Cultural Institutions as Spaces for Education: Artistic Expressions in Initial Teacher Training at the University of Madeira

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Abstract

This communication aims to highlight the formative and artistic role of three socio-cultural institutions in the island territory of the Autonomous Region of Madeira, Portugal, as spaces that preserve various local cultural aspects while promoting artistic education, inclusion and citizenship from a perspective of education for all — basic elements in the training of future education professionals. Our choice for these non-formal learning environments was based on their characteristics and potentialities, as privileged fields of knowledge and involvement with the local community and culture. In this process, the pedagogical practice evokes the access to education and culture as basic components for the integral development of the individuals — a complex act of dialogues of artistic expressions, meanings and citizenship practices. In order to understand the main aspects underlying the elaboration of the projects of these spaces we questioned the people in charge of each institution as partners in the initial teacher training of the University of Madeira. Of the main results we emphasize that the artistic experience promotes appreciation for the arts, culture and heritage, in addition to promoting cultural diversity. Cultural institutions play a relevant role in education because through them our students have the opportunity to get to know better the local culture and themselves in relation to others, expanding their worldviews.

Keywords: Teacher Training, Artistic Expressions, Culture, Citizenship



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Introduction

Non-formal learning environments, due to their characteristics and potential, are considered privileged fields in the training and involvement of and with the local community of education professionals. In this analysis, we highlight the access to education and culture, considered by us as basic components of the integral formation of the individual, a complex act of dialogues of artistic expressions, meanings and citizenship practices¹.

In this line of thought, we can say that we are the result of what we learn in all vital circumstances, which include learning environments with very different characteristics. From the most informal learning contexts — with all the circumstances of human contact that occur daily — to the most formal learning contexts, learning plays a fundamental role. To this end, the intercrossed dialog of the respondents to the questions we asked was important for the understanding of the trajectory that we propose to address in this text.

The Role Of Socio-Cultural Institutions: Education, Culture and Inclusion

When approaching the role of cultural institutions as educational spaces promoters of art and culture we need to clarify some concepts, namely *culture* and *inclusion*. According to Laland (2017), culture is the sum of knowledge and technologies learned and disseminated over time in a given community. Culture is an interactive and dynamic network of continuous adjustments and improvements of the complex knowledge, artifacts and social institutions that already exist, which generates countless creative variations. Artistic expressions are then an integral part of culture. Regarding inclusion, we consider it to be a "process that helps overcome barriers that limit the presence, participation and achievements of students" (UNESCO, 2019, p. 13).

Situating dimensions such as citizenship and inclusion in dialogue with artistic expressions implies a look at the institutions that promote them. In this context, we analysed three institutions that fit the definition of museum presented below by the scope that UNESCO attributes to it.

UNESCO defines "museum" as a non-profit, permanent institution, available to all, which is "in the service of society and its development which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment" (UNESCO, 2007). This definition is not limited to the institutions that we traditionally know as museums but in fact it is transversal to other sociocultural spaces such as:

Non-profit institutions or organisations undertaking conservation research, education, training, documentation and other activities related to museums and museology; (...) cultural centres and other entities that facilitate the preservation, continuation and management of tangible or intangible heritage resources (living heritage and digital creative activity). (UNESCO, *idem*)

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These places are essential to meet the cultural needs of citizens, *i.e.* social groups, the public and individuals working in the creation of leisure activities, festivals, demonstrations, among others. Thus, the inclusive role of institutions is of great importance for civic education because through them citizens can be active, informed and culturally participatory individuals in society.

Socio-Cultural Spaces: Citizenship Practices

Citizenship has been understood from two perspectives: the *formal*, consisting of the individual's connection with the state, related to his/her legal status acquired at birth; the *cultural*, which concerns the individual's social integration into the community, acquired in the informal context of life (Beaman, 2016; Delanty, 2003). In liberal democracies, *formal* citizenship ensures that the individual legally enjoys rights, accessible to him/her only he/she knows them and can evoke them (Pawley, 2008). According to Delanty (2013), knowledge of legal rights is generally set on a formal learning context.

Cultural citizenship, in turn, facilitates the creation of a a relationship of reciprocity between the individual and the community in which he/she is inserted, by assenting to socially established norms, values, practices and behaviours but also questioning them (Beaman, 2016). Such citizenship develops through learning that equates the *self* and the relationship of the *self* with *others*; citizen's identity is constructed by his experiences and beliefs, and occurs both in the private sphere and in the relationship with others. Their cultural integration highlights personal and collective differences. Thus, the socio-cultural spaces under analysis, in addition to being promoters of education and culture, contribute to the formation of socially constructed citizenship.

The possibility of participation within social institutions stimulates the inclusion of the public in the institution and in the learning provided there through educational projects. According to Delanty (2003), the type of learning and citizenship promoted by the institutions under study do not have to follow the language of formal citizenship: they are neither disciplinary nor imposed, therefore they fall within the domain of non-formal and optional education.

We consider that citizenship — and, consequently, inclusion — is developed in the informal context of daily life. It is the co-participation in the creation and recreation of cultural manifestations, with which the community creates meanings for its ways of life that generates inclusion (Kocoska & Petrovski, 2015). In this way, cultural institutions assume a leading role in establishing dialogues that underlie the process of social inclusion, where various actors promote the negotiation of their differences. This process provokes the interconnection of individuals' life stories with broader cultural discourses — where the consensuses predetermined by society are questioned and in the end the reconstruction of the *self* in relation to *others* is promoted.

In this discussion, inclusion in a community involves the development of two types of citizenship: *formal* and *cultural*. However, the interdependence of both, given the tendency towards pedagogical informality and proximity to everyday life, cultural citizenship is extremely relevant in the formation of citizens.

Informal, Non-formal and Formal Education — Exploring Concepts

As mentioned above, citizenship, and consequently inclusion, is developed in the informal context of daily life. We corroborate with Patrício (2004), when he says that:

We learn in any circumstance. We learn in the family circumstance, with mother, father, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins (...). We learn in the street circumstance. The street is society flowing. The street is the outside of the family (...). If we were to take from each of us what we have learnt in the family and in the street, there still would be, and there still is, a borderline. The family is a world, but the street is a world... (p. 13)

More than ever, today there are so many opportunities for learning in the most diverse contexts in which the individual moves. Learning takes place on many sides and in many circumstances, and is less and less dependent on limited physical contexts, on the canons written in textbooks or on the focused action of teaching resources. In this regard, Rogers (2004) clarifies some elements that help us to situate the issue of learning in those contexts. For him, when it is the individual who circumscribes his learning, namely learning what he wants, when he wants and also stopping when he wants, we are facing a context of informal education. In this context, informal learning can be defined as "any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill that takes place outside the curricula of educational institutions, or the courses or workshops provided by educational or social agencies" (Livingstone, 1999, p. 51). In other words, the category of informal learning includes all learning that takes place outside the formal and non-formal curriculum of educational institutions and programmes.

Rogers (2004), on the other hand, argues that when the individual is in a pre-existing learning programme, but adapted to his/her circumstances, we speak of non-formal education. Thus, non-formal education refers to all organised educational programmes that take place outside the formal school system and are usually short-term and voluntary. This includes a wide variety of programmes, namely courses, study visits, second language programmes, yoga classes, painting courses, workshops, among others. Trilla (1993) reinforces this idea by arguing that this type of education seems to refer to "all those institutions, activities, means, spheres of education which although not school-based have been created to fulfil certain educational objectives" (p. 21). Though it is generally aimed at adults, non-formal education can also be aimed at children and adolescents (e.g. joining a scout group, music lessons during the weekend, among others). As in informal education, there are teachers (monitors) and a curriculum with various degrees of flexibility.

Finally, when we are faced with an externally "imposed" learning programme dominating our autonomy we are in a formal education context. This is confined to the institutional ladder and ranges from pre-school to postgraduate education. Among its characteristics, the fact that it is highly institutionalized stands out; it includes a compulsory period called "basic education" (which varies from country to country and usually ranges from 6 to 12 years). Formal education functions through the implementation of a prescriptive curriculum — State approved — with explicit objectives and assessment processes through examinations and tests, depending on the hiring of certified teachers and institutional activities largely supervised by the Ministry of Education. It is propaedeutic in nature (in the sense that each level prepares learners for the next and that to access to a certain level requires satisfactory completion of the previous level); it is a hierarchical system, usually with ministries of

education at the top and students at the bottom; at the end of each level graduates receive a diploma or certificate that allows them to be accepted at the next level, or qualifies them to enter the labour market (Rogers, 2004).

In view of the above, we understand that both formal and non-formal learning environments enhance deliberate learning and implicit learning and, in this case, socio-cultural institutions are spaces of relevant non-formal environments for lifelong learning.

The Cultural Institutions of the Study

A consultation of the website Cultura Madeira - Atlas of Madeira Culture² reveals the existence of more than one hundred cultural institutions and organisations in the Autonomous Region of Madeira (ARM). The choice proved to be easy, considering the partnership work already carried out by us in the context of the initial training of teachers and other education professionals, namely in the Curricular Units of Musical Expression, Dramatic Expression, Plastic Expression, Education through Art, Interdisciplinary Seminar of Expressions and Didactics of Expressions. Thus, we've interviewed the leaders of three institutions — the Xarabanda Musical and Cultural Association (XMCA), the Frederico de Freitas Museum House (FFMH) and the Funchal Experimental Theatre Association (FETA) — in order to assess some data that we consider relevant for this exploratory study.

Xarabanda Musical and Cultural Association

This Association came to be by the hands of a group of friends who shared interests in traditional and popular musical culture and cultural issues, and recognized its value and importance. By the 1980's, the local Conservatory excluded from its syllabus the Madeiran culture — everything that was popular was ignored and relegated to the background, so the friends formed the musical group "Algozes," which sought to collect and spread the traditional poetic-musical heritage of Madeira and Porto Santo.

After several years of performances, throughout Portuguese territory, and the recording of an LP (1989), the need arose to transform an informal group into an identity that could dedicate itself to a broader project within the scope of traditional Madeiran culture, giving birth to the XMCA, whose new name made the public understand the essence of the Association: to guarantee the perpetuation of tradition, through the collection, systematisation and dissemination of elements of Madeiran culture, permeating the regional and even the national level. And that is how the XMCA was founded in 1990, continuing the work of collecting and disseminating traditional Madeiran music and, also, teaching regional chordophones of popular tradition, promoting training actions; raising awareness of regional popular and traditional music; organising and editing a songbook of Madeiran oral tradition. Among its various works, it began publishing a regular magazine, with the collaboration of anthropologists, musicians, historians and others.

In 2002, the XMCA was declared a "Public Utility Institution," for the work it developed in the field of collecting and disseminating Madeira's musical, cultural and popular heritage, as

² Cultura Madeira is a platform that includes all the information on the cultural offer in the ARM and allows access to the socio-cultural institutions existing in the region. Available at https://cultura.madeira.gov.pt/atlas-da-cultura-%E2%80%93-entidades-culturais

well as for its merit recognised at regional, national and international level. Among distinctions and awards, it has continued its work, financially supported by the Regional Directorate for Cultural Affairs (RDCA), for the implementation of projects, in collaboration with the Regional Directorate for Education (RDE), through the secondment of teachers.

Frederico de Freitas Museum House

The FFMH is located in the former Casa da Calçada, residence of the Counts of Calçada, in a building dating back to the 17th century. It was remodelled successively, and in 1941 it was rented to Dr. Frederico de Freitas, a lawyer and collector. There, this resident took the opportunity to organise the house to accommodate his multiple collections. After his death, the house was acquired by the Regional Government and subsequently transformed into a museum, presenting the estate of its last resident. At the end of the 20th century, the FFMH was organised into three distinct spaces: the Casa da Calçada (which presents the former tenant's decorative and utilitarian objects, that includes a wide variety of regional and foreign decorative art, sculpture, painting, furniture, ceramics, glass and metals, among others); the temporary exhibition area (which presents exhibitions and initiatives that provide other approaches to the museum and its estate); and the Casa dos Azulejos (dedicated to the exhibition of the tile collection, , which crosses several centuries and cultures).

This museum has an educational service, whose aim is to facilitate communication with different audiences and to publicise its collection. The structure of this Educational Service is closely linked to the specificities of the FFMH. In fact, its work is based on three thematic axes: the house, the collector and his collections. In Casa da Calçada, for example, the way the exhibition of Decorative Arts is distributed — by several rooms — motivates several routes, in the form of thematic visits such as "From the Kitchen to the Table," "Romanticism in the House" and "A Journey through Tiles in Portugal." In addition to these visits, the teachers of this service also develop playful, dramatic, written or plastic expression activities related to the collector, the collections and the Museum.

Funchal Experimental Theatre Association

FETA - Theatre Company began its journey in 1975, in the cultural services of Funchal Town Hall. Between 1984 and 2006 it was a Limited Liability Cooperative, until it became a non-profit Cultural Association. Its educational service promotes guided tours, shows, training workshops and artistic projects for different types of audiences.

Being also a theatre company, the Association managed for years to secure a group of actors that enabled it to take on shows dedicated to different educational institutions, always keeping in mind to raise awareness and promote theatre in the Madeira Archipelago, focusing on theatre for children and youth, as well as on itinerant work, in order to cover the different age levels. More recently (from 2018), *galeria.a* — idealised within the artistic project of the company FETA — emerges as a space for the interaction of the arts, as a producer of performing arts: Theatre, intends to boost the growth of public formation in the fruition and dissemination of artistic and cultural, through its educational service and its accessibility component.

We also highlight that FETA approaches audience training through theatre training workshops for different age groups, developing group dynamics, dramatic, body and voice expression, storytelling and character-building techniques, as it recognises the importance of

early contact with the world of theatrical art. In this way, during the training workshops part of the theatre games allows the discovery of the body, voice training, playing with space and promoting the development of critical thinking about this form of art and about the world.

Thus, FETA, in its role as an educational service, has the main objective of being an element of inclusion and socialization.

The Questions and Their Analysis

In order to better understand the action of the aforementioned institutions, we consulted each of their managers, posing them three questions: 1) What is the target audience of the institution? 2) When preparing the annual activity plan, what aspects do you consider to promote inclusion, in order to provide sociocultural opportunities for the entire community? 3) How is the articulation of the sociocultural project operationalised with local educational institutions?

Regarding the first question, in the words of XMCA's President Rui Camacho, since the beginning of the association's cultural activity, the work has been aimed at the general public. As for the FFMH, teachers Catarina Andrade and Helena Sousa, responsible for the Education and Animation Services, say that they seek to "respond to the expectations and requests of the local public and the regional community." In their words: "we try to reach everyone, creating several thematic visits aimed at different age levels, with our programme divided into: students, teachers, families, adult audiences, senior audiences and even for holidays and ephemeris" (February 1, 2022).

In turn, the head of FETA's Educational Service, teacher Ester Vieira, says that the institution's target audience is the general public. Therefore, the creative proposals and their contents reach children and youth, adults, seniors, among others. It contemplates:

General public (shows of greater scope and in wider time ranges); Children and Youth (although also aimed at the general public, they are more specifically aimed at the school public and at a functional schedule compatible with school activity); Senior public (public assigned to institutions and/or activity projects aimed at them); Public with Special Needs (public assigned to institutions and/or activity projects aimed at them); Artists (specific public in the field of performing arts or visual arts, often related to interventions in the *galeria.a*) and Teachers (specific audience attending the shows through schools or individually, often associated with trade union or associative organisations). (E. Vieira, February 7, 2022)

Considering the voices of the leaders of the three institutions participating in this study, we can affirm that the target audience of these institutions is comprehensive, since both the general public and the surrounding community are part of their objectives. On the other hand, there is a concern to include individuals of various age groups, social status, education and personal interests. They are therefore, institutions open to society, including educational and teaching institutions. In this sense, they are essential spaces for non-formal education, which complement students' knowledge in different areas and levels of education.

Regarding the second question, the president of XMCA shared that when the activity plan is drawn up, its mission is to contribute to the well-being of the entire community in order to promote training, inclusion and socio-cultural development:

We believe that the work we do is always for others. In cultural VALUES — what concerns communities: uses, customs, know-how (the intangible), solidarity, a sense of responsibility, truth, (what we are, while we are "the depositary generation of that important heritage that will allow us to preserve it. This is an indispensable condition for the affirmation of our individuality [and identity]"). (...) There has always been a concern to include (...) to value, accept, know and not ignore, regardless of age, level of education, social status, gender, city or rural area. To include forgotten areas of small towns far from the centrality, which have never had the opportunity to receive something important for their knowledge. (R. Camacho, February 5, 2022)

This leader emphasised that inclusion sometimes becomes a complex process, as it depends on factors such as the suitability of projects, availability, financial support, local conditions to fully realise it. He emphasised the importance of partnerships with different institutions in the community to develop "multicultural, comprehensive projects that go far beyond music. The aim is to integrate the local community by valuing the knowledge of each and every one" (R. Camacho, February 5, 2022).

Teachers Catarina Andrade and Helena Sousa, from FFMH, describe that they "prepare, plan and carry out thematic visits, of short and long duration, as well as complementary activities of a playful nature, written, plastic and dramatic expression. Design and create teaching materials used to stimulate curiosity, encourage learning or facilitate understanding" (February 1, 2022). They also state that they seek to establish links with other institutions through actions and meetings with teachers to raise awareness of the importance in education of the cooperation between schools and museums. We go to educational establishments, museums and other similar organizations, we present communications on the theme of "The Museum and the School", promoting the House-Museum, publicizing it, launching challenges for new activities and attracting new audiences (C. Andrade and H. Sousa, February 1, 2022).

The FFMH also seeks to cover different segments of the population by organising Free Time Occupation activities suitable for the different times of the year (Christmas, Easter, Summer) and aimed at younger audiences or intergenerational groups. This space welcomes visitors of all age groups, from 3 years old onwards, establishing visit routes specially geared to different ages or to people with special needs.

Regarding FETA, we found that they develop artistic activities for all types of audiences, creating physical, technical and different language conditions to communicate with all spectators. This socio-cultural institution carries out supervision of professional internships (artistic and technical) and internships of the Employment Institute of Madeira. It also has an educational service dynamized by teachers with activities of a technical-pedagogical nature, led by teacher Ester Vieira. It develops several projects and activities, namely:

Guided tours of *galleria.a* collective exhibitions and to the backstage spaces and their equipment, backstage conversations (which take place between the audience, artists and technicians at the end of the shows), temporary thematic workshops, permanent workshops, occasional Audience Training projects, Technical Artistic Training within the scope of Special Needs with access to people with special needs, Theatre Workshops for the Community, Performances, Street Animation, Technical Artistic Training in the field of Theatre with access to people with Special Needs. For

example, we translate plays and content into Portuguese sign language. (E. Vieira, February 7, 2022)

We highlight that FETA received and integrated in its artistic project the "OFICINA VERSUS TEATRO" (Inclusive Theatre Group) from the former Regional Directorate of Special Education. This way artistic inclusion is developed in all the programmed activities of the different artistic seasons.

An analysis of the discourses allows us to attest to the concern to include, value, accept, know, make available and involve, regardless of age, education, social status, gender and origin. On the other hand, the search for inclusion is endeavoured through the adaptation of the institutions' activities to specific segments of the population (*e.g.* by age, by family affinities). In this way, they try to create bridges through the particular aspects of the collections (the creation of thematic visits, in the case of the FFMH), potentially appealing to these segments. These institutions are concerned with inclusion through the languages of different artistic expressions, with a view to training and socio-cultural experience, for they plan activities that provide pedagogical, educational and training substance in the socio-cultural context.

FETA, on the other hand, offers a very wide range of activities, representing a fundamental field of intervention in the area of dramatic expression and theatre, both for the general public and in support of other institutions and groups in the community. Its role at the training level should be emphasised, considering also the supervision and guidance of internships in the context of the professional training of actors and other theatre professionals.

To summarise, there is a concern with the promotion of inclusion in order to provide sociocultural opportunities for the whole community, with comprehensive multicultural projects and in some cases embodied in partnerships.

Finally, with regard to the third question, the head of XMCA states that a large part of the study visits of students from different levels of education, including the University of Madeira, to the association's space are on the initiative of the educational institutions themselves that want to know about the Material Cultural Heritage (musical instruments of Madeiran tradition) and Intangible Cultural Heritage (music of popular tradition, literature of oral transmission, among other important traditional practices that run the risk of disappearing if they are not registered, studied and disseminated in order to guarantee their maintenance) of the Region.

XMCA organises specific activities, according to the different requests of the community, free of charge, to share knowledge about our heritage. Thus:

Working groups are created to energise artistic spaces and processes. It should be noted that all of this is done free of charge through the will, KNOWLEDGE, ZEST and PASSION, in defence of cultural values: what we were in the past and what we have received as cultural heritage, what we are in the present and what we want to be in the future. (R. Camacho, February 5, 2022)

In turn, the teachers responsible for the educational services of the FFMH report that they publicise their programme by:

Sending it to the educational establishments of Madeira, senior retirement homes, day centres, parish councils, private institutions of social solidarity and community centres. We have a list of individuals who after coming or participating in some activity at the museum ask to send them the programme. Social networks (blog, Facebook and Instagram) are a free tool that reach a large number of people. We also do it through the institutional websites of RDCA and Regional Directorate for Tourism and Culture (RDTC). (C. Andrade and H. Sousa, February 1, 2022)

In this context, the teachers still value the informal testimony of visitors who pass by, to their acquaintances, by mentioning that the "role of 'word of mouth' (...) ends up bringing friends and acquaintances of our visitors to the Museum-House, who thus become a reliable source of dissemination" (C. Andrade and H. Sousa, February 1, 2022).

Regarding FETA, according to the person in charge of the educational service, it works in partnership with different educational institutions, community centres, support centres for empowerment and inclusion, RDTC, RDE, Funchal City Hall and public and private regional companies, in order to respond to the expectations of the surrounding community. The entire artistic project is made known through several kind of media, such as institutional websites, public media, among others.

For this articulation, they have the institutional support of the RDTC, RDE, Funchal City Hall (with material and human resources, and financial support). In addition to these, they have permanent support of various companies for the production, promotion and dissemination of artistic creations, programme cycle.

Considering the shared discourses, we see that the study visits of students from different levels of education — an initiative of the schools themselves with the aim of seeing, hearing and talking about Cultural Heritage (musical instruments of the Madeiran tradition, visual and decorative arts, theatre plays, music of popular tradition, literature of oral transmission, among other important artistic practices), are aspects considered by the institutions we have consulted. In turn, visits to schools to publicise the collection and the work carried out by these institutions, with a view to disseminating activities and to creating socio-cultural and leisure moments, are a common practice.

We also found that the channels of articulation with the population have as reference the formal contexts of learning — through visits to the schools or institutions under analysis, or through the realisation of artistic activities — resulting in opportunities for significant, implicit learning, closer to the daily lives of children, young people and ordinary citizens. In these circumstances, in addition to the contact with artistic and cultural practices, the public experiences real citizenship practices and consequently inclusion.

Conclusions

Access to cultural values relates to the achievement of cultural rights for citizens, raising the standards of artistic creation in the desire that the work becomes accessible to all. When art becomes culture and its values are seen by the public, there is a change and improvement of the general quality of life.

This exploratory study allowed us to understand better the role that socio-cultural institutions have at the level of our community, as well as the wealth they represent for the cultural and

social formation of individuals. Knowledge and contact with the cultural and artistic heritage of our Region, in dialogue with artistic expressions contribute to a large extent to the blurring of social inequalities and to the development and creation of citizenship practices. In this line of thought, the Eurydice Report (European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice, 2018) states that the main objective of citizenship education is to promote the harmonious coexistence and development of individuals and communities. In relation to educational communities, citizenship education implies an active, responsible and conscious education, where students assume their responsibilities considering the local and regional dimensions with an eye to a global dimension.

From our experience as Higher Education teachers, we consider that the pedagogical processes in the field of art education, developed together with the socio-cultural institutions studied, constitute an added value in the training of future education professionals. In this context, the development of meaningful learning in non-formal environments is particularly important. In fact, arts education fosters creative and critical thinking skills, as well as increases collaboration and connection between subjects and the community, and allows students to construct and transform meanings.

Artistic experience fosters appreciation for the arts, culture and heritage, and promotes cultural diversity. Art has an aesthetic, inclusive, social and cultural significance, whose survival depends on the existence of an audience that appreciates, experiences, recreates, interprets and values it, because new creations are formed and envisioned in it. We believe that among young students, readers, exhibition visitors, spectators, future artists and educators will be born. In other words, culture and cultural institutions play a great role in civic education, because through them citizens can rise culturally, they can develop their worldviews, their views of themselves and others, their knowledge and skills and thus become active, informed and socially successful citizens.

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