything and nothing; I am both a graphic designer and a photographer, for this reason I say that my activity is ‘graphics at 360 degrees’⁴¹⁸.

When Zannier and Maupas worked for Palazzo Grassi, they collaborated with Pierluigi Cerri, one of the associates of Studio Gregotti. After accepting the job, the work of the graphic designer begins immediately. “It often started with a simple sketch, from a basic idea proposed by Cerri. To him, I must recognize a clairvoyance, an

⁴¹⁶ “Omar Galliani. The drawing in water”, Civic Aquarium, Milan, 2015; for further information: <http://www.arte.it/calendario-arte/milano/mostra-omar-galliani-il-disegno-nell-acqua-18249> [last access 18/03/2022].

⁴¹⁷ “Dominique Perrault. Morceaux Choisis”, Triennale Design Museum, Milan, 2003; for further information: <https://www.domusweb.it/it/architettura/2003/01/16/dominique-perrault-10-pezzi-scelti-in-mostra-a-milano.html> [last access 18/03/2022].

⁴¹⁸ O. Maupas, *Interview*, 7 December 2021; “sicuramente, Palazzo Grassi e la Fondazione Cini sono state per me due realtà molto importanti, ma non mi occupo esclusivamente di mostre. Secondo le definizioni correnti, sono un art director, anche se per me questa è una parola abusata, vuole dire tutto e niente; io sono sia un grafico che un fotografo, per questo dico che la mia attività è ‘grafica a 360°’”.

extraordinary ability to imagine, to ‘see’ the finished work”⁴¹⁹. In Maupas’ opinion, the ability to see one step ahead is the best quality a graphic designer should have, being crucial for the success of the whole operation. He took advantage of this experience in his work when he left Studio Gregotti and launched his own business, about twenty years ago. When asked in which moment of the exhibition production he carries out his job, Olivier Maupas explains that usually a first contact is made with the museum direction, which gives his studio the task of developing the visual communication of a certain exhibition. Afterwards, the curator clarifies which artworks will be displayed and the sense of the exhibition, “the common thread on which it is woven”⁴²⁰. Budget is another relevant point, “not for the fee of the Studio but for everything related to materials or interventions that are entailed to the graphic project”⁴²¹. It is fundamental to bear in mind that the graphic project

is at the service of the artworks and it must never overwhelm them but accompany, complete, highlight them. Therefore, it is necessary to have an aesthetic sense and be effective but also, always, discreet. Almost always the rule that applies is ‘less is more’.

For example, for the Tiepolo exhibition⁴²² (see Ill. 48) at the Cini Foundation the idea was to use some drawings and engravings by the artist and enlarge them to 2x3 meters. By doing so, those works – rather small in real life – became majestic. The enlargement allowed to highlight their precision and beauty, thus enhancing the mark, the gesture, the manual skill used to make them.

In any exhibition, the explicatory panels, labels, captions are crucial guides for the visitor. Designing the visual communication is a fundamental step. However, Maupas thinks that its ‘shape’ must always be different and innovative. The job of graphic designers consists in enhancing an exhibition and leading the visitor through different tools: the choice of the font, the visual cage to follow along the path, the colors, the supports on which the texts will be read, etc.

Inside Studio Gregotti & Associates, Olivier Maupas oversaw the development of the

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.; “spesso partiva da un semplice schizzo, da un’idea base lanciata da Cerri. A lui devo riconoscere una chiarezza, una capacità straordinaria di immaginare, di ‘vedere’ il lavoro finito”.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.; “il filo conduttore sul quale viene tessuta”.

⁴²¹ Ibid.; “non per il fee dello studio ma per tutto quello che riguarda i materiali o gli interventi che scaturiscono dal progetto grafico”.

⁴²² “Tiepolo. Irony and the Comic”, Cini Foundation, Venice, 2004; for further information on the exhibition: <https://www.cini.it/en/events/tiepolo-ironia-e-comico> [last access 18/03/2022].

whole graphic projects, from the beginning until the end. Together with Cerri, they designed the image of the exhibition from every point of view, from the posters to the banners, from the catalogues to the invitations. During the preparation of the display, the curator usually provides several photographs, artworks and texts from which they can take inspiration to conceive the visual graphics. Maupas remembers the 1993 retrospective dedicated to Marcel Duchamp⁴²³ in Palazzo Grassi, curated by Pontus Hultén and designed by Gae Aulenti and Pierluigi Cerri. “I recall we had made some huge screen prints to put on the walls, a technical prowess not to be attributed to us as graphics designers but to the printer himself, since it presupposed a great know-how and the use of heavy-weight frames”⁴²⁴. As a natural consequence of the graphic project, many other professionals are involved and charged with putting into practice their abilities. On these occasions, “the success of the work depends on these external actors; therefore, they must be chosen with extreme care for the quality of their services, [...] not only in function of their economic quotations”⁴²⁵.



Ill. 48 Exhibition view “Tiepolo. Irony and the Comic”, Giorgio Cini Foundation, Venice, 2004; ph. Olivier Maupas Portfolio.

⁴²³ “Marcel Duchamp”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 1993; for further information: http://www1.adnkronos.com/Archivio/AdnAgenzia/1993/02/16/Altro/GRANDI-MOSTRE-DUCHAMP-A-PALAZZO-GRASSI-3_183100.php [last access 20/03/2022].

⁴²⁴ O. Maupas, *Interview*, 7 December 2021; “ricordo che avevamo fatto fare delle enormi serigrafie sui muri, una prodezza tecnica non tanto nostra come grafici quanto del serigrafo, perché presupponeva l’utilizzo di telai dal peso ingente e una grande abilità”.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*; “spesso da questi attori esterni dipende la riuscita del lavoro, perciò vanno scelti con estrema attenzione, per la qualità dei loro servizi, [...] non solo in funzione dei preventivi economici”.

3.13 Matteo De Fina, free-lance photographer, Venice

“My work begins when the art pieces have not arrived at the museum yet”⁴²⁶. Several months before the inauguration, the museum or the private entity contacts De Fina asking him to travel to the lending institutions and photograph the works that will later arrive. Matteo De Fina’s pictures have various uses: they can be used by restorers, scholars, researchers, for social media, as well as for exhibition catalogues. Currently, he is collaborating with both Venetian foundations and public museums, such as Palazzo Grassi, Palazzo Ducale, Correr Museum, and Gallerie dell’Accademia.

The exhibition curator often knows him personally or is aware of his know-how, so through word-of-mouth he is contacted by the institution to make professional and high-quality photographs. When the artworks are not conserved inside museums, they are kept in churches or private houses. With 35 years of experience in the field, De Fina is a reliable and trustworthy person: Venetian art institutions chose him because they know his seriousness and ability as a photographer.

De Fina was formed as an electronic technician and then started working as an assistant photographer, gaining his know-how directly on the ground. At the time, he used optical banks, some models by Hasselblad, and different analog cameras; with time, he switched to digital devices. Since then, once he is commissioned a certain job, he first exchanges with the museum director who grants him the permission to photograph the works, and with the graphic designer for the layout of the catalogue.

When asked about his experiences, De Fina recalls an episode, which happened at Palazzo Grassi, which commissioned the restoration of two frescoes that had been detached from their original walls and fixed on canvas in the ‘50s. Painted by Carlo Innocenzo Carloni, they depict some moments of Bartolomeo Colleoni’s life, one of the most important leaders of the Venetian Republic. With APICE Venice, he witnessed the handling and photographed the two canvases that would have been hung on the walls of the entrance of the Palazzo. He additionally collaborated to the creation of some catalogues, like the ones for Martial Raysse and Damien Hirst’s exhibitions at Palazzo Grassi. For a display that will be held at Ca’ D’oro, Venice, he had to fly to Brussels to photograph some of the sculptures that will be shown; he also worked in

⁴²⁶ M. De Fina, *Interview*, 31 January 2022; “il mio lavoro inizia quando le opere non sono ancora arrivate al museo”.

France and Switzerland.



Ill. 49 Martial Raysse, “Make up”, 1962, for the exhibition “Martial Raysse”, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2015; ph. Matteo De Fina.

For Gallerie dell’Accademia, Matteo De Fina photographed the drawings by Leonardo Da Vinci for the catalogue of the 2019 exhibition “Leonardo Da Vinci. The Model Man of the World”⁴²⁷, including the Vitruvian Man. “It was incredible seeing the world’s most famous drawing in person and being able to photograph it”⁴²⁸.

He photographed the Domus Grimani for the Museum of Palazzo Grimani and his pictures appeared in the book titled “Domus Grimani. La collezione di sculture classiche a palazzo dopo quattro secoli”, published and curated by Bergamo Rossi. In the same Palazzo Grimani, he also photographed “Archinto”⁴²⁹ (see Ill. 50), an exhibition presenting the most recent works by Georg Baselitz, with twelve canvases specifically created for the Sala del Portego.

For the Guggenheim collection, he is in charge of taking pictures for social media; for Palazzo Grassi, he is the official photographer for private events, not only for the

⁴²⁷ “Leonardo Da Vinci. The Model Man of the World”, Gallerie dell’Accademia, Venice, 2019; for further information: https://www.internationalwebpost.org/contents/Leonardo_da_Vinci_The_model_man_of_the_world_12548.html#.YmLqqdpBy5c [last access 20/03/2022].

⁴²⁸ M. De Fina, *Interview*, 31 January 2022; “vedere il più famoso disegno al mondo dal vivo e poterlo fotografare è stato incredibile”.

⁴²⁹ “Archinto”, Palazzo Grimani, Venice, 2021-2022; for further information: <https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/eventi-e-mostre/domus-grimani-la-sala-del-doge-georg-baselitz-archinto-museo-di-palazzo-grimani-19> [last access 19/03/2022].

catalogue's pictures: "I was there when Damien Hirst invited Red Hot Chili Peppers, Leonardo Di Caprio and Salma Hayek"⁴³⁰.



Ill. 50 Installation view of the exhibition "Archinto", Sala del Portego, Palazzo Grimani, Venice, 2021 - 2022; ph. Matteo De Fina. Courtesy Gagosian.

For Palazzo Ducale, part of MUVE Foundation, he captured the works displayed at the exhibition "VENETIA 1600. Births and rebirths"⁴³¹. Among the advantages of his work, De Fina states that he has access to restricted-access areas: he once went to the attic of the Basilica dei Frari to take some pictures of the church. De Fina also photographed, during the lockdown, all the tombs of the Doges of Venice. Carrying around a 9-meter-high stand – which weighs about 40 kilograms –, he captured the details of the tomb sculptures. The result was the publication of "I monumenti dei dogi. Sei secoli di scultura a Venezia"⁴³² by Toto Bergamo Rossi. He currently mostly follows the documentation of restoration processes. He witnessed and documented the detachment of some paintings by Paolo Veronese from the ceiling of San Sebastiano's church, as well as the restoration of the cycle of Sant'Orsola del Carpaccio, currently kept at the Gallerie dell'Accademia, in Venice.

⁴³⁰ M. De Fina, *Interview*, 31 January 2022; "c'ero quando Damien Hirst ha invitato i Red Hot Chili Peppers, Leonardo Di Caprio e Salma Hayek".

⁴³¹ "VENETIA 1600. Birth and rebirths", Palazzo Ducale, Venice, 2021-2022; for further information: <https://palazzoducale.visitmuve.it/en/mostre-en/mostre-in-corso-en/venetia-1600-births-and-rebirths/2021/04/21207/exhibition-2/> [last access 12/03/2022].

⁴³² T. Bergamo Rossi, *I monumenti dei dogi. Sei secoli di scultura a Venezia*, Venice: Marsilio, 2020.



Ill. 51 Installation view, Guggenheim Collection, Venice, 2020; © Peggy Guggenheim Collection, ph. Matteo De Fina.

“I am lucky enough to do a very nice job”⁴³³. De Fina’s current task is to follow the restorer Giulio Bono while working on the Assumption of Titian: “I think it is one of the ten most important paintings in the world”⁴³⁴. This oil on board dates to 1516-1518 and it is 690 centimeters high and 360 centimeters wide. He is documenting the work of the restorer, so De Fina himself is “face to face with the painting”⁴³⁵.

3.14 Annalisa Casagrande, education and cultural mediation area, Mart Museum, Rovereto

Annalisa Casagrande is the only internal professional that has been interviewed because of her coordinating position with external firms and freelancers. In a similar but different way with respect to the registrar, her work requires to establish connections with external personnel. Inside Mart Museum, she oversees the conception and implementation of the education and mediation-related activities for each category of visitors: adults, families, children, elders, and people with disabilities. She takes care of the didactic apparatus, the guided tours, and the laboratories. “It is necessary, in fact, to distinguish between the tools of mediation that the visitor finds

⁴³³ Ibid.; “io ho la fortuna di fare un lavoro molto bello”.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.; “penso sia uno dei dieci quadri più importanti al mondo”.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.; “a tu per tu con il dipinto”.

inside the exhibition and that can be enjoyed autonomously, and the activities, instead, that the educational department of the museum offers to the different publics”⁴³⁶.

Inside temporary exhibitions, the main tool of mediation is the didactic apparatus, composed by the explanatory texts. Casagrande explains they must have a different style of communication with respect to the ones the curator writes for the catalogue. The texts found in the exhibition rooms should be synthetic, for the visitor needs to read them quickly. Depending on the display, the educational department can produce the explanatory texts to be put on the wall as well as specific captions to accompany a selected series of artworks. The process differs for every display, based on the *modi operandi* of the curators:

I write these texts based on the essays written by them [the curators] for the exhibition catalogue, or I revise and adapt the texts they have already prepared. Therefore, my work varies according to the exhibitions and, above all, the curators who take care of them. For example, for the exhibition ‘Forgery in art. Alceo Dossena and Italian Renaissance sculpture’⁴³⁷ I produced the texts from scratch, as I always do with the curator Alessandra Tiddia. However, for the exhibition dedicated to Raphael⁴³⁸, the curator Beatrice Avanzi and I divided the work⁴³⁹.

When Mart exhibitions are proposed by external curators, Casagrande almost never has a direct relationship with them, as they deal with an internal curator. The 2016-2017 exhibition “Umberto Boccioni. Genius and Memory”⁴⁴⁰ (see Ill. 52) was an exception: it was organized in collaboration with the two Milanese institutions of Palazzo Reale and Museo del Novecento in the form of a double exhibition. The two

⁴³⁶ A. Casagrande, *Interview*, 14 December 2021; “occorre, infatti, distinguere tra gli strumenti di mediazione che il visitatore trova all’interno della mostra e che possono essere fruiti in autonomia e le attività, invece, che il dipartimento educativo del museo propone ai diversi pubblici”.

⁴³⁷ “Forgery in art. Alceo Dossena and Italian Renaissance sculpture”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2021-2022; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/forgery-in-art-alceo-dossena-and-italian-renaissance-sculpture-149667> [last access 22/03/2022].

⁴³⁸ “Picasso, de Chirico, Dali. A dialogue with Raphael”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2021; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/picasso-de-chirico-e-dali-a-dialogue-with-raphael-138803> [last access 22/03/2022].

⁴³⁹ A. Casagrande, *Interview*, 14 December 2021; “scrivo questi testi basandomi sui saggi scritti da loro per il catalogo della mostra oppure rivedo e adatto dei testi già predisposti da loro. Il mio lavoro, quindi, varia a seconda delle mostre e, soprattutto, dei curatori che se ne occupano. Per esempio, per la mostra ‘Il falso nell’arte. Alceo Dossena e la scultura del Rinascimento italiano’ ho prodotto interamente io i testi, come faccio sempre con la curatrice Alessandra Tiddia. Per la mostra dedicata a Raffaello, invece, io e la curatrice Beatrice Avanzi ci siamo suddivise il lavoro”.

⁴⁴⁰ “Umberto Boccioni. Genius and Memory”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2016-2017; for further information: <https://www.mart.tn.it/en/mostre/umberto-boccioni-genius-and-memory-138710> [last access 20/03/2022].

exhibitions had different and complementary perspectives that had been agreed through a co-planning. In that case, she directly submitted her texts to the Milanese curator, Francesca Rossi.



Ill. 52 Exhibition view of “Umberto Boccioni. Genius and memory”, Mart Museum, 2016-2017; ph. Frame of the video “Mart – Boccioni genio e memoria”⁴⁴¹.

On other occasions, Casagrande receives the texts by the external curators and suggests some adjustments to make them understandable and suitable for the wider public. “A fundamental rule is to never take for granted that an art museum visitor is necessarily an art connoisseur and for this reason the texts we use must be simple and clear”⁴⁴². Sometimes, external curators decide to insert one of their texts inside the exhibition space; for instance, in the exhibition on Isadora Duncan⁴⁴³, a text by the curator was present in the space. Since it was a unicum within the exhibition – the other sections were introduced by Casagrande’s texts – it was inserted in quotation marks along the itinerary.

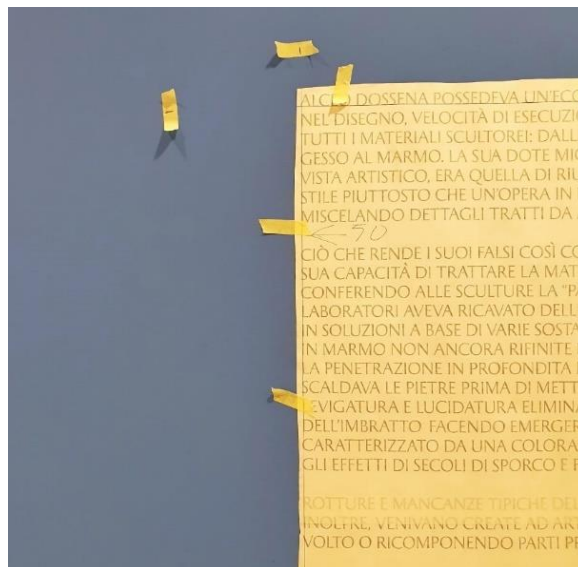
Casagrande explains that in Italy many exhibitions are still provided with explanatory texts written by the curators themselves. Though, not all of them can adapt and modify their language according to the public. The curator’s point of view and vision must be

⁴⁴¹ The video can be watched at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7f32hdn6Sk> [last access 20/03/2022].

⁴⁴² Ibid.; “una regola fondamentale è non dare mai per scontato che un visitatore di un museo d’arte sia per forza un conoscitore d’arte e per questo i testi che noi utilizziamo devono essere semplici e chiari”.

⁴⁴³ “Dancing the Revolution. Isadora Duncan and the Figurative Arts in Italy between the 19th century and avant-garde”, Mart Museum, Rovereto, 2019-2020; for further information: <https://www.modemonline.com/modem-mag/events/all/3/02-2020/event/19703-italy--rovereto-dancing-the-revolution-isadora-duncan-and-the-figurative-arts-in-italy-between-the-19th-century-and-avant-garde> [last access 20/03/2022].

clear in the exhibition project as well as in the explanatory texts. It is Casagranda's task to explain the concept and key of interpretation of the display with a suitable language. Her experience is the result of many years of work on the field, that gave her the ability to adopt a point of view that is closer to the museum's public. Casagranda is also responsible for guided tours: she writes the visit path that will be given to every internal educational operator. A few weeks before the opening of the exhibition, she presents it to the mediators and delivers the study material, consisting in the list of the artworks, catalogue essays, biographies, and in-depth materials. Shortly before the inauguration, she visits the exhibition with the group of guides, providing them a very detailed text, the so-called "track". This allows the operators to have a standard to conform to: it is a useful tool to uniform the service to the public. However, it goes without saying that each tour is different, because each operator has "its own style of communication, but 'the skeleton' of the path and the methodological choices (which artworks to focus on, how to create fluid passages from one area to another) are mine"⁴⁴⁴.



Ill. 53 Attachment of one of the explanatory texts written by Annalisa Casagranda for the exhibition "Forgery in Art. Alceo Dossena and Italian Renaissance sculpture", Mart Museum, Rovereto; ph. Eleonora Savorelli.

Timing is extremely important for the setting-up of exhibitions: often, Mart internal curators work with a very tight schedule and consequently this difficulty affects the

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.; "il suo stile di comunicazione, ma "l'ossatura" del percorso e le scelte metodologiche (su quali opere puntare, come creare dei passaggi fluidi da una zona all'altra) sono mie, in quanto responsabile di questo settore".

educational department. Casagrande has found herself planning guided tours without even being aware of the final arrangement of the artworks in display. This issue has repercussions also on the making of the audio guides, which requires a longer production process and imperatively needs to be planned in advance. Mart Museum collaborates with external firms for this latter aspect, even though Annalisa Casagrande personally selects the works on which to draw the attention and decides the cut to be given to the project, in agreement with the curators. She then meets the external professionals that produce the texts to give them precise information on the content to be highlighted. Additionally, especially over the past two years, Mart has also made in-house free audio guides that can be enjoyed through IziTRAVEL platform. For some of the latest exhibitions, the educational department created both the texts and the audio recordings. “It was an opportunity to understand the amount of work behind the production of an audio guide that is convincing, exciting, and that you listen to with pleasure”⁴⁴⁵.

3.15 Dario Pinton, self-employed museum guide, Venice

In *The Museum time-machine: putting cultures on display*⁴⁴⁶, “Eilean Hooper-Greenhill was asking herself ‘counting visitors or visitors who count?’”⁴⁴⁷. Dario Pinton is a self-employed museum guide who mainly collaborates with the Guggenheim Collection in Venice. In his opinion, those who design a museum, or an exhibition should “not only study the space, but also exchange with those giving guided tours because some artworks must be looked at more than other ones, thus they deserve a ‘liveable’ space”⁴⁴⁸. As a freelancer, since 1993 Pinton organizes private guided tours to the Biennale and since even before to the main exhibitions in Venice. He does not accompany his clients to every art display: he chooses the ones that are

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.; “è stata l’occasione per capire quanto lavoro ci sia dietro la produzione di una traccia audio convincente, appassionante e che si ascolta con piacere”.

⁴⁴⁶ R. Lumley (ed. by), *The Museum time-machine: putting cultures on display*, London: Routledge, 1988.

⁴⁴⁷ D. Pinton, *Interview*, 3 February 2022; “Eilean Hooper-Greenhill si chiedeva: Si contano i visitatori o sono i visitatori che contano?”; the book’s quote is from chapter 10 of the book *The Museum time-machine: putting cultures on display* and is taken from the title of the chapter. The Italian translation is from E. Hooper-Greenhill, *L’industria del museo. Nuovi contenuti, gestione, consumo di massa*, R. Lumley (ed. by), p. 245, Genova: Costa & Nolan, 2005; “Si contano i visitatori o sono i visitatori che contano?”.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.; “confrontarsi non solo con lo spazio ma anche con chi fa le visite guidate perché ci sono opere che devono essere guardate più di altre, e quindi meritano uno spazio ‘vivibile’”.

worthy by applying a personal critical judgement.

My clients are mostly collectors of contemporary art, in any case people really passionate about art. They are no more special than others, they just have combined their passion (and their financial means) with the willingness to learn without expecting to see all the works of visual art⁴⁴⁹.

In 1996 Pinton started working at the Guggenheim Collection. The then director appointed him responsible for the program Early Opening, now renamed First Look⁴⁵⁰. This last has currently been suspended because of the pandemic, but the educational department hopes to reactivate it as soon as possible. Pinton's main task is to train the future young guides to prepare them to autonomously conduct tours. His work involved the selection of university students, mostly coming from Ca' Foscari, that on a voluntary basis would have been available to know more about art and how to communicate it. The opportunity consisted in a three-months free formation course that would also include group visits to contemporary art exhibitions held in Venice, from the Biennale to Gallerie dell'Accademia. The other part of Pinton's job inside Peggy Guggenheim Collection consists in carrying out organizational secretarial duties such as "the collection of reservations for visits, the scheduling of guided tours and at the same time I was always present and available to replace those who could not do the guided tours due to unforeseen commitments"⁴⁵¹. Students were volunteers, but Dario Pinton offered them the opportunity to integrate their studies, have a direct experience with the works of art and the people looking at them.

When Pinton started working for the Guggenheim Collection, a didactic section did not exist yet. Over the years, the needs led to the foundation of the department. As an evolution of First Look program, in 2005, from an idea of his, the service of guided tours of the Biennale was born with the same system consisting in training, and seminar meetings. Pinton asserts that the presence of an educational department and a didactic section is crucial in museum structures; though, in many Italian universities

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.; "i miei clienti sono per la maggior parte collezionisti di arte contemporanea, in ogni caso persone veramente appassionate d'arte. Non sono più speciali di altri, hanno solo unito alla loro passione (e alla loro disponibilità economica) la volontà di comprendere senza pretendere di esaurire le opere d'arte visiva".

⁴⁵⁰ For further information on the program: <https://www.guggenheim-venice.it/en/learn/schools/first-look/> [last access 21/03/2022].

⁴⁵¹ D. Pinton, *Interview*, 3 February 2022; "raccolta delle prenotazioni per le visite, distribuzione delle visite guidate e contemporaneamente sempre presente e disponibile a sostituire chi non poteva fare la visita guidata per impegni imprevisti".

there is not a module about this, and students can know more only through field experiences.

In his opinion, culture should not be considered a commodity on par with others. For this reason, combining forces and resources to build an art exhibition, both coming from the inside and the outside of the institution, can be the key to propose a bright cultural product and service. Art institutions should and must be open to external collaborations, which could give the internal team the opportunity to have a different and innovative point of view.



Ill. 54 A student of the program First Look, Guggenheim Collection, Venice; ph. Guggenheim website.

Conclusion

Museums have assumed a completely new position with respect to the past, as multi-purpose centers characterized by fluidity and porosity. They represent and centralise various functions of the city within themselves, thus their identity is in constant evolution. In being defined as crossroads pursuing utilitarian and non-utilitarian objectives, they actively participate in globalization, especially through temporary exhibitions and art loans.

The expansion and articulation of proposals that the museum offers to its public determined an increasing need for specialization in the cultural sector. The above mentioned sixteen interviews with museum operators contribute to show the changes undergone by museums and by every occupation. Moreover, they strive to make visible the ones who cannot be seen by the audience visiting a temporary exhibition. Having a different consolidated experience background and covering different positions in the organization of temporary exhibitions, fifteen of them are freelancers or work for private firms. Their interventions demonstrate how their responsibilities often intertwine and their experiences, if shared with the other personnel, actively contribute to achieving the ultimate goal.

The number of external collaborators has risen since through outsourcing museums can seek help from the outside, creating a fertile environment for both Knowledge Sharing and Transfer. This process can lead to a unique competitive advantage from which both the institution and the staff can benefit. External know-how is combined with internal forces with the aim of creating an ephemeral product that, because of its nature, is *hic et nunc* and cannot be reproduced in the exact same way in other spaces. Travelling exhibitions share the same scientific-curatorial project, the list of the artworks, possibly a similar layout, though the “container” changes every time and, with it, the people working for the creation of the final product. The beauty of exhibitions lies in their temporariness: for a certain amount of time, people collaborate to create a unique display.

The figure-liaison between inside and outside the museum is the registrar. Registrars coordinate the external professionals and the whole exhibition system, giving light to a fruitful encounter among all the individuals participating in the construction of the

display. As argued, the registrar is “responsible for the holding of what we could call the procedural chain, making sure that there are no weak links, that is the moment of risk for the safety, protection and conservation of the works”⁴⁵². With regards to the relevance of the contribution provided by external personnel along this chain, former registrar Clarenza Catullo states: “this proximity with external professionals was very important for my career as a major skill for a registrar is to know how to do everything but doing nothing but what is necessary”⁴⁵³. The key aspect of this profession resides in its multi-disciplinarity. The heterogeneity of their tasks ranges from safeguard of artworks and their records to legal-administrative-logistics aspects related to loans. Thus, registrars must be skillful problem-solvers and risk-managers. They must possess a wide knowledge concerning each step of the production process, i.e., loan agreement, transport, insurance, conservation and restoration, condition reporting, security, handling, etc. Despite the different variations of the job profile, the first being the division between the Anglo-American model and the European one, it is argued that the registrar is considered the pivot around which the organization of art exhibitions rotates and should be a permanent part of the staff of every public and private art institution. In Italy, these figures have gained recognition in recent years, though has yet to reach their full potential, since they are not legally acknowledged yet. In their all-encompassing role, they are the internal profiles interacting the most with the outside.

The aim of this thesis is to give voice to all those that can be considered, to a certain extent, phantom limbs of the national art system, that is registrars and the external personnel. Operating first of all with due regard for the safety, protection and conservation of the artworks, these professionals are crucial and irreplaceable inside the “museum family”⁴⁵⁴.

Human resources represent one of the layers in which the private sphere has made its

⁴⁵² M. Serio, *Introduzione*, in *Registrar di opere d'arte. Atti della terza conferenza europea. Approfondimenti sul ruolo e le competenze dei registrar in Europa*, F. Bonino, K. Spurrell (curated by), Milano: Silvana editoriale - Registrarte, 2004; “al registrar compete in particolare il controllo della tenuta di quella che potremmo chiamare la catena procedurale, evitando che vi siano anelli deboli, ossia momenti di rischio per la sicurezza, la tutela, la conservazione delle opere”. The translation is from Professione Registrar, in “Registrarte”, <http://www.registrarte.org/p/index.php?page=professione-registrar> [last access 2/02/2022].

⁴⁵³ C. Catullo, *Interview*, 6 April 2022.

⁴⁵⁴ M. Case, *Registrars on Record. Essays on Museum Collections Management*. Washington D.C.: Registrars Committee of the American Association of Museums, 1988, p. 25.

way inside museums. The other two, briefly analyzed in the first chapter, are the broad management of the museum itself – including its legal status and financial support – and the privatization of non-mandated activities, that is all the services that are complementary to the museum’s mission. Externalization proved to be a winning tool in the museum system, often relieving art institutions of public constraints.

Museums of the present are cultural crossroads resulting in a plurality of proposals. In particular, temporary art exhibitions are “the material outcome”⁴⁵⁵ of experimentation, scientific research, curatorial studies, technical skills, legal rules, art loans, protection, and conservation of the artworks. Exchange between private and public institutions, between private and public workers, is necessary to affirm the power of museums, as dynamic meeting points and communication vehicles. These collective architectures and spaces have internalized some roles of the city: the urban space has entered the museum one, becoming permeable to life.

Kurt Forster⁴⁵⁶ – architectural historian and professor at the Yale School of Architecture – explains that the contemporary museum has four possible manifestations: it is a sanctuary, a storage, a point of sale, a stage. This division leads to four different actions: veneration, study, purchase, performance⁴⁵⁷. What is crucial to understand is the importance of every individual contributing to keeping the museum alive, in all its functions and alternative fields of action. Hopefully, this aspect and the phenomenon of outsourcing will be more and more deepened in the future, both at the national and international level, so that a comparative study might be carried out. Museums are the new modern monuments, though they could not be such without the work of human resources and external specialists, the true protagonists of this thesis.

⁴⁵⁵ Y. Herreman, *Display, Exhibits and Exhibitions*, in *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*, ICOM, Paris: ICOM, 2004, pp. 91-103, here p. 95.

⁴⁵⁶ K. W. Forster, *Tempio? Emporio? Teatro? Riflessioni su due decenni di museografia americana*, in “Zodiac”, 6, 1991, pp. 30-74; the text is also cited in *Musei, architetture 1990-2000*, L. Basso Peressut, Milano: Federico Motta, 1999.

⁴⁵⁷ L. Basso Peressut, *Musei, architetture 1990-2000*, Milano: Federico Motta, 1999.

Appendix

Interview to Raffaele Cipolletta, Architect and Exhibition Designer, Mario Bellini Architects, Milan; 1 February 2022

· Cosa significa essere l'architetto di una mostra temporanea in un museo?

Si è in qualche modo il regista del processo. Le nostre competenze devono governare tutte le figure coinvolte e gestire le problematiche che ne derivano. Da quando parte l'allestimento della mostra, i curatori stabiliscono l'organizzazione delle opere. Ci sono spesso delle richieste specifiche legate alle sequenze, alle relazioni, alle posizioni delle opere. C'è anche un discorso di illuminazione, da artificiale a naturale a seconda dei casi. Ho in mente quest'ultima mostra che abbiamo organizzato a Palazzo Reale sul Realismo Magico: ci sono tutte le esigenze del luogo che ospita la mostra: ci sono delle regole da rispettare. Per questa mostra, abbiamo fatto una serie di incontri tecnici perché sono presenti delle telecamere fisse che garantiscono la sorveglianza, e dal momento che abbiamo progettato delle pareti che hanno frazionato le grandi sale, abbiamo dovuto considerare una serie di questioni legate al tema della videosorveglianza e della sicurezza. I muri non potevano ostruire la visuale. Un altro discorso è quello impiantistico e della climatizzazione: il clima all'interno delle mostre è fondamentale. A meno che non ci siano opere che hanno il loro clima-box e un loro ambiente protetto, altrimenti il clima per le opere e per le persone è importantissimo e va monitorato. In ogni caso, gli allestimenti vanno pensati per le persone del mestiere ma anche per le persone che non conoscono a fondo l'arte: questo è un aspetto fondamentale.

· In che momento la sua figura entra in campo nell'organizzazione di una mostra?

Dipende. In una mostra che prevedeva un allestimento all'interno del padiglione dell'arte islamica al Louvre abbiamo progettato l'edificio e anche l'allestimento. Il cantiere e l'intervento sono durati sette anni. Anche a Melbourne, alla National Gallery, abbiamo riqualificato le gallerie e in contemporanea il pensiero era la gestione dell'allestimento: l'edificio è stato progettato e rivisto in funzione dell'allestimento futuro. È vero che, spesso, più nelle mostre temporanee, gli spazi devono essere flessibili, permettere il massimo della libertà nell'organizzare mostre e modulare lo

spazio. In altri casi, ci sono spazi dedicati a delle opere precise e quindi viene cucito il “vestito” su quelle opere. Per il museo delle arti islamiche, il progetto è nato perché c’era un’opera alta 12 metri che raffigurava la bozza di un mosaico. Quindi, l’edificio che abbiamo creato, che aveva dei vincoli con la sovrintendenza del Louvre, aveva un punto in cui si alzava 12 metri perché è stato pensato per mettere quell’opera proprio in quel punto, in relazione a una serie di accorgimenti, perché l’opera doveva scorgersi dall’inizio del percorso.

Tornando alla mostra sul Realismo Magico, abbiamo iniziato i lavori a ottobre 2021 e dalla primavera 2021 abbiamo cominciato a fare una serie di incontri. Si fanno considerazioni sulla mostra e i prestiti, si fanno i sopralluoghi. I curatori preparano la mostra con uno schema prestabilito di relazioni tra le opere selezionate; però capita che le misure che i prestatori danno sono solo quelle relative all’opera, senza contare il supporto in cui sono conservate. Quindi uno dei grossi problemi, che capita spesso, è che le opere che arrivano gli ultimi giorni abbiano una serie di problematiche impreviste. Per esempio, il prestatore arriva qualche giorno prima dell’inaugurazione con l’opera e vuole assistere alla sua installazione, per assicurarsi che non ci siano lavori in corso attorno che potrebbero compromettere la sicurezza dell’opera. Capitano anche sorprese riguardanti le dimensioni delle opere che arrivano gli ultimi giorni.

Mi è capitato a Stupinigi, in una mostra organizzata da Palazzo Grassi, con la mostra sui modelli del Barocco insieme a Clarenza. C’era un quadro molto grande, pensato per uno spazio specifico di una sala. Avevamo la misura del quadro ma non della cornice, quindi capita che l’opera non passi dalle porte. A volte capita anche che il courier voglia che l’opera arrivi imballata nella sala e quindi deve entrare con la cassa, che è molto più grande dell’opera.

Sarebbe meglio conoscere prima queste informazioni senza che si trasformino in imprevisti in modo da poter pianificare soluzioni efficaci.

Un altro aspetto legato a Palazzo Grassi è capitato con la mostra sui modelli del Rinascimento: il curatore aveva ipotizzato di mettere in mostra una stampa che rappresentava un’architettura di un modello ligneo. Doveva essere una stampa da appendere al muro o da porre in una teca, con un’illuminazione specifica che deve essere sotto i 50 lux. Peccato che nel 1700 questa stampa è stata rilegata all’interno di un libro e quindi per esporla dovevamo esporre il libro. La stampa si sarebbe esposta

in una cornice o una teca sulla parete, mentre il libro andava esposto su un piano. Il problema è che non poteva stare su un piano orizzontale perché il peso stesso delle pagine andava a rompere la rilegatura, quindi, andava posizionato a 20 gradi in maniera che, con degli appositi supporti, le pagine non cedessero. Questo è un esempio eclatante, ma spesso è quello che succede.

Spesso le opere, arrivando dall'estero e da diversi enti, non si ha modo di fare un sopralluogo, anche a causa dei costi. Tutte le problematiche andrebbero indagate prima ma spesso non c'è un supporto economico che lo permette. Per mostre importanti questo si fa, per altre ci si fida delle informazioni che si hanno e dei documenti storici.

· Oltre al curatore, lei collabora con la manovalanza?

Sì, questo dipende dal tipo di allestimento: se non si deve intervenire sulle pareti di appensione ed è necessario solo appendere le opere “leggere” può essere che non sia necessario; ma quando l'allestimento diventa articolato, allora bisogna ragionare con tutte le persone coinvolte. Per la mostra di Giotto abbiamo usato un rivestimento in lamiera; quindi, in quel caso abbiamo ragionato con il fabbro che deve poter fare delle lavorazioni nell'ambiente stesso dell'allestimento, perché non tutto può essere eseguito in officina, chiaramente le scelte sono state condivise con i curatori e il museo. Capita in alcuni casi che bisogna esporre opere pesanti (sculture, pezzi di architettura) e quindi bisogna creare dei supporti sicuri per le opere e per i visitatori. Questo richiede sopralluoghi e verifiche sugli oggetti da esporre perché strutture complesse non possono essere improvvisate in loco ma vanno pensate e condivise con tutte le persone coinvolte (prestatore, curatore, museo ecc.) Per esempio, sempre nella Mostra sui modelli del Barocco a Stupinigi i curatori avevano deciso di mettere in mostra un capitello della Cappella di Guarino Guarini appena distrutta dall'incendio che aveva coinvolto la Sacra Sindone. Avevo effettuato un sopralluogo alla Cappella con i vigili del fuoco (l'area era sotto sequestro per gli accertamenti) per recuperare un capitello originale della Cappella. Tra le macerie, abbiamo recuperato un marmo che è stato sottoposto a varie ripuliture e alla verifica delle condizioni (molti elementi architettonici erano cotti dalle alte temperature dell'incendio). È stato studiato un supporto sagomato in ferro per sostenerlo in mostra a 2,5 metri d'altezza (il pezzo pesava circa 30 chilogrammi). In questo caso come in altri quando si interviene con opere pesanti ed invadenti è importante che il personale sia qualificato e che sappia

come muoversi e maneggiare gli attrezzi; non devono fare polvere né vibrazioni, devono usare solo materiali idonei per il contatto con certe opere d'arte, evitare i materiali con acidità diverse che possono compromettere le opere. Mi ricordo del museo a Melbourne e l'ampliamento era avvenuto all'interno del parcheggio, che aveva un'ampia area nel basamento interrato. Peccato che in questo parcheggio in cemento armato, la pavimentazione era fatta in catrame di 5 cm; sono state fatte delle analisi e i curatori hanno trovato dei rilasci di petrolio che avrebbero danneggiato le opere a olio. Sono stati eseguiti una serie di trattamenti per asportare il catrame e usare prodotti specifici per impermeabilizzare la zona.

Collaboro ovviamente anche con il registrar. Approcciando il nostro lavoro dalla creazione del progetto alla parte impiantistica e illuminotecnica e di condizionamento, perché in certe situazioni sono richieste delle condizioni termo-igrometriche particolari. Con Clarenza e con chi come lei segue questa parte di sviluppo del progetto, è molto frequente la collaborazione.

L'architetto è il referente: per la messa in scena di una mostra, tutti i dettagli sono importanti e tutto quello che passa attraverso i personaggi coinvolti deve essere gestito dal progettista dell'allestimento, che ne deve essere sempre a conoscenza. Dipende sempre dalle situazioni: a volte i curatori vogliono gestire in prima persona certe cose, altre volte dipende dal rapporto di fiducia che si crea tra le parti.

· Lei è sempre sul luogo?

Così come lavoriamo noi, sì. Dipende sempre dalla serietà professionale, il tipo di allestimento e la parcella professionale riconosciuta. Per mostre più semplici, può succedere, ma non per gli allestimenti. Per esempio, abbiamo fatto delle mostre che hanno girato, come "I Tesori di San Marco": l'allestimento è andato fino in America. A seconda dei casi, non tutti i pezzi girano, ma comunque si cerca di mantenere lo spirito dell'allestimento originario. In quel caso, è capitato che i singoli musei o associazioni che organizzavano, prendessero riferimento dalla prima mostra organizzata per adattare le opere al loro ambiente e alle loro sale. La mostra viene venduta e con essa l'allestimento.

Per gli allestimenti, c'è un discorso sia visivo, perché spesso i quadri scuri se appesi su una parete bianca, l'occhio crea delle situazioni dove i colori o la luminosità dell'opera non emerge. Delle opere scure come quelle del Caravaggio muoiono se

messe su una parete bianca e illuminate male. Devono avere una parete che faccia spiccare i colori: per il Realismo Magico abbiamo scelto un colore caffè bruciato. Il colore nasce da una scelta culturale, che è legata in questo caso a dei colori già presenti nelle opere, in modo che il focus vada sull'opera. Dipende molto anche dalle cornici: sono aspetti che vanno analizzati e valutati. Per il Realismo Magico abbiamo scelto quella colorazione perché in quel modo il discorso cromatico "cantava". È chiaro che tinteggiare e ritinteggiare a ogni mostra ha dei costi; quindi, può accadere che le pareti rimangano bianche per praticità/economicità del budget, ma questa non è spesso una scelta felice per la lettura di certe opere.

Per esempio, per il Realismo Magico sono arrivate tre opere che andavano accostate. Le tre opere arrivavano da collezioni diverse e una aveva, tra passe-partout e cornice bianche, 40 cm in più delle altre e l'opera era 50x50: il bianco sviscava l'opera. Su un muro tinteggiato di marrone spiccava solo il passe-partout: in quel caso abbiamo sagomato la luce posizionandola solo sull'opera – perché non ci è stato permesso di cambiare cornice e passe-partout. Ovviamente è visibile ma il colpo di luce è esclusivamente sull'opera.

Succede anche di dare dei colpi di luce su dei dettagli, o su un volto, per enfatizzare un certo aspetto dell'opera che il curatore vuole evidenziare o raccontare.

- Progettate le luci o collaborate con l'illuminotecnico?

Collaboriamo con loro. Il problema delle luci che ci interessa controllare è che non devono abbagliare, devi avere sempre un effetto dark light, non devi vedere da dove arriva la luce. Le sorgenti luminose non devono essere invadenti e disturbare il racconto della mostra. Altri problemi che riguardano le luci sono legati alle teche, per il riflesso, agli olii, e ai vetri protettivi che riflettono. A volte succede che vengono messe delle opere "riflettenti" (oli o vetri protettivi) di fronte: mentre ne guardi uno, vedi l'altro riflesso e si crea un effetto specchio. Per il progetto della luce, queste sono tutti aspetti da coordinare. L'illuminotecnico di solito arriva una volta che sono impostate le opere anche perché le posizioni dei binari elettrificati e le posizioni dei punti luce sono obbligate dopodiché si sceglie il tipo di ottiche; spesso si utilizzano luci con un indice di resa cromatica molto elevato per evidenziare al meglio la cromaticità dell'opera, ma non sempre noi e l'illuminotecnico abbiamo a disposizione corpi illuminanti di ultima generazione e di alta qualità. Per le posizioni delle lampade,

dipende dalle posizioni delle barre elettrificate, in modo tale che il colpo di luce che ricevono rimandi un riflesso che non finisce nell'occhio. È preferibile una luce molto verticale dall'alto (30/35°) per non avere il ritorno negli occhi della luce riflessa sull'oggetto illuminato e/o l'ombra dell'osservatore riportata sull'opera. Se però la cornice è importante, si rischia di avere la sua ombra sul quadro. Come sempre ogni situazione va studiata e risolta in relazione alle opportunità e disponibilità delle attrezzature illuminotecniche e agli spazi espositivi. Quando sei in un allestimento con 80/90 opere si cerca di mediare con quello che si ha a disposizione e con l'effetto generale della mostra, se ci sono pezzi unici/capolavori si costruisce una visione più personalizzata per dare il giusto risalto dell'opera

· Lavora su gara d'appalto o anche affidamenti diretti? In Italia o anche all'estero?

Per gli allestimenti lavoro su incarico diretto. Lavorando con lo Studio Bellini, ci chiamano perché sanno come lavoriamo e vogliono il nostro contributo. Per il Louvre e la National Gallery di Melbourne, c'era una gara a cui abbiamo partecipato e vinto il progetto per la realizzazione dello spazio o dell'edificio e dell'allestimento. Per le gare, il problema tipico italiano è che vengono fatte al ribasso con pagamenti a lunghissimo termine, ci è stato proposto anche 60 giorni dopo la chiusura della mostra, ma capite bene che per una mostra che dura mesi e il nostro lavoro inizia molto prima, rischiamo di essere pagati anche un anno dopo(!). Se si viene pagati poco poi si cerca di ottimizzare il lavoro con il rischio di compromettere il risultato. Spendere poco nel progettare una mostra, come in tutti i lavori, spesso non paga sul risultato finale e rischia di costare di più nel complesso dell'intervento. Per allestimenti importanti c'è il budget e la volontà di creare qualcosa di fatto bene. Per le gare, vince chi fa il prezzo più basso e non chi lavora meglio. I professionisti e le maestranze vanno scelti per la qualità del lavoro e non per quanto poco chiedono di essere pagati.

Interview to Antonella Cimarolli Marshal Chief of Security at Mart Museum, 2005-2019, Rovereto; 9 December 2021

· Che cosa significa essere responsabile della sicurezza all'interno di un museo? Fondamentale, avere una conoscenza globale e approfondita della struttura museale è la base di un buon responsabile della sicurezza ed aiuta a gestire al meglio tutte le attività. Questo è importante dal punto di vista architettonico, quindi, spazi interni, esterni, perimetrali, punti deboli e sensibili a livello di sicurezza strutturale del museo, vie di fuga, etc. e permette di sapersi muovere per far fronte ad eventuali urgenze o emergenze che si potrebbero verificare.

L'organizzazione interna del museo è un altro aspetto che interessa molto il responsabile della sicurezza, poiché è indispensabile avere una conoscenza diretta dei vari responsabili interni, in quanto con essi ci si deve coordinare e relazionare per l'espletamento dei vari eventi, considerando che in un museo non si fanno solo mostre ma anche eventi esterni, cene di gala, manifestazioni, catering, presentazioni di libri e quant'altro. Gli allestimenti sono la parte più viva del museo, assieme alle mostre che sono il passo successivo.

Ultima cosa, poiché mi piaceva l'idea di formare una triade di mansioni, è coordinare il Corpo di Vigilanza che deve poi prestare servizio all'interno del museo stesso. Nella fattispecie, nel museo Mart, c'era un Corpo di Vigilanza adibito e specializzato su quella struttura museale, il quale operava esclusivamente all'interno dello stesso. Questo era fondamentale poiché anche il personale adibito alla vigilanza, doveva avere delle conoscenze abbastanza approfondite del museo e per questo, si manteneva sempre lo stesso personale in servizio.

Il responsabile della sicurezza di un Museo si muove fondamentalmente all'interno di questa triade che le ho elencato, ma si occupa anche di molto altro, come per esempio l'assetto della videosorveglianza in fase di allestimento mostre, del controllo e del funzionamento di tutti gli impianti relativi alle videosorveglianze, degli impianti antincendio, degli impianti antintrusione, della parte amministrativa interna della Control Room, della formazione continua e del controllo qualità del personale interno e nel mio caso specifico, della gestione di tutta la parte riguardante la Certificazione Aziendale, essendo responsabile della produzione di tutta la modulistica certificata

aziendale e soprattutto dei mansionari operativi di servizio.

· Lei faceva parte dell'organico all'interno del Mart o veniva chiamata di volta in volta in base ai vari eventi?

Il museo ha alle dipendenze, tramite appalto, come tutti i Musei in Italia, un Istituto di Vigilanza esterno che opera come sicurezza all'interno del Museo. Io ero la responsabile operativa dell'Istituto di Vigilanza che svolgeva servizio presso il Mart e quindi ero sempre presente in servizio, poiché come gran parte dei musei italiani, il Mart ha un Corpo di Vigilanza che opera h24, sette giorni su sette e 365 giorni all'anno. La mia principale mansione era quella di governare e coordinare sul posto il personale in servizio, quale responsabile del servizio, del personale e principalmente della Control Room. Mi confrontavo e rapportavo con i vari responsabili interni, per lo svolgimento di altre mansioni, poiché lavorare in un museo come il Mart, significa avere degli aggiornamenti quasi quotidiani inerenti le attività che vengono svolte all'interno della struttura e quindi diventa fondamentale e basilare, coordinarsi con il personale interno, per il regolare svolgimento di tale attività. Questo comporta, che il responsabile della sicurezza del Corpo di Vigilanza, sia sempre presente e operativo, all'interno del Museo.

Attualmente, per una questione relativa al nuovo appalto, all'interno del Mart, svolge servizio un altro Istituto di Vigilanza. Ogni quattro anni le gare d'appalto si rinnovano e nel caso si cambi Istituto, come da Legge, il personale viene ceduto con l'appalto stesso e quindi viene licenziato dal vecchio Istituto di Vigilanza, per poi subentrare al nuovo, quindi il personale rimane in loco, ma cambia datore di lavoro. Questo meccanismo avviene anche per il personale che aderisce alle cooperative nelle funzioni di addetti alla didattica, segreteria e servizi vari; se cambia la cooperativa in base alla gara d'appalto, il personale rimane e cambia la società che li gestisce.

Noi siamo sempre rimasti legati allo stesso istituto perché si aggiudicava sempre la gara d'appalto, poiché è stato il primo istituto a entrare al Mart nel 2002, quando il museo ha aperto al pubblico nella nuova sede. Per la vigilanza non ci sono limiti di tempo per la durata dell'appalto, deve sempre e comunque riuscire ad aggiudicarsi l'appalto per poter proseguire con il servizio. Il museo Mart, in particolare, è per 2/3 di proprietà della Provincia Autonoma di Trento e 1/3 di proprietà del Comune di Rovereto e quindi la gara d'appalto, viene gestita dalla Provincia stessa e si divide in

due sezioni: una sezione tecnica, a cui si attribuiscono punteggi in base a determinati requisiti che ha il Corpo di Vigilanza e l'altra riferita al ribasso per l'aspetto economico. In base al coefficiente che esce, viene aggiudicato l'appalto: questo per le vigilanze.

Io ho lasciato l'Italia nel 2021 e mi sono congedata dal Corpo delle Guardie Giurate, nella fattispecie dell'istituto che operava al Mart, poiché ho preferito proseguire su altri fronti. Ho lavorato al Mart dal 2005 al 2019 e ricordo con molta nostalgia i tempi e la Direzione della D.ssa Belli, poiché sono stati anni gloriosi, considerando che il Mart è stato creato e fondato da lei e con lei ci sono state le mostre più belle in assoluto, sia a livello nazionale che internazionale, grazie agli scambi da lei trattati, specialmente con gli Stati Uniti. Ogni Direzione porta un imprinting personale all'interno del Museo, quindi bisogna adattarsi e uniformarsi sempre a nuove direttive e a nuovi stili.

Il Mart si articola su altre due sedi, la Galleria Civica di Trento e il Museo Depero a Rovereto; il Corpo di Vigilanza fisso che io gestivo, presiedeva solo il museo Mart e gli altri musei solo da remoto, se non in casi particolari.

- Come funziona l'organizzazione di una scorta?

Principalmente, il Museo si rivolge all'Istituto di Vigilanza che opera già in loco, quindi contestualmente, mi occupavo anche di organizzare le scorte con la D.ssa Catullo e molte le ho svolte personalmente.

- Si occupa di sicurezza per il pubblico o anche sicurezza in cantiere nel momento della costruzione della mostra?

La Vigilanza all'interno del Museo opera per la sicurezza globale. Nel 2006 è arrivata la D.ssa Catullo in Museo e all'epoca non esisteva una figura specifica che si occupasse di allestimenti/disallestimenti a livello di sicurezza e che si confrontasse con la Registrar, quindi, abbiamo unito le forze e studiato insieme una figura, interpretata dalla sottoscritta per moltissimi anni, la quale svolgeva sicurezza all'interno dei cantieri, con determinate mansioni specifiche. Antecedentemente al 2006, il Museo si limitava a chiedere la presenza di una Guardia Giurata in sala nel momento dell'allestimento, ma senza specifica mansione, se non quella di garantire la sicurezza generale degli spazi e verificare gli accessi, se accreditati o meno, all'interno degli spazi in cantiere.

- In che modo collabora con il registrar per una mostra?

Fino al 2006, la figura del Registrar non era riconosciuta all'interno del Museo e non c'era nessun interfaccio tra la figura del responsabile della sicurezza e del registrar. La D.ssa Catullo proveniva da una realtà museale ben più nota e importante rispetto a quelle che abbiamo noi in Trentino, considerando inoltre che il Trentino non è mai stata terra di cultura artistica, come potrebbe essere Venezia, Firenze, Roma, Napoli o Milano. Il Trentino, nella fattispecie, Provincia Autonoma di Trento e Comune di Rovereto, ha voluto fortemente istituire il Mart, un museo di arte moderna e contemporanea, dapprima nella sede storica di Palazzo delle Albere a Trento e successivamente con la sede nuova di Rovereto, progettata dall'architetto Botta, molto scenografica specialmente nella parte esterna della piazza, con la cupola trasparente che la ricopre, ma il quale a mio avviso, in riferimento a quanto detto sopra, rimane una cattedrale in mezzo al deserto, considerando che se fosse stato creato in una delle città citate pocanzi, avrebbe sicuramente avuto più interazione con altri musei, più visibilità e sicuramente sarebbe stato nettamente molto più visitato. In realtà, il Mart, come lo testimoniano statistiche stilate nel corso degli anni, fa numeri quando ci sono mostre sull'impressionismo. Fare mostre di nicchia tipo Baruchello, Alfano, solo per citarne un paio, ma ce ne sarebbero molte di più, attira un pubblico limitato e non un pubblico che potrebbe fruire dell'arte in maniera globale e non specifica. Fondare il Mart per la D.ssa Belli, è stata una grande scommessa e fino alla fine della sua Direzione è stato qualcosa di veramente coinvolgente ed esplosivo, poiché sono state trattate delle mostre molto importanti ed ha lasciato una grande eredità culturale, la quale ha contribuito in parte, a portare avanti anche la D.ssa Collu, avendo il coraggio di fare una mostra sul 400 su Antonello da Messina.

Il discorso della figura creata con la D.ssa Catullo, non era solo di avere una guardia all'interno degli allestimenti che vigilasse a livello globale sulla sicurezza, ma bensì una figura operativa attiva, che verificasse nello specifico, una serie di procedure. Il lavoro preliminare di questa figura, parte ancora dal trasporto delle opere d'arte: quando le opere arrivano in Museo, la Registrar riceve una serie di informazioni relative ai mezzi che vengono usati per il trasporto, all'azienda che si occuperà del trasporto stesso e dei nominativi dello staff. Il Corpo di Vigilanza deve verificare, all'atto dell'arrivo dei trasportatori, che queste informazioni coincidano e siano

correte. Per la parte amministrativa, qui era stata studiata da me un'apposita modulistica da compilare, contenente tutte queste informazioni, in modo tale da creare una tracciabilità.

La parte più importante di questa figura avviene all'interno del vero e proprio cantiere dell'allestimento o del disallestimento: per gli allestimenti, seguivo in prima persona l'apertura e la chiusura delle casse, presenziavo all'apertura per verificare che all'interno della cassa effettivamente vi fosse l'opera e alla chiusura per sigillare con timbro e firma l'avvenuta chiusura, a testimonianza che nella cassa fosse presente effettivamente l'opera. Questo certificava, per l'intero tragitto e fino all'arrivo, che durante il trasporto non vi fossero manomissioni da parte di terzi. Durante il cantiere una cosa molto importante è la dislocazione delle opere; è un altro momento pericoloso e sensibile degli allestimenti, poiché potrebbero esserci dei danni, furti, rotture e quindi io vigilavo anche sulla manipolazione delle opere fino all'accrochage, poiché si ha sempre a che fare con persone diverse e non sempre avvezze, a lavori in ambito museale. Un altro compito che veniva svolto era l'inventario giornaliero; in apertura e chiusura del cantiere, si procedeva con l'inventario di tutte le opere in cassa, fuori cassa, sui carrelli a disposizione dei restauratori, in bacheca, a piè di parete oppure già allestite o a parete.

È importante e interessante capire cosa comporta organizzare una mostra, come si svolge un cantiere, quante persone ci lavorano e cosa significhi allestire una mostra; mi capita spesso di narrare a qualche conoscente tutto ciò e quando mi soffermo così a lungo a raccontare e spiegare i particolari, le persone stupite, esclamano “non pensavo ci fosse tutto questo lavoro dietro all'organizzazione di una mostra”. Personalmente, amavo la parte degli allestimenti, poiché mi trasmetteva emozioni profonde e ben diverse rispetto alla mostra stessa. Avevo la possibilità di poter fruire della visione di un quadro in anteprima, di poterlo vedere in tutta la sua bellezza e in tutte le sue sfaccettature; sovente mi soffermavo a lungo ad ammirare la parte posteriore delle opere, poiché in quel punto, si traccia la vita dell'opera stessa.

Tutte le persone che accedevano al cantiere, dall'operaio, al trasportatore, al restauratore, al personale del museo, dovevano essere state tutte precedentemente identificate e accreditate. Un altro mio lavoro in qualità di responsabile della Control Room era quello di preparare i pass nominativi per gli accompagnatori e una volta

giunti in Museo, accreditarli e accompagnarli in sala, in base al programma della D.ssa Catullo.

Come ultimo punto, ma non per importanza: la bonifica continua degli spazi; la guardia non sosta mai in un punto preciso, ma deve avere sempre il controllo in toto, di tutto lo spazio espositivo in allestimento.

- Quale è stata la scorta più complicata che si ricorda?

La scorta più pericolosa e importante è stata in occasione di una mostra itinerante che doveva arrivare al Mart dal museo Cantini di Marsiglia. C'era stato un furto di opere all'interno del cantiere, la sera prima della partenza per Rovereto; l'intento era quello di rubare tre opere di Klimt, fortunatamente tradotto nella sottrazione di un solo pezzo. Il mattino seguente, la scorta formata da me e un collega si è recata su ordine del Museo Mart, al confine di Stato con la Francia, per prelevare la mostra che arrivava da Marsiglia e scortarla direttamente a Rovereto. È stata una scorta importante poiché c'era il sospetto che durante il tragitto, da Ventimiglia a Rovereto, ci fosse un assalto per recuperare gli altri due capolavori che non erano stati, fortunatamente, oggetto del furto.

Altra bella esperienza è stata quella di scortare la D.ssa Catullo, con delle opere provenienti dalla Sicilia per la mostra su Antonello da Messina, è stato emozionante poiché siamo arrivati in museo il giorno dell'inaugurazione, con le opere di punta.

Tante altre scorte, compresa anche quella a Palazzo Strozzi di Firenze, in piena manifestazione sindacale e con valichi chiusi, ogni scorta ha la sua peculiarità e per questo richiede sempre la massima attenzione.

Gli allestimenti hanno un orario di inizio ma non di fine: ricordo che nel 2007 avevamo fatto una mostra sul jazz e lì abbiamo fatto notte. Si entrava alle 08:00 del mattino e si usciva alle 02:00 di notte, così per 15 giorni. Per motivi di sicurezza, la Guardia è la prima che entra e l'ultima che esce dal cantiere. Quando tutte le maestranze lasciavano il cantiere, all'una di notte, io dovevo trattenermi per all'incirca un'altra ora, per poter svolgere l'inventario di tutte le opere presenti; l'aspetto positivo di fare questo lavoro, è di poter visionare le opere d'arte in forma privata e nel silenzio affascinante, che avvolge il Museo durante la notte.

- Lavora esclusivamente sulla sicurezza di mostre temporanee o anche per collezioni permanenti?

Durante l'allestimento delle collezioni permanenti, una figura così, non viene richiesta. Viene adottata esclusivamente con le mostre temporanee perché il 95% se non il 100% delle opere, proviene da prestiti di altri musei o da privati, quindi c'è un'attenzione più elevata.

· Lavora/ha lavorato con musei pubblici o anche enti privati? Mi può fare qualche esempio?

Con la D.ssa Catullo, qualche anno fa, abbiamo avuto modo di fondare un'Associazione senza scopo di lucro, denominata Venezia Arte Contemporanea, con la quale abbiamo organizzato mostre principalmente su Venezia e zona limitrofe. A Venezia abbiamo esposto a Palazzo Flangini con "Eminent Architects", una mostra fotografica di Ingrid Von Kruse sugli architetti. È stata una mostra molto importante e il nostro manifesto era dedicato a Zaha Hadid, a mio avviso, grande architetto. Di Ingrid Von Kruse, abbiamo fatto un'esposizione anche presso l'Hotel Hilton di Venezia, abbiamo poi collaborato con la Fabbrica del Vedere sempre a Venezia e fatto una mostra a Mogliano Veneto con l'artista Patricia Bucchi.

Nel frattempo, avevamo istituito dei corsi di museologia con i ragazzi di Cà Foscari di Venezia, i quali avevamo coinvolto per fare della formazione pratica sul campo, inseriti per il servizio di custodia nelle mostre aperte al pubblico e in cambio della loro disponibilità, veniva offerta loro la possibilità di partecipare a dei corsi, che teneva gratuitamente la D.ssa Catullo, sulle varie tematiche e figure museali. A tal proposito, abbiamo fatto anche una lezione di illuminotecnica delle sale espositive tenuta da Claudio Cervelli, un professionista del settore, con una preparazione notevole che, a differenza di molti altri, ama il suo lavoro. Amare ciò che si fa, si fa molto meglio e con meno fatica.

· Quale è stato il momento più emozionante?

Penso che il momento più emozionante di una mostra, non sia tanto vedere l'opera esposta in sala, quanto l'apertura delle casse. C'è un momento dove tutte le figure che collaborano all'allestimento, eseguono una sorta di cerimoniale, riunendosi tutte intorno alla cassa; le maestranze aprono la cassa e si ha l'opportunità di vedere in anteprima, una prima nazionale o una prima europea, come quando abbiamo ricevuto dall'Israel Museum di Gerusalemme un'intera collezione. Il Museo doveva chiudere per poter eseguire la ristrutturazione e non sapendo dove alloggiare le opere, hanno

ideato una mostra itinerante in Europa della durata di due anni, ovvero il tempo utile per poter portare a termine i lavori di ristrutturazione. In questo modo, le opere oltre che ad essere “custodite” erano protette e assicurate dal punto di vista della conservazione.

Quella è stata l’esperienza più importante della mia vita professionale all’interno di un museo: lavorare con gli israeliani, equivale confrontarsi con i primi al mondo a livello di sicurezza e precisione nel lavoro; ricordo un particolare delle casse delle opere, poiché differivano dai modelli standard ed usuali che eravamo abituati a vedere. Loro avevano delle casse che si aprivano lateralmente sul fianco, ove vi erano alloggiate al massimo due opere, le quali venivano sfilate lateralmente e quindi non c’era bisogno di abbattere la cassa, per l’apertura. Ogni trasportatore, museo, Stato, adotta le proprie casse, senza seguire degli standard precisi, su materiali o tipologia; l’unica cosa che hanno in comune le casse europee e anche degli Stati Uniti, è che si aprono frontalmente: di solito si abbatte la cassa e si apre il coperchio verso l’alto. Altro punto importante a livello di sicurezza che veniva utilizzato dagli israeliani, era fare delle spedizioni aeree della casse singole e non in flotta, per evitare appunto dei possibili incidenti aerei e perdere così l’intera collezione o spedizione.

Al momento dell’apertura della cassa sono presenti il curatore, il registrar, il responsabile della sicurezza, l’accompagnatore, quindi una serie di figure che verificano in anteprima l’opera. Questo è il momento più emozionante e più importante di un allestimento. Entrano poi in scena i restauratori, interni ed esterni (se in veste di accompagnatori) i quali provvedono a stilare il condition report che accompagna l’opera, ovvero una sorta di carta d’identità, nella quale vengono verificate e annotate, vecchie e nuove problematiche, riferite all’opera stessa.

· Ogni volta trova personale differente e musei differenti con staff che hanno preparazioni differenti. È complicato integrarsi e coordinarsi?

Lavorare all’interno di un museo è complicato, sono tante le figure coinvolte. Comunicare e amalgamarsi a volte risulta difficile dal punto di vista umano e poi quando si tratta di lavoro c’è sempre competizione tra le varie professioni.

Il personale che opera durante l’allestimento è dipendente di aziende esterne che partecipano su appalto. Ci sono aziende che lavorano esclusivamente sugli allestimenti di musei, mentre altri che operano anche su altri fronti, come traslochi o allestimenti

di stand nelle fiere; da qui, si evince la differenza sulla preparazione del personale. In Svizzera, dove abito e lavoro ora, a differenza dell'Italia dove al momento è pura utopia, ogni figura professionale ha conseguito una qualifica professionale specifica alla mansione e un apprendistato, per esempio, anche nel campo delle pulizie.

In Italia, purtroppo, non vi è una formazione scolastica adeguata che formi figure che operano nei musei durante gli allestimenti e specialmente che maneggiano opere d'arte; al momento non esiste, ma sarebbe interessante e auspicabile, che venissero istituiti percorsi formativi mirati. In mancanza di tale formazione, c'è molta improvvisazione e la formazione la imparano direttamente sul campo. Se si lavora con personale già addestrato, il clima è più sereno e si crea una sorta di fiducia tra sicurezza e operai allestitori, nonostante ci debba essere una continua e sempre attiva supervisione, da parte del responsabile della sicurezza, in sala. Quando si ha del personale, invece, che non è abituato a lavorare all'interno del museo, si deve prestare la massima attenzione, poiché muoversi all'interno degli spazi espositivi in cantiere, diventa difficile e molto pericoloso.

Oltre a formare le maestranze addette agli allestimenti, ritengo sia importante anche la formazione del responsabile della sicurezza ed è quello che auspicherei per i musei italiani, un percorso formativo apposito che formi adeguatamente i responsabili della sicurezza o le Guardie Giurate, che si occupano di sicurezza all'interno degli allestimenti e allo stesso tempo, renderle libere e itineranti tra i vari musei. Avere del personale fisso, agevola gli scambi con i vari responsabili interni, ma allo stesso tempo crea rapporti sfavorevoli, poiché entra in gioco la confidenza con i dipendenti del museo, con il rischio che vengano ignorate determinate norme di sicurezza a livello procedurale e a livello di sicurezza in generale. Io sono favorevole all'istituzione di una figura esterna e itinerante, la quale possa esercitare in maniera indipendente all'interno degli allestimenti, per il periodo necessario dei lavori.

· Lavora tramite gare d'appalto o anche affidamenti diretti? In Italia o anche all'estero?

Le Guardie Giurate che svolgono servizio all'interno di un Museo dipendono da Istituti di Vigilanza che hanno vinto la gara d'appalto del Museo. Esse sono vincolate all'Istituto di Vigilanza di appartenenza e non possono svolgere attività parallele e soprattutto indipendente.

- Ha trovato differenze sostanziali tra il lavoro in Italia e all'estero?

In Svizzera, attualmente, sono responsabile della sicurezza di un collezionista privato. Quello che posso dirle è che all'estero gli standard di sicurezza sono molto più elevati e rigorosi rispetto all'Italia e le maestranze che lavorano all'interno degli ambienti museali, sono molto più preparate. Per ogni figura professionale, vengono richiesti precisi requisiti e fondamentale è la preparazione scolastica, seguita da apposito apprendistato, cosa che in Italia purtroppo, non esiste ancora o non per tutti i settori. I Corpi di Vigilanza stessi, non hanno percorsi specifici formativi a carico del personale che presta servizio nelle varie istituzioni museali, tanto meno specializzato nel seguire gli allestimenti delle mostre o a svolgere scorte delle opere d'arte.

La figura professionale che segue gli allestimenti che abbiamo creato e istituito con la D.ssa Catullo attualmente non esiste più al Mart e ritengo che sia una grave regressione del museo con la dimostrazione che la sicurezza probabilmente sia passata in secondo piano. Un vero passo indietro, il quale mi rende molto dubbiosa sul fatto che probabilmente non si arriverà mai ad un avanzamento sotto questo aspetto, a livello generale, ma soprattutto, nello specifico di questo museo, dimostra che la sicurezza non è, purtroppo, tra i temi più importanti considerati dall'attuale Direzione.

- Qual è la sua relazione con il registrar?

Tra i vari professionisti che lavorano in una mostra, la figura del registrar non è molto conosciuta; solo i musei più importanti ne possiedono una, ma non tutti. Per il Mart, è stato svolto un concorso ad hoc una decina di anni fa, riconoscendo ufficialmente questo ruolo e soltanto dopo anni che la D.ssa Catullo svolgeva già questa mansione, considerando che era già responsabile delle collezioni e della conservazione. Il registrar è il perno dell'organizzazione di una mostra, dev'essere una persona estremamente precisa, professionale e consapevole di ciò che fa, poiché si occupa delle assicurazioni dei prestiti, delle gare d'appalto per i trasporti e del trasporto stesso, coordina tutto all'interno del cantiere ed è una figura importante nonché basilare. La D.ssa Catullo era una professionista che non temeva rivali, molto precisa, pignola, responsabile di sé e dei suoi collaboratori, con un bagaglio culturale notevole e proveniente da esperienze lavorative ben più note e importanti, rispetto al Mart; quindi, direi che è stato un valore aggiunto molto importante, utile e necessario, per lo svolgimento di tutte le mostre.

La nostra è stata un'ottima collaborazione, poiché avevamo in comune uno stile preciso e professionale, il quale ci ha permesso di esercitare in relazione all'accrescimento degli standard di sicurezza, adottati fino a quel momento, quindi antecedenti all'anno 2006 e di raggiungere obiettivi ben sopra la norma.

Il curatore, non ha responsabilità dal punto di vista logistico, poiché interviene con le opere già presenti all'interno del cantiere e cura tutta la parte a livello scientifico, della mostra.

· In quanto professionista privata che viene chiamata dai musei per compiere la sua funzione durante un determinato periodo di tempo, in che modo il suo apporto è fondamentale per l'organizzazione di una mostra?

Come già detto, in Italia non esiste la figura della professionista privata che viene chiamata dai Musei, ma esiste, laddove sia stata formata, una figura che è ricoperta da una Guardia Giurata che presta servizio all'interno del Museo stesso. Ritengo, che questa figura, sia fondamentale per lo svolgimento degli allestimenti nella massima sicurezza, sia per i collaboratori del museo che lavoravano all'interno del cantiere, ma soprattutto a protezione delle opere presenti.

· Quali sono le mostre più memorabili in cui ha lavorato presso il Mart?

La mia prima esperienza, all'interno di una mostra molto importante, è avvenuta nel settembre del 2005 ed è stata in occasione dell'esposizione di "Da Goya a Manet, da Van Gogh a Picasso. The Phillips Collection" la quale ha contribuito ad alimentare la fucina delle presenze in Museo, con una media giornaliera di 5.000 visitatori. Nel 2006 "La danza delle Avanguardie. Dipinti, scene e costumi, da Degas a Picasso, da Matisse a Keith Haring". "Mitomacchina" nel 2006. Nel 2007 "Schiele, Klimt, Kokoshka e gli amici viennesi", "Il Modo Italiano. Design italiano e avanguardia nel XXesimo secolo" con Guy Cogeval, che ai tempi era direttore del Musée d'Orsay di Parigi. Nello stesso anno abbiamo fatto "Maurice Denis" e "Chen Zhen", nel 2007-2008 "Depero Pubblicitario. Dall'auto-réclame all'architettura pubblicitaria" e "Vincenzo Agnetti. Retrospectiva 1967-1980". "Impressionisti e post-impressionisti. Capolavori dall'Israel Museum di Gerusalemme" tra il 2008 e il 2009 "Il Secolo del jazz. Arte, cinema, musica e fotografia da Picasso a Basquiat", "La guerra fredda. Arte e design in un mondo diviso 1945-1970", sempre del 2009 "Immaginare New York. Fotografie della collezione del MoMA", "Kendell Geers. Irrespektiv".

Nel 2010: “Dalla scena al dipinto. La magia del teatro nella pittura dell’Ottocento” nel 2010 con Guy Cogeval anche “la magia del teatro”. 2010, “Arte americana 1850-1960. Capolavori della Philips Collection di Whashington”. “Mario Botta. Architetture 1960-2010”, dello stesso anno è “The Panza Collection. Conceptual Art” e una personale di Dana Schutz. Una mostra che ricorderò sempre è “Modigliani Scultore”: ricordo che per i prestiti di questa mostra la D.ssa Belli con la D.ssa Catullo sono volate negli States, una settimana alla ricerca di teste.

Nel 2012 Paco Cao ha esposto dei quadri appesi al contrario e di cui si vedeva solamente il retro; inoltre, il venerdì a Casa Depero faceva degli aperitivi scientifici in cui faceva le carte ai visitatori e si cimentava nella preparazione di alcuni cocktail. Nel 2013 “Gianluca Vassallo. Dentro Inside” e Rudolf Steiner. “Progetto Cibo. La forma del gusto” con uno showcooking all’interno delle sale. “Antonello da Messina” nel gennaio 2014 con la D.ssa Collu, direttrice subentrante della D.ssa Belli. “La guerra che verrà non è la prima. Grande guerra 1914-2014”. Nel 2017 Boccioni e Mattiacci. “Margherita Sarfatti. Il Novecento italiano nel mondo” del 2018-2019.

Interview to Luisa Mensi, self-employed and external Conservator-Restorer at Castello di Rivoli, Turin; 2 December 2021

· In quanto conservatrice-restauratrice libero professionista, in che modo collabora con il registrar? Quando la figura del registrar non è presente all'interno dell'organico del museo/ente privato chi è il suo referente?

Il registrar è il perno del museo. È la figura pivotante attorno cui ruotano tutte le altre, dal direttore al personale delle pulizie, passando per gli amministrativi eccetera. È la figura professionale che tiene le fila di tutte le vicende.

Qualche museo ha la doppia figura di registrar e collection manager, ma questo dipende dal museo; spesso le due figure si sovrappongono, si sommano, o sono alternative.

C'è sempre la figura che chiamiamo registrar ma che non è sempre e soltanto un registrar, all'interno dei musei e grandi collezioni e fondazioni, che si occupa non solo della logistica, perché il registrar più strettamente è quello che si occupa di quello che concerne la logistica e che coordina le varie figure professionali che cooperano durante la vita del museo: l'allestimento, le movimentazioni, i restauri, i prestiti, dai trasporti ai restauratori eccetera.

Spesso, soprattutto in Italia ma non solo, la figura del registrar ha compiti che vanno al di là di quello che è in senso stretto la sua mansione. Oppure, se vogliamo dire in un altro modo, la figura del registrar comprende un'ampia gamma di attività. Anche se in Italia non è ancora riconosciuta appieno, è ruolo interessantissimo perché spazia dagli aspetti archivistico-teorici e coordinativi con curatori, direttori e conservatori ad aspetti più pratici, riguardanti la logistica: ne deve sapere di casse, di trasporti, di legislazione ad ampio raggio dei beni culturali. È una figura di riferimento molto importante.

Dove ci sono queste figure mi rivolgo a loro, quindi è per me basilare perché a mia volta il mio lavoro è ad ampio raggio, non si ferma solo a quello che è lavoro di restauro in senso stretto ma spazia sulla conservazione, schedatura, perizie danni per conto di compagnie assicurative. Infatti, lavoro anche come perito.

Per tutto quello che succede nel museo mi devo interfacciare con il registrar. In musei, fondazioni e collezioni private, dove non c'è il registrar, c'è spesso collection manager

che ricopre figura del registrar. Piano piano anche le fondazioni private si stanno strutturando con un registrar, ma dipende se hanno doppia figura o se la figura del collection manager ricopre anche quella di registrar.

· Le è capitato di lavorare in piccole realtà museali? Come cambia l'organizzazione dello staff con cui si interfaccia?

Ha appena fatto dei piccoli restauri su varie opere d'arte contemporanea di un pittore morto da una decina d'anni e di cui si celebra centenario. L'artista è Giannetto Fieschi e la mostra è allestita al museo diocesano di Genova. È un museo sconosciuto ma meraviglioso, sia come collocazione, che come edificio e collezione. Lì purtroppo la figura di riferimento è una sola: è la conservatrice che fa anche funzione di direttrice che di registrar. I piccoli musei hanno poco organico. È un piccolo museo che ospita mostre d'arte contemporanea e il mio desiderio è che sia più vivace, anche se al momento è in uno stato di torpore letargico. Quindi con le mie assistenti abbiamo fatto interventi di manutenzione e restauro.

Esistono quindi situazioni in cui il personale è molto ridotto e la stessa persona deve ricoprire ruoli che normalmente sono di competenza di più figure. In questi casi capita che il conservatore/direttore/registrar si ritrovi ad aiutare a spostare quadri e imballarli.

· E per i grandi musei pubblici e gli enti privati?

I musei con grandi collezioni come il Mart e il Castello di Rivoli, che sono più strutturati, hanno dei registrar interni. Rivoli ne ha una che, a seguito del corso per registrar coordinato da Clarenza tre anni fa presso il Castello, è stata assunta.

Quindi, il panorama è molto vario: istituzione museale vuole dire tutto e non vuol dire niente. Ci sono fondazioni private come la Sandretto, che è molto più strutturata e ha una registrar interna, che è Carla Mantovani. La Fondazione Vedova ha una registrar che è Elena Bianchini. Le faccio esempi di istituzioni con cui collaboro o ho collaborato.

Il conservatore-restauratore ha dei punti di riferimento che sono nel museo/ente privato che devono per forza coprire ruolo del registrar per estensione o lo sono. Il Castello di Rivoli, che è un'istituzione attiva dal 1984, ha avuto una registrar che è andata in pensione nel 2014 circa e poi per 5 o 6 anni è rimasta senza registrar. Per un anno e mezzo è rimasta anche senza collection manager. E la capo curatrice faceva la collection manager, mentre la segretaria di direzione fungeva anche da registrar.

· Ci sono momenti in cui il suo lavoro di restauratrice-conservatrice va di pari passo con quello del registrar?

Ci sono delle situazioni in cui il restauratore in mostra può trovarsi a dover ricoprire parti del ruolo del registrar: la verifica opere all'interno delle casse, la spunta delle opere in mostra, oltre al proprio ruolo di verifica dello stato di conservazione. In situazioni più o meno di emergenza mi sono trovata a dover ricoprire alcune delle funzioni del registrar.

Allo stesso tempo, all'occorrenza, il registrar deve poter essere in grado di leggere correttamente un condition report e confrontarlo con la situazione dell'opera in quel momento. Ci sono situazioni in cui le nostre incombenze e i nostri compiti si sovrappongono.

· A quando risale l'ultima collaborazione con la dott.ssa Catullo?

A parte l'istituzione in cui lavoro in maniera più stabile che è il Castello di Rivoli, più volte mi è capitato di collaborare con il Mart e quindi con Clarenza Catullo, con cui c'è un'ottima intesa e una stima reciproca.

L'ultima collaborazione risale a un paio di mesi fa, un intervento per l'attuale mostra dal titolo "La Casa del Mago" di Depero, in cui a rischio c'era il prestito del dipinto che dava il titolo all'intera mostra a causa di un'incomprensione tra i trasportatori e il prestatore. In questo caso, oltre all'incarico professionale legato alla verifica delle condizioni di conservazione, l'incarico aveva anche un aspetto "diplomatico" per rassicurare il prestatore sulle garanzie per il prestito.

· Quali sono le mansioni che ricopre al momento?

Sono conservatrice restauratrice al Castello di Rivoli come libero professionista esterna.

A lato svolgo l'attività privata, seguendo sia gare d'appalto che affidamenti diretti. Essendo un piccolo laboratorio, cerco di lavorare più su affidamento diretto a causa dell'impegno burocratico che le gare d'appalto richiedono.

· Pratica la professione esclusivamente sul territorio nazionale? Ha trovato grandi differenze nella gestione?

No, lavoro anche all'estero. Non ci sono grandi differenze, situazioni positive e/o problemi si possono trovare simili in tutto il mondo. Parafrasando Blade Runner "Ho visto cose che voi umani..." non solo in Italia ma anche all'estero.

- Le è capitato di collaborare con gallerie d'arte internazionali?

Conosco bene la realtà delle gallerie private perché ho collaborato e collaboro con grandi gallerie internazionali. Tra le tante, ho collaborato, quando era direttrice Valentina Castellani, con Gagolian per le mostre di arte, per la retrospettiva di Piero Manzoni e la mostra sugli ambienti di Lucio Fontana. Presso le grandi gallerie internazionali, il registrar svolge esclusivamente i compiti del registrar, cioè si occupa solo ed esclusivamente di logistica (trasporti e assicurazioni).

- In quali piccole realtà ha operato all'estero?

Tra le collaborazioni sulle piccole realtà internazionali, una delle più interessanti è stata accompagnare, nel 2018 in qualità di courier, il dipinto di Manet dal titolo *La Nègresse* (è il ritratto di una donna creola che è stata musa ispiratrice di tanti pittori a Parigi dell'800 e ai tempi non era discriminata.), di proprietà della pinacoteca agnelli, presso una piccola realtà newyorkese, cioè la Wallach Art Gallery della Columbia University che è uno spazio creato per dare voce ai progetti di mostra dei giovani dottorati della Columbia. La mostra, che ruotava attorno all'*Olympia* di Manet e alle figure delle modelle di colore nella seconda metà del XIX secolo, ha poi avuto una seconda tappa al Musée d'Orsay.

- Qual è il futuro del ruolo del registrar in Italia a suo avviso?

Anche in Italia si sta formando una bella platea di registrar indipendenti che non necessariamente sono assunti all'interno delle istituzioni ma che hanno agilità ed elasticità, come noi restauratori. La figura del registrar in Italia ha anche uno sviluppo sulla professione indipendente. Una volta acquisita l'esperienza e la professione, e questo si fa con stage o collaborazioni a tempo determinato, è una professione come tante altre che può svilupparsi anche a livello libero professionale e non solo istituzionalizzata, come siamo stati abituati finora a vedere.

- Quali sono i pro e i contro del lavorare come professionista esterno ai musei/enti privati?

Nonostante le oggettive difficoltà, lavoro parcellizzato, mancanza di facilità burocratica, quello di restauratrice-conservatrice è un lavoro che faccio ancora con grande entusiasmo. Nel 1988 ho aperto la mia partita IVA. L'aspetto negativo di essere libero professionisti è che niente è sicuro dopo anni di lavoro, ma ce n'è anche uno molto interessante che mi è stato fatto notare da un'amica curatrice museale. Lavorare

per varie istituzioni mi consente di avere la possibilità di partecipare a realtà differenti e quindi avere uno sguardo più ampio.

La collaborazione con i registrar è sempre stata per me molto importante, tanto che nel 2008 sono stata invitata a parlare a una delle tavole rotonde dal tema “Lavorare con artisti viventi: potenziali momenti di contrasto? - Museum and Living Artists: Potentially Clashing Interests?” presso l’annuale ERC, che quell’anno aveva luogo a Basilea.

- In cosa consiste il suo lavoro in quanto perito?

Per quanto riguarda le perizie sui danni occorsi alle opere d’arte, dipende da chi mi dà l’incarico. Ho iniziato a collaborare con alcune compagnie assicurative e ho contratti di collaborazione con due di queste, che sono AXA ART e Arte generali, e per loro agisco in qualità di perito per la valutazione dei danni e del conseguente deprezzamento commerciale delle opere. I danni che uno incontra essere di varia natura, da quelli traumatici a quelli climatici ai danni causati dall’uomo volontariamente o involontariamente (accidentali o vandalici). Al momento, sto seguendo i danni causati a collezioni dovuti a bagnamenti e principi d’incendio.

L’onere della prova, cioè dimostrare il buono stato di conservazione, è sempre a carico del proprietario ma spesso e solo in sede mostra viene redatto il condition report per il quale l’istituzione incarica una figura super partes, il restauratore, in modo da tutelare prestatore e prestatario. In caso di sinistro, il registrar è la figura incaricata di aprire e gestire il sinistro. Insieme alle sue figure di riferimento, cioè il restauratore-conservatore ed eventualmente anche il consulente legale ecc.

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