

## Didart: when art becomes experience

Didart is a research project conceived by the Educational Department of MAMbo (Project prime coordinator) now at its 4th edition, financed by the European Commission – Programme Culture in the category Visual Arts as the best proposal for communication and education regarding contemporary art.

The first edition 2002-2003 has been characterised by the establishment of the network, by the realization of the first Documentation Centre about Art Education in Reggio Emilia and by the creation of the internet site [www.didart.net](http://www.didart.net), which collects and spreads out all the activities linked to the project and its research fields. It is well known that the main purpose of Didart is to approach the public to art and its places: the protagonists of this project aren't only the museums but also all the institutions, which build up a dialogue with art and education. Didart at its 2nd edition wanted to compare new methodologies, to individuate the right practices, to experiment a direct approach with art and artists' poetics; and the result was: Artists' Houses, an educational exhibit, which moved to all the seats of the partner museums. Young artists participated in this event and they met children and young people of different ages. This was an important experience for all the partners and it allowed us to compare new methodologies and to test them in different, far away contexts. The last edition of Didart started off by sharing these activities, by learning different realities and common needs individuated during our many meetings: an European reflection about the role of the museum educator, about the importance of this role in the creation of a new museum, a privileged place where to share and participate directly into the different knowledges. We wanted to discuss about what kind of educational path was able to give a proper professionalism to this figure that is committed to interpret and transmit the cultural project of a museum to diversified users. A role that hasn't been well defined yet, and that needs to find the right position inside the European cultural panorama.

Therefore, by respecting the features of this project, whose priority is the experience in its own practices, the International workshop Didart started off; a space where young students and museum educators had confrontations and dialogues with the representatives of the partner institutions and with international experts in this field.

The Workshop was held from 17 to 28 September 2007 at MAMbo, Museum of Modern Art of Bologna, and involved 20 young museum operators from different countries, selected by the Didart scientific committee according to pre-established criteria: they should have a degree of 1st level with a CV testifying their knowledge in art history; they should have had an internship experience inside a museum and they had to understand and speak English. The Aim of the Workshop was to offer to this small group of people an intense training experience. The 12-day programme envisaged a series of theoretical meetings about museum education, history, methodologies, specialist publishing, and workshop experiences, which also took in consideration the non-verbal language of the body, the graphic communication, and the artistic practice. Test bench of this intense activity was the exhibit "VERTIGO. Il secolo di arte off-media dal Futurismo al Web" [VERTIGO. The century of off-media art from Futurism to the Web] going on in the same period at MAMbo. At the end of this intense workshop, the participants presented their interpretation of the exhibit during an animated visit open to the public.

The round table about the professional figure of the museum educator and the educational role of the museum held on Sunday 23rd September was a significant event of the programme. Didart wanted to promote this meeting to widen the debate and ask for an important contribute to people, who are committed to these issues for a long time; to enlarge and let participate a more and more conspicuous number of people in this issue, to choose an international window like the Festival of the Art book *Arte libro* going on in Bologna in the same period. We invited to come and speak David Anderson, Director of Learning and interpretation at Victoria and Albert Museum, Claude Fourteau, expert of museum policies, who worked for many years at Centre Pompidou and Louvre; two experts of undoubted value coming from two European countries not participating in the project. Also Maria Antonella Fusco, MIBAC – Centre of Educational services related to the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and Silvia Mascheroni, ICOM Italia took part in the meeting. This volume intends to pick up the experience of these 12 days dedicated to education and art by presenting also the complexity of the work of an international group, who chooses to compare different realities for a common research just started.

The essays of these guests, who participated in the round table, are published in the first part of the book: a cross-section about the most updated and influential considerations shared at European level. In the text drawn up by Carla Padrò, professor of Art Pedagogy and Education at the University of Barcelona and partner of the Didart project since 2002, year of the first edition, we will read the conversations among partners and students during the days spent together. It's a team work highlighting the different points of view, which is able to testify the complexity of the comparison among different educational backgrounds, ideas, and contexts so as to give value to the richness and the variety of experiences Europe can offer. The last part is dedicated to students, who participated in the workshop and who are the basic protagonists of this experience.

The 20 young museum operators present their identities and offer to the readers



the result of one of the many training activities carried out during the workshop: the graphic communication about their experience in Bologna.

The most featuring aspect of this last edition of Didart, perhaps the most difficult one to transmit to people who didn't live directly the experience, is the encounter of different people and the sharing of a common life project: expectations and motivations of the first ones at the very beginning of their job career and the latter ones with a long experience in this field. Everyone, who participated in the workshop, really understood, even if sometimes with difficulties, the differences and the importance of the respect for the individual identities and the human and professional specificities. I think that acquiring this value was an educational and training element, which can be treasured by everyone: young and elder people.

**Didart**

credits

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