



Ca' Foscari  
University  
of Venice

Master's Degree programme  
in Digital and Public Humanities

Final Thesis

# How social media have changed the world of art and culture

The case of La Fenice Opera House in Venice

**Supervisor**

Ch. Prof. Stefania De Vincentis

**Assistant supervisor**

Ch. Prof. Diego Mantoan

**Graduand**

Sara Bettin

Matriculation Number 857271

**Academic Year**

2021 / 2022





*"Social networks are no longer about websites,  
they are about experiences"*

*(Mike DiLorenzo – musician)*

# THANKS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. De Vincentis, for supporting my thesis idea and understanding my way of working on it while I was also struggling with supporting myself financially. I thank my co-supervisor, Prof. Mantoan, for giving me the opportunity to interview for one of the most important internships of my life and one that allowed me to realise many dreams. I would like to thank Pietro Tessarin and the Fondazione Teatro La Fenice for having welcomed me for six months in those golden walls that emanate so much history and glory and enabled me to live some of the most beautiful moments that I will always carry in my heart. I thank all my friends, those of a lifetime and newer friendships, for not having left me during my paranoia about the future. Last but not least, I thank my mother who put up with me and supported me and without whom I would not be who I am today.

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>9</b>
<hr/>	
<b>1 COMMUNICATION, CULTURE AND MUSEUMS</b>	<b>13</b>
<hr/>	
<b>1.1 COMMUNICATION, CULTURE AND MUSEUMS - THE DIGITAL AGE</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1.2 DIGITAL CULTURE</b>	<b>25</b>
1.3 THE NECESSARY PLATFORMS THAT EVERY CULTURAL ORGANISATION SHOULD HAVE	33
<b>1.4 THE SOCIAL AGE - AN APPROACH IN EVERYDAY LIFE</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>1.5 THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL MEDIA: WHEN WERE THEY BORN?</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>1.6 A WORLD IN CONSTANT CONNECTION</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>1.7 HOW SOCIAL MEDIA SHOULD BE USED CONSCIOUSLY: RULES EVERYONE SHOULD FOLLOW</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>1.8 NUMBERS, INFLUENCERS AND MEMES: SOME CASES OF VIRTUOUS CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>46</b>
1.8.1 WHO ARE THEY AND WHAT NUMBERS DO THE LARGEST CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS HAVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA	47
1.8.2 NEW WEB PROFESSIONALS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS: INFLUENCERS AS NEW VEHICLES OF KNOWLEDGE	50
1.8.3 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF VENICE AND WINNING COMMUNICATION THROUGH MEMES	51
<b>1.9 WHICH COMMUNICATION METHODS ARE MOST COMMONLY USED BY CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS?</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>1.10 THE PRECARIOUS SITUATION BEFORE COVID-19 AND THE AFTERSHOCKS</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>2 THE CULTURAL NETWORK IN VENICE: SOME CASES AMONG MUSEUMS, FOUNDATIONS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTES IN THE CITY</b>	<b>68</b>
<hr/>	
2.1 THE FONDAZIONE MUSEI CIVICI DI VENEZIA (MUVE)	76
2.1.1 The MUVE Foundation's social platforms: strengths and weaknesses	81
2.2 VENETO REGIONAL DIRECTORATE OF MUSEUMS	86
2.2.1 The social platforms of the Veneto Regional Museums Directorate: a SWOT analysis	92
2.2.2 Two museums compared: Palazzo Grimani and the National Museum of Villa Pisani	98
2.3 LE GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA	103
2.3.1 How the Accademia Galleries behave on social media	106
	107
2.4 OTHER PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	108
2.4.1 Some examples of social platforms of private entities: the positive and negative aspects	109
<b>3 LA FENICE OPERA HOUSE - ITS HISTORY AS A CULTURAL BODY, OPERA HOUSE AND INSTITUTION IN VENICE</b>	<b>113</b>
<hr/>	
<b>3.1 A CASE STUDY: LA FENICE OPERA HOUSE</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>3.2 A FURTHER MINOR THEATRICAL REALITY: THE GOLDONI THEATRE</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>3.3 LA FENICE OPERA HOUSE: THE INTERVIEW WITH THE INSIDER</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>3.4 ITALIAN COMPETITORS ON SOCIAL MEDIA</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>3.5 THE COMMUNICATIVE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A MUSEUM AND AN OPERA HOUSE</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>4 THE COMMUNICATION STYLE OF LA FENICE OPERA HOUSE AS SEEN IN EACH OF ITS SOCIAL PROFILES</b>	<b>131</b>
<hr/>	

<b>4.1 LA FENICE OPERA HOUSE ON SOCIAL MEDIA: PLATFORMS, CONTENT AND AUDIENCE</b>	<b>132</b>
4.1.1 FACEBOOK	134
4.1.2 INSTAGRAM	137
4.1.3 TWITTER	144
4.1.4 TIKTOK	146
4.1.5 LINKEDIN	148
4.1.6 YOUTUBE	150
<b><u>5 DATA ANALYSIS OF THE THREE MOST USED SOCIAL PLATFORMS BY LA FENICE: FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM AND TWITTER</u></b>	<b><u>153</u></b>
<b>5.1 THE DATA FROM LA FENICE: THE CURRENT SITUATION</b>	<b>154</b>
5.1.1 HOW FACEBOOK'S DATA HAS CHANGED IN A YEAR	157
5.1.2 THE GROWTH OF INSTAGRAM: HOW MORE POSTS CHANGE THE GAME	162
5.1.3 ONE OF THE BEST TWITTER PROFILES OF OPERA HOUSES IN ITALY	169
<b><u>CONCLUSIONS</u></b>	<b><u>175</u></b>
<b><u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u></b>	<b><u>180</u></b>
<b><u>SITOGRAPHY</u></b>	<b><u>186</u></b>





# Introduction

What would the world be like today without social media? What would our lives be like if we didn't worry about taking the perfect photo, the perfect selfie or simply enacting a fictitious perfection in the eyes of those who follow us?

Certainly very strange, perhaps we don't even remember what our life dynamics were like before the advent of the social era, but if our lives as ordinary private citizens have changed a lot since the first phones with only the address book and Snake installed, the same goes for all those companies in the broadest sense of the word, who have entrusted their story and their way of speaking to the public to these media.

The development of media (both the more traditional and the latest generation) and their impact on society have challenged the now dusty world of cultural organisations such as museums, libraries, galleries and universities. These new media enable the viewing of different contents, communication systems and the development of new spatial and textual experiences as a whole. From this new vision implemented through sites and screens emerges the opportunity to consider new textual and spatial dilemmas about digital cultural communication and to propose co-creation methods for multi-site distribution.<sup>1</sup>

Instagram, Facebook and Twitter are just some of the most popular social platforms that have allowed art and culture to come down from the pedestal where it had been placed over the years, making it almost an elitist activity, and to reach everyone.

Major museums such as the MoMA and the Metropolitan Museum in New York or the Louvre in Paris have become real trailblazers for what has been the entry of culture into the social world. Through posts, tweets and videos, they have been able to transport the interior of their rooms, sometimes left dusty by the oblivion of contemporary life, out of that world that is frozen in time and not always in step with the times.

On the other hand, unlike the museums just mentioned that are present in large foreign metropolises, the current phase that museums are experiencing, and in particular those in Italy, appears rather complex to describe due to forces and factors, often external to the

---

<sup>1</sup> Russo A., Watkins J., *New literacy new audiences: social media and cultural institutions*, EVA 2008 London Conference, 2008, p. 226

cultural world, in which it is far from obvious to distinguish phenomena from implications and changes of a deeper and more structural nature.

It is difficult to answer, for example, whether the museum system in Italy has strengthened and consolidated over the last twenty years or whether it has weakened. Probably both answers are true. Museums have grown numerically, have become more accessible and modern, and have undergone processes of change that have expanded the role and social reach of their actions. There has been a rethinking of administrative and management criteria and organisational behaviour to improve the efficiency of processes and the effectiveness of results.<sup>2</sup>

Suffice it to summarise how culture consumption in Italy has undergone profound changes in recent years. These evolutionary lines appear effectively interpretable in the light of the new consumption trends, counted by some sociologists under the heading of postmodern consumption. The postmodern evolution of consumption, in our opinion, can facilitate the understanding of the phenomenon of cultural consumption, characterised by the emergence of new consumers in search of authentic, non-artificial experiences, able to connect intimately with cultural heritage, typical productions and local traditions.<sup>3</sup>

The major digital changes forced by the Covid-19 pandemic will also be shown. It is true that even before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, cultural institutions, and specifically museums, had already implemented changes from being collection-centred to being user-centred, in the context of participation and human interaction. When Covid-19 came disrupting our lives, the various cultural institutions had no choice but to turn to digital transformation. With the crisis caused by the pandemic closures, museums saw their doors close, visitors disappear and so did their main income and revenues.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of this thesis, at this point, is to show how social media have revolutionised not only the times, but also the way of communicating culture and approaching audiences who, over the years, have moved away from museum halls (and not only those), preferring a hit-and-

---

<sup>2</sup> Bollo A., *I musei e la sfida della nuova cultura digitale*, Associazione per l'Economia della Cultura, 2012, p. 1

<sup>3</sup> Pencarelli T., Splendiani S., *Le reti museali come strumenti capaci di generare valore: verso un approccio manageriale e di marketing*, «Il Capitale culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage», n. 2, 2011, p. 229

<sup>4</sup> Giannini T., Bowen J. P., *Museums at the crossroads: between digitality, reality, and Covid-19*, Heritage, 2022, p. 2

run cultural education based on streaming broadcasts viewed from home or from a mobile phone while standing in line at the post office.

The growth in museum digital engagement during the pandemic has produced several promising benefits, but also ethical concerns. With a world caught up in dramatic change, it is perhaps more important than ever that museum professionals engage in discussions about power, injustice, privilege and lack thereof, comfort and care.<sup>5</sup>

To show the power of social media, we need only think (for a moment) outside the cultural world and how these platforms in times of crisis play an increasingly important role in supporting efforts to cope with natural disasters. To give just one example of the power of social platforms in such dramatic times, in the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter helped to raise funds for relief efforts, but also provided a vital line of communication during the crisis itself.<sup>6</sup>

Even in these moments of crisis, the Tweet-O-Meter found that Twitter usage in Tokyo reached 1,200 tweets per minute. Indeed, not only was it the medium that provided the latest news, but it was also one of the only sources of communication with the country's population, along with Facebook and the Japanese social networking site.

After analysing the historical context in which social media were born and how they have brought about a real revolution in the modus operandi of cultural institutions, I want to focus on a case study that I experienced first-hand during my years at university, when I carried out various internships for cultural institutions in the Venice area for which I was responsible for following their social pages and creating ad hoc communication for them.

In fact, after showing how in the city of Venice (island and mainland) the various institutions are connected to each other, through social and not, I will talk about the Fondazione Teatro La Fenice, the first opera house in the city and one of the most famous in Italy.

The Teatro La Fenice was also the site of my second curricular internship and I spent six months in their Press Office where I was in charge of following and updating their website and I was completely entrusted with their Instagram and TikTok pages, the latter created by me, making the Opera House the first in Italy to appear on the Chinese platform.

---

<sup>5</sup> Kist C., *Museums, Challenging Heritage and Social Media During COVID-19*, Vol 18, No 3, 2020, p. 345

<sup>6</sup> Carlile L., *Development Online: Making the Most of Social Media*, International Institute for Environment and Development, 2011, p. 3

After analysing La Fenice both as a museum and as a theatre, I will show the diversification of the communication that is done on the various channels and the data showing the growth of the Opera House in the last year and how it has placed second in the ranking of total followers among the various opera foundations in Italy.

This is a real journey that brings together two worlds: culture, which is often seen as old and static, and contemporary communication, which is often seen as an ephemeral pastime that will not last for years to come.

"The Internet is not just a vehicle; it is a form of culture. The net is first and foremost a philosophical concept."<sup>7</sup> So said Jovanotti, and given the subject of my thesis, I cannot agree more.

---

<sup>7</sup> Lorenzo Cherubini, aka Jovanotti, Italian singer-songwriter. <https://www.lefrasi.com/frase/jovanotti-internet-non-solo-veicolo-forma-cultura?bg=p38> (14/02/2023)

# 1 Communication, culture and museums

In recent years, cultural organisations have used terms such as interpreting, relevancy, interacting and creating meaning to define their different functions and ambitions.

Cultural organisations provide communication across all levels of function, in-house and outdoors. Communicating is at the very core of whatever a cultural organisation makes. However, the term has often been linked to marketing functions, for instance, but not to any culture-specific function.<sup>8</sup>

One of the most important functions is related to a more solid relationship with the territory: the cultural entity must become an indispensable reference point for its promotion. It can bring added value to traditional functions by connecting with tourism. New tourists, like visitors to the organisation, will seek more authentic experiences to improve their quality of life. Unconventional strategies such as Humanistic Marketing bring the tourist, who knows what he or she wants but not how to get it, back to the centre of attention through packages that could be considered as intangible assets. The museum stands out as a tourist destination when it connects with other cultural venues, when it plans projects related to emotional and inner well-being, when it acts as an info point for other offers in the area, and when it highlights offers related to social responsibility and environmental sustainability.<sup>9</sup>

Comprehending what communication is all about is first of all about how we approach the terms our most frequently used. Professor Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, Emeritus Professor of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester, addressed the concepts of significance generation and understanding by considering them interconnected: 'The process of meaning-making is the process of making sense of experience, of explaining or interpreting the world to ourselves and others. The creation of meaning, the construction of understanding, is achieved through the process of interpretation'.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup>Nielsen J. K., *Museum communication and storytelling: articulating understandings within the museum structure, Museum Management and Curatorship*, 2017, p. 440

<sup>9</sup> Vanni M., La museologia e le nuove funzioni del museo, Massa Carrara, «Finestra sull'Arte», Danae Project, 14/01/2021, <https://www.finestresullarte.info/focus/la-museologia-e-le-nuove-funzioni-del-museo> (26/01/2023)

<sup>10</sup> Nielsen J. K., *Museum communication and storytelling: articulating understandings within the museum structure, Museum Management and Curatorship*, 2017 p. 442

It is generally agreed that what cultural institutions convey - as intricate communicative structures - is actually valuable. Yet, it is also the purpose of communication that these entities provide.

As such, communication per se qualifies as the conveyance and interchange of knowledge. However, cultural communication also includes the core concepts of learning, meaning-making and interpretation, which are already widely used by these entities. Thus, communication affects all aspects of the way the organisation in question goes about its work. Cultural communication is consequently a process, in addition to a concept, and should be handled accordingly.<sup>11</sup>

The idea of this chapter is to go deep into the history and how social media have changed the daily habits of people all over the world.

How did the latest generation of platforms come about? What was there before Instagram, Facebook and the very latest like TikTok. These are the questions I asked myself and wanted to give an answer to, spanning almost three decades of history, which began in the late 1980s.

In recent years, social media have gained considerable importance and their influence is constantly growing. In addition to classic mass media such the press, radio or TV, social media allow users to interact and communicate, to create and share content digitally. This main feature allows regular users to create a media wave comparable to that generated by the media.<sup>12</sup>

If the work of a social media manager is still difficult to understand for most people, so will be the history of these platforms, which, to tell the truth, does not date back to recent years but to the previous generation of what is known as the "digital native".

Furthermore, I would like to explain in the best possible way what the job of a social media manager consists of. In fact, many people think that it is just a figure who systematically posts a few photos, videos and events on the calendar of a particular company (a term that I do not use by chance, as it is useful for all types of companies, whether they are non-profit organisations, businesses or public administrations).

I want to try and dispel some of the myths behind this figure and demonstrate the preparation, commitment and dedication to work that lies behind it, as in any other more 'traditional' job.

---

<sup>11</sup> Ivi p. 443

<sup>12</sup> Roese V., *You won't believe how co-dependent they are*, p. 313

Not all that glitters is gold: the social media manager doesn't just take a good photo (which, in many cases, he doesn't even take himself, but uses professional shots taken by photographers or others) and publish it. Behind this there is meticulous planning, deadlines and the right timing to publicise and often sell one's product at the right time and with the right results.

The world of social media is therefore not a purely ephemeral one of glitter and influencers. Behind it, the work is much tougher, so much so that the social media manager hardly ever leaves the office after hours.

There is always someone who requests his presence on the various platforms and it is his job to respond.

This historical excursus will be the basis from which I will start to arrive, subsequently, at my case studies and make it clear why in our days this work is of vital importance for companies that want to position themselves in the right way in their market. In all this, it is basic to understand that cultural heritage is not only for our enjoyment or profit, but first and foremost to make us more civilised, more human and also happier. If all of this is not clear in our minds, we will never understand the reasons why we need to save it and, moreover, why we need to attend to it and communicate it. We must convince ourselves that cultural institutions are places that contribute to our well-being. Therefore, we must become aware that cultural heritage is a fundamental element in building our society and our inner wealth.<sup>13</sup>

The lack of a habit of enjoyment, even as some kind of regularity, is compounded by the problem of the many who, while accessing museums on occasion, take on a 'hit and run' spirit: these are those who go to see what is on offer without having either a real interest or any intention of grasping the stimuli offered to them.

Underlying these issues is the idea of inclusive and participatory cultural institutions that are able to grasp and develop the right of every citizen to have access to them and to derive both pleasure and dignity from the experience.

Before analysing what has changed digitally in recent years, it must be said that the reform of museums has experienced a rapid and evident development of social, cultural and

---

<sup>13</sup> Branchesi L., Curzi V., Mandarano N. (ed.), *Comunicare il museo oggi. Dalle scelte museologiche al digitale*, Milano, Skira, 2016, p.

economic impact in recent years. This is also thanks to the experimentation with a type of public management with greater autonomy and corporate-inspired governance.

The data and events of the last few years make it clear how transparent high-level selection procedures, greater autonomy of directors, the possibility, when necessary, of finding external know-how, and the streamlining of many procedures, which have clearly benefited autonomous museums, could also serve as a model for many other cultural institutions. Let us think for example of the network of permanent theatres, opera houses, large festivals and orchestras that are supported entirely by the public sector.<sup>14</sup>

## 1.1 Communication, culture and museums - the digital age

How did we arrive at an almost exclusively digital cultural communication?

This is the fundamental question to ask when analysing the phenomenon of digitisation of cultural organisations, from the use of a website to more modern tools such as social media, podcasts and virtual tours.

One must begin by saying that in the field of cultural marketing and with particular reference to museums, disseminating and promoting their various initiatives does not only bring a benefit in terms of increased revenue but also in a clear revaluation of the image of the area hosting the museum. This goes hand in hand with the ability to capture and stimulate the interest of citizens, increasing their consent and attention.

It would not be possible to pursue such a goal without an adequate exploitation of the latest information technology. Of course, the scarcity of public resources and private contributions has always placed museums in a condition on the edge of survival, but it is precisely on the level of communication that the challenge of the future for public and private museum institutions lies.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Lampis A., *La riforma dei musei statali spinge a una nuova governance delle istituzioni culturali*, Roma, «Economia della Cultura», n.2, Il Mulino, giugno 2020, p. 1

<sup>15</sup> Manfredi E., *Il marketing nei musei: tra innovazione tecnologica e promozione del patrimonio artistico. Il caso di Jewish Museum di New York*, Roma, Università Luiss Guido Carli, 2015/2016, p. 32



Museum institutions must set themselves the goal of creating web applications that represent a highly recognisable, identifiable and credible space in which information is made available to all users, regardless of their lack of familiarity with online services.

What we are saying allows us to formulate an initial consideration; the acceleration of the digital revolution has contributed exponentially to the modernisation of cultural institutions in favour of a widespread conception of cultural heritage.

Web channels, new participatory social media and the socio-economic model of the word of mouth offer enormous potential for cultural communication in terms of visibility and distribution; the mobility of communication, possible through a wide variety of digital devices, further favours the creation, sharing and dissemination of cultural content.<sup>16</sup>

A survey commissioned by the former Ministry of Heritage, Cultural Activities and Tourism (the old Ministry of Cultural Heritage, which also included tourism) on the digital performance of the nation's museums has shown some interesting insights, which go beyond the trivial drafting of a simple numerical ranking. In fact, Travel Appeal, the start-up company that created and presented it, clearly identifies the state of the art of the thirty major state museums, assessing the progress and results achieved on the technological and digital front, while at the same time measuring the degree of satisfaction (defined by the term sentiment) of the public in basic services. The results deserve attention. In a nutshell, in fact, the picture that emerges is that of a new momentum towards the public carried out through the use of social media, with a definite growth of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages populated by a multitude of content and interactions. It seems that, probably also thanks to the contribution of new competent professional figures, the mission of attracting the public by occupying its most assiduous virtual venues has hit the mark.

In the context of an increased international mobility of people, soaring tourist flows and their range of movement with its consequences in terms of the gap between cultures, the challenge to be faced is to offer convincing answers to a visitor made more aware by the forms of contemporary consumption, knowing that even in the face of a work or an environment of very high value, one will seek satisfaction from the overall experience. In practice, the international tourist, by now tried and tested by multiple and varied travel experiences, even in the presence of the Uffizi collections or the Pinacoteca di Brera, will not be satisfied with mere contemplation but will seek ways of accessing and interacting with these contents in

---

<sup>16</sup> Roese V., *You won't believe how co-dependent they are*, p.

line with his experience. The aim is to accelerate the possibility of establishing a contact with the public that goes beyond the stop at the visit and focuses on the experience, which cannot only be virtual. The motivation is almost obvious: the role that in the contemporary scenario assumes the visitor as an influencer, and his or her gratification as a tool for defining user-centricity strategies based on qualitative and not quantitative metrics.<sup>17</sup>

The increasing use of the Internet and the web by the world's population and their growing importance in the process of cultural renewal and dissemination have favoured the development of a borderless user base. This has created a unique virtual community of individuals where communication and interaction are virtual, a community that is not tied to a place but only to web accessibility, able to communicate instantly with the rest of the world through instant communication software.<sup>18</sup>

Looking also for a moment at the post-museum environment, in which cultural participation through museum learning becomes increasingly important, it is suggested how audiences and communities could work together with museums to extend both the knowledge situated around the documents of individual collections and the reach of such information. Although museums have used their educational programmes to innovatively engage audiences with cultural knowledge both online and offline, social media offer a meaningful and perhaps more efficient way of 'publicising' the ways in which audiences respond to cultural content.<sup>19</sup>

For as long as it has existed, the web has always been perceived as a tool that connects people. The concept has expanded exponentially since the birth of Web 2.0, a new way of conceiving the Internet that revolves around the ability to enable interaction between the user and the network. The direct consequence of this evolution was the appearance of social media, for instance, all those applications that are based on the ideological assumptions of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content, the User Generated Content (UGC).<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Asproni, Patrizia, *Musei social o musei digitali?*, Venezia, «Il Giornale delle Fondazioni», Fondazione di Venezia, 15/11/2017, <http://www.ilgiornaledellefondazioni.com/content/musei-social-o-musei-digital> (30/01/2023).

<sup>18</sup> Bonacini E., *I musei e le nuove frontiere dei social networks: da Facebook a Foursquare e Gowalla*, 2010, p. 1

<sup>19</sup> Russo A., Watkins J., Kelly L., Chan S., *How will social media affect museum communication?*. In: Proceedings Nordic Digital Excellence in Museums (NODEM 06), Oslo, 2006, p. 4

<sup>20</sup> De Gottardo F., D'Amore A., Gasparotti V., Raimondi Cominesi A., Giannini F., Colella P., D'Eredità A., *Comunicare la cultura online: una guida pratica per i musei - Progettazione di siti web, content management, social media e analisi dei risultati*, 2014, p. 66

In reality, social networks have always existed and Facebook and Twitter are nothing more than the online evolution of social network theory, studied since the 19th century by anthropology and sociology experts and referring to the complex relational dynamics that exist between members of all social systems, at whatever level. According to social network theory, a 'social network' is a social structure composed of nodes – for instance, individuals or organisations - that are bound together by one or more types of interdependent relationships, such as values, aspirations, economic exchange, friendship, hatred and so on. So why should museums know what social networks are and, more than anything else, why on earth should they use them? It is a more than justifiable asking of a question and the first answer one is sometimes tempted to give is the wrong one, at least in part: why does everyone do it. In reality, social networks are the ideal tool for cultural organisations that want to build a powerful community around their values and collections, since they are tools that allow, at the same time, both to share information of any kind in real time, and to rapidly and exponentially exploit the relationships between the nodes of the social network.<sup>21</sup>

In other words, thanks to social networks, cultural organisations have the opportunity to share their most interesting, creative and up-to-date content - such as videos, photographs, events and online initiatives of any kind (contests, meetings, live-chats, quizzes) - online. At the same time, users can participate, comment and even create content of their own. This approach departs from the image traditionally associated with a cultural institution, perceived as authoritarian, inaccessible and complex. In addition to this consideration of brand awareness and brand image, and perhaps still important, is the possibility offered by social networks to create a 'many-to-many' dialogue with users who are part of a given community.

From the cultural institutions' point of view, however, it is relevant to go past the regulatory and frequently rather nominal comprehension regarding social media as a source of both celebration and worry, and to recognise the possibilities offered by the variety of different services and methods of communication. Social media, fundamentally invites organisations to reorganise their communication role models in cultural communication by moving from an institutional (what we want to deliver) to a user model (what people may wish to convey).<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Ivi p. 67

<sup>22</sup> Drotner K., Schrøder K. C., *Museum Communication and Social Media - The Connected Museum*, 2013, p. 3

In terms of what and how of communication, social media catalyse modes of communication that consist less of unilateral communication processes (information about the institution and its artefacts), whilst being more interested in interactive communication flows (engagement of external stakeholders as partners).

Nevertheless, it is relevant to understand that social media impact all five dimensions of a cultural institution in a rather potential sense, and to analyse for a second only the museum sector, which partly composes the cultural sector, as defined by the standard definition offered by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) statutes: "acquisition, conservation, research, exhibition and communication" (International Council of Museums, 2007).<sup>23</sup>

This definition, however, has recently been updated with the following one that emphasises accessibility, inclusiveness, diversity and sustainability. Important emphasis is also placed on communication, which must be done and professionally.

Here is the updated text:

“A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.”

Going back to the definition of ICOM and as the above mentioned examples of the influence of social media on research indicate, museum (and more generally cultural) communication can concentrate on communicating research, which is traditionally addressed to more specialised publics, or on communicating to the audience of exhibitions and the museum directly.

Cultural public communication concentrates on communication with real and would-be visitors, and this has become increasingly important since the 1990s. The combination and controversial talk about knowledge societies and economies of experience has given prominence to the societies that museums serve and of which they form a component.

---

<sup>23</sup> Ivi p. 5

I want to mention here some fundamental points for the digitisation of a cultural institution, starting with the website.<sup>24</sup>

The museum website (or always speaking generally that of any cultural institution such as theatres, archives and the like) can allow remote users to participate in the creation of cultural content, to add their own 'labels' to the artefacts in the collection, thus allowing for the creation of 'informal' interpretations of objects and folksonomic classifications (which, as some research has shown, broaden the technical-museum vocabulary in an innovative, simple and participatory way and help exponentially in the indexing of collections).

In recent years, Italy, contrary to what one might think, has played a vanguard role in the field of website design for museums and, more generally, in defining the principles that determine the quality of a cultural website.

This structure included seven main areas:

- The Institution Itself: pages dedicated to the institution (history of the building, history of the collection, map of the rooms, the directors, research, the archive, the institution in the territory and in the city) but also to the activities carried out by the institution (research, acquisitions, restorations, publications, exhibitions and displays);
- Heritage: a section devoted to the museum's collection;
- The Routes: section in which the institution's collection is presented by routes, which may be chronological or thematic;
- The Services: pages dedicated to the services offered by the institution;
- Online resources: a page with useful links;
- The community: a space designed to host newsletters, discussion forums, association initiatives related to the museum's heritage;
- News: a section with the latest news

In addition to these macro-areas and the home page, of course, " Institution & Web" identified a multilingualism selector, meta-navigation tools (internal search engine, site map, guide, contact page, feedback forms) and a footer containing copyright information, disclaimers, revision and update dates, page URL.

---

<sup>24</sup> De Gottardo F., D'Amore A., Gasparotti V., Raimondi Cominesi A., Giannini F., Colella P., D'Eredità A., *Comunicare la cultura online: una guida pratica per i musei - Progettazione di siti web, content management, social media e analisi dei risultati*, 2014, p. 10

One of the main purposes of users, as well as the main purpose for users of the surveyed institution websites, is therefore to search for information and then visit the institution in person. The second type of users is, on the other hand, those who are looking for information such as: historical information about the cultural institution, room descriptions, information about research activities, information about the staff, pages dedicated to patrons, the multimedia section and the "Work with us" section.<sup>25</sup>

A further trend common to the sites of all the world's major institution is to dedicate a special section to events and exhibitions, which often have their own mini-sites, and even to include the main events or exhibitions on the home page.

One therefore understands the importance of accessibility: a practice aimed at allowing the full consultation of a website also to differently abled users such as blind people, deaf people, visually impaired people, people with disabilities that prevent them from being able to use a mouse and keyboard fully, people with cognitive disabilities, people suffering from photosensitive epilepsy. These people may not have full access to the resources available on the web and therefore surf the net with different tools from those we are used to.

In addition to this, it is also the task of public administrations to train and constantly update the staff responsible for maintaining the site, to ensure that there is no discrimination between able-bodied and differently-abled employees, to involve a differently-abled public in checking the accessibility of sites.<sup>26</sup>

Among the most innovative institution-user communication options (which in many cases also turns into a real form of cultural production on the part of the user) mention should be made of storytelling, a technique through which the institution asks the user to express an emotion aroused during the visit or by an object from his or her present or past daily life, perhaps accompanied by images or comments. A narrative is basically a structure that can be based on engaging emotionally, learning, educational, interactive, individual or social, imaginative, fictional or unfictional, digital or non-digital, subjective or objective. Attention is obtained by recalling sensations, feelings, memories and interest.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Ivi p. 11

<sup>26</sup> Ivi p. 17

<sup>27</sup> Nielsen J. K., *Museum communication and storytelling: articulating understandings within the museum structure, Museum Management and Curatorship*, 2017, p. 43

Storytelling might be seen as the notion that brings with it the articulation of comprehension that shapes cultural communication and the engaging narration that forms the story.

A good narrative is invaluable to any organised entity. Moreover, it can help an institution build trust and a closer bond between the staff and users, as in addition to guaranteeing that the institution's goals and objectives are shared internally by the staff. A cultural organisation that utilises storytelling in-house has the chance to look at the authenticity of stories and improve external communication with the intended public.

The focus of storytelling is basically on communication, making it important for many practical aspects of culture communication. Many institutions have limited storytelling to communication with visitors, focusing in particular on live interpretation, living history and guided tours. Digital storytelling is used as part of informal and formal learning as well as personal entertainment as digital tools and software make it easy to both access and create stories.

Many institutions have embraced digital media in their communication practices, although these do not always seem fully integrated as part of the storytelling traditions in institution. Just as for their website, storytelling is also applied in other situations, such as social pages.

Institution had no choice but to stand aside from the evolution of digital communication; they rightly started to use these tools to re-appropriate their functions of conservation, preservation, communication and valorisation in new ways. The creation of a profile on a social network by an institution manifests the search for an institutionally recognised means of communication and dissemination which, through the trustworthiness and authority of the institution itself, provides a guarantee of the veracity of the cultural content communicated and distributed, thus also avoiding the dissemination of erroneous or uncontrolled content.

We will now look at how our society has come to be based on digital culture, what it means and what the implications of these new tools are for cultural institutions, analysing above all the field of social media, their implementation for culture, their history and the various languages that can be used in communication.

Actually, just what the digital culture is promoting is not just codes of conduct. On the contrary, it is also instilling people to make the tools they need themselves.

Even though the younger and quicker generations in the consumer society, particularly the digitally minded natives who were at ease using their own household and generation products, are adapting, yet they have a longing to be free from monopoly capitalism.

Concerning young people, the relationship with the younger generation is important in understanding how to use these new technologies in the cultural sphere.

In the large and varied universe that shows little interest in attending cultural institutions, a significant part is made up of young people and adolescents.

After the end of compulsory schooling, the habit of visiting museums declines sharply.

Of course, also in this context the socio-demographic variables and the cultural background of the individual have a significant influence, not only on the choice of whether or not to visit a museum, but also on whether the visit experience is culturally and socially effective.

In order to change the museum-youth relationship, it is necessary to start from the school, by leveraging, among other things, the possibility of creating strategic alliances between teachers and museum operators who must find ways of working according to shared objectives and methodologies. It is a matter of building new processes of cultural mediation based on the participation and involvement of young people with activities that can foster the perception of the museum no longer as a place where knowledge is imparted and accumulated, but rather springs from the bringing into play of the interests and aptitudes of individuals through interaction with those who work and operate within the museum.<sup>28</sup>

Although its elements are different, the popular or mass culture's desire to establish a shared code of how people feel and act is also applicable to digital culture. The internet has actually turned into a thriving element of global capitalism. Digital culture is differentiable with cultural products for each platform to look for marks of the other cultures or to be handed to each has different cultural names may not be a requirement. Important is that a culture is not searching for a condition, such as the existence of shared distinctive features, as it will not mean that all people in that specific culture behave or operate likewise and that a set of emerging applications will make more headway than earlier ones.<sup>29</sup>

Although all gaming consoles, computer simulators, and social networks in Digital Culture share different cultural coding on a micro basis, on a macro level they have entrenched

---

<sup>28</sup> De Luca M., *I giovani e i musei*, Roma, «Economia della Cultura», n.1, Il Mulino, 2008, p. 99

<sup>29</sup> Çöteli S., *The Impact of New Media on The Forms of Culture: Digital Identity and Digital Culture*, p. 7



partnerships. Two components can be used to explore and comprehend the role of both media and people in Digital Culture: people and technology.

We will then see how Digital Culture was born and how it has been applied to the social media sector by cultural organizations.

## 1.2 Digital culture

Digital culture is the culture that has developed thanks to new technologies, and in particular thanks to the Internet.

Digital culture began to develop in the 1960s, when the first Internet projects took shape in the United States. Although the expression 'digital culture' has no real originator, it aims to give a definition of digital that is not merely a set of technical tools. The cultural value of the digital lies in the fact that it changes human practices and the meaning of these. Marcello Vitali-Rosati, professor and philosopher of virtuality, digital identity and related issues, explains in *Pratiche di editoria digitale* that: "The tool produces practices and also produces the meaning of these practices, it modifies our way of being in the world but also our 'nature', because it changes our way of understanding...". The expression 'digital culture' thus reflects the paradigm shift brought about by digital technology, so much so that Milad Doueihi, historian of religions and holder of the chair of digital humanism at the University of Paris-Sorbonne, speaks of 'digital conversion'.<sup>30</sup>

From this project, a series of technologies and innovations emerged that led us increasingly towards a digital culture. Indeed, at that time, there was an increase in publishing, consumption and manipulation of information, particularly using computers and computer networks. Originally, the Internet was used to exchange data between computers, for instance within the same institution; it was only in the early 1990s that, thanks to Tim Berners-Lee and his World Wide Web (a network of information resources based on the Internet infrastructure), it became possible to connect all the computers in the world<sup>31</sup>.

---

<sup>30</sup> [https://it.frwiki.wiki/wiki/Culture\\_num%C3%A9rique](https://it.frwiki.wiki/wiki/Culture_num%C3%A9rique) (15/02/2023)

<sup>31</sup> [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultura\\_digitale](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultura_digitale) (05/12/2022)

The evolution of the concept of digital culture inevitably follows the progress of the media in which this culture is developed as well as the widespread use of the Internet and some of its applications such as social networks. During the 1990s, digital culture was the domain of a rather specialised public composed of professionals and other users including students who not only had the skills but also the physical possibility of accessing computer equipment possibly connected to the network. Since the advent of the personal computer and distributed broadband access, there has been a gradual broadening of the base for the production and use of digital content, especially in its online availability<sup>32</sup>.

Fundamental to this theme is the computer literacy of society as a policy aimed at overcoming technological barriers and ensuring the enjoyment of content by a broad user base. Another important aspect is digital obsolescence and the related need to preserve the accessibility of the different formats over time, especially in relation to born-digital data, for instance, native in electronic format: the technological outgrowth of the format or medium in which the information is embedded could in fact entail its inaccessibility at a different historical moment, a situation whose extreme projection is sometimes described as digital dark age or digital middle age, in reaction to which the use of standards in content production and archiving is promoted.

Several initiatives, including Google books and Europeana, are currently oriented towards the digital migration of cultural and historical heritage considered to be of particular relevance, through public or private digitisation programmes of materials belonging to museums, cultural institutions, archives, libraries and collections. According to Deuze Mark, associate professor in the Department of Telecommunications at Indiana University, digital culture is based on three elements: participation, digitisation and re-use of information. Participation implies an active role on the part of users who are no longer just passive users of information but become actors and authors in the information society. This also transforms the communication model from 'one-to-many' to 'many-to-many'.

Remediation, on the other hand, refers to the new modes of relationship that have emerged between the new and old media, emphasising the continuous interrelationship that has been created in a landscape now dominated by new technologies. Through digital remediation, there is the adaptation of old media content into formats supported by new media: it is as if the content has migrated from the old to the new without being altered. However, if due to

---

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/cultura-digitale-pubblica> (05/12/2022)

this process the new media are modelled on the characteristics of the old media, at the same time the old media are forced to rethink themselves in the innovative logics they come into contact with.

The third characteristic of digital culture highlighted by Deuze is the re-use of information. By this is meant the possibility to access information more easily by combining, reusing and sharing it. If we take a closer look at digital culture in the social approach, we will realise that this is a real revolution. At the basis of that evolutionary continuum through which the web has revolutionised itself, moving from phase 1.0 (1990-2000) to the current 2.0 phase, lies the social transformation of the web, a revolution not only in terms of content technology but above all in the very modes of interaction and sharing and the attitudes of users in relating to those contents and technologies.

Web 2.0 is constantly evolving, to the point that one wonders about its future generations: web 3.0 or semantic web and web 4.0 or three-dimensional web. With phase 4.0, the web will turn into a vast platform capable of hosting multi-user virtual and three-dimensional spaces in which users act through the 'figurative' mediation of their avatars<sup>33</sup>.

Because of their impact, overwhelming every branch of human thought and activity, digitisation and ICTs are considered structural elements of societal growth, true bridges to overcome economic and social geographic distances, indicators in evaluations of the cultural capital of individuals and societies, creators of what Lev Manovich has called software culture. This is not only a change in the style of communication but a revolution in the centrality that the architecture of communication and information has assumed in our society and, therefore, a transformation of the communication logics themselves.

International attention to cultural participation through the new digital platforms on the web intensified in the mid-2000s and was closely linked to the exploit of those social networks (2004-2005 saw the success of content sharing platforms such as Flickr and Youtube, which paved the way in 2006 for the new generation of social networking, represented by Facebook and Twitter) that enabled millions of users to take part in the digital social experience, contributing to the formation of a global village and the transformation of the web into an information platform open to contribution and collaboration<sup>34</sup>.

---

<sup>33</sup> Bonacini E., *Il museo partecipativo sul web: forme di partecipazione dell'utente alla produzione culturale e alla creazione di valore culturale*, 2012, p. 94

<sup>34</sup> Ivi p. 96

The acceleration of the digital revolution has contributed exponentially to the modernisation of cultural institutions in favour of a 'diffuse' conception of cultural heritage. What has evolved by adapting to the digital reality is first and foremost culture which, having entered the phase of Culture 2.0, is driving and pushing all cultural, social and economic institutions and actors around it towards renewal.

Web channels, new participative social media and the socio-economic model of word of mouth 2.0 offer enormous potential to cultural communication in terms of visibility and distribution; the mobility of communication, possible through the most diverse digital devices (from iPods to smartphones and tablets of various brands and types), further favours the creation, sharing and dissemination of cultural content.

For these reasons, the application of multimedia and new forms of participatory communication to the cultural heritage sector is considered an essential condition to ensure the definitive transformation of cultural institutions into "socio-cultural platforms of integrated development" capable of enabling active communication with their audiences and enjoyment of their cultural heritage without geographical boundaries and projected towards a future in which sharing and the open access model will be ever more widespread.

Culture communication, aimed at favouring the approach to potential visitors and opening up to a virtuous and modifiable dialogue with the users, is oriented towards transforming the cultural organizations into a 2.0 cultural organizations, a participatory organizations, in which participatory processes are activated that can transfigure it into a platform that connects the various actors involved, open to the collaboration of the users with the museum offer (or even its direct production) through personal user-generated content, so as to favour co-creative processes of cultural value. According to this model, the cultural user can interface with information content in five ways: create, store, share, search/find and learn<sup>35</sup>.

The culture organization website can allow remote users to participate in the creation of cultural content, to add their own 'labels' to the artefacts in the collection, thus allowing for 'informal' interpretations of the objects.

Cultural organizations had no choice but to stand aside from the evolution of digital communication; they rightly started to use these tools to re-appropriate their functions of preservation, protection, communication and valorisation in new ways. The creation of a profile on a social network by a cultural institution manifests the search for an institutionally

---

<sup>35</sup> Ivi p. 99

recognised means of communication and dissemination that, through the trustworthiness and authority of the institution itself, provides a guarantee of the veracity of the cultural content communicated and distributed.

The increase in people's use of the Internet, the web, and respectively their importance in the processes of renewal and cultural dissemination, has favoured the development of users without borders, or we can even say 'planetary'.

In this way, a single virtual community of people has come into being, not bound by a physical place, but only by the possibility of accessing the web, able to communicate instantaneously with the rest of the world<sup>36</sup>. It is precisely thanks to this connectivity that knows no limits and to the virtual evolution of the relational aspects between people, that more and more social networks have sprung up on the market in recent years; a clear example of the propensity of post-modern society to participate globally in new forms of sociality and communication and willing to become a user-consumer, participating in the response of stimuli directly sought by it.

In fact, if we go back a few years, say to 2005, when social media was still in its embryonic state, only 5% of the world's population had an account on any of these platforms. In 2019, this percentage has risen to 70%. According to a study by the research institute Pew, the social platforms preferred by the 25+ age group are YouTube and Facebook, while teenagers prefer TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat, platforms that have been growing steadily in recent years. Almost all members of the 13-17 age group - so about 97% - are on at least one social platform.

The percentage of time spent on social is astounding: according to the report, the average teenager in the 13-18 age group spends about 9 non-continuous hours per day on social, while the 8-12 age group, at least 6 non-continuous hours per day. This discourse on the use of social networks applies to private individuals as much as to companies and in the case of this study to cultural entities in all their forms.

Following in the wake of the large American cultural organizations, many European institutions are changing their approach towards their visitors, incorporating a greater

---

<sup>36</sup> Bonacini E., *I musei e le nuove frontiere dei social networks: da Facebook a Foursquare e Gowalla*, 2010, p. 1

participatory dimension, even giving them the opportunity to participate in the organisation content published with material of their own making<sup>37</sup>.

Among the most innovative communication options used by cultural organization (and obviously not only by them) is storytelling, through which the institution in question asks the user to express on its pages the emotion he or she experienced when seeing a specific object in the collection; this can be done through an image or a comment and leads to emotional involvement or food for thought.

Taking national examples, the Museo di Arte Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto (MART) has many projects based on the use of the web and apps, such as a WhatsApp channel for updates on the museum and its presence on Google Arts and Cultures and Amazon's Alexa device. These examples in the use of new technologies are very interesting, although most museums limit themselves to the use of the most common social platforms, from those of the META group (Facebook and Instagram), Twitter and YouTube.

The use of social media by these institutions has also been possible due to an awareness of the opportunities it provides, especially from a museum marketing perspective.

The Metropolitan Museum in New York, for example, values the opportunities provided by each platform very highly: it has a profile on each type of social network.

Using social is therefore fundamental to be able to both communicate with an ever-growing public and to advertise one's activity. It is not surprising, in fact, that the various cultural organisations invite visitors to be tagged in their posts. Having a profile on the major social networks in use has, therefore, multiple purposes: the possibility of synchronous and asynchronous communication, the possibility of cultural marketing up to distinctly commercial purposes<sup>38</sup>.

Facebook, like the other social networks, offers Page Insights, a service that was created to measure the exposure of commercial pages (one has to associate one's e-mail address with the domain of one's company), and 'provides Facebook Page owners [...] with metrics related to their content. By understanding and analysing trends in user growth and demographics, user experience and content creation, Page owners [...] are better equipped to optimise their business with Facebook.

---

<sup>37</sup> Ivi p. 2

<sup>38</sup> Ivi p. 4

The presence of companies, institutional subjects, events, etc. on the web and on social networks is no longer perceived as a distinctive element; on the contrary, it is negatively perceived when a subject, which one would expect to find in the various web environments available, is not present: not finding material concerning a museum on the web or verifying its extraneousness<sup>39</sup>.

From the major social networks today is to be considered a cultural marketing mistake.

Social networks, media-sharing networks are a method to be considered in order to "reach" the public in the most modern and "youngest" way possible, to get rid of the idea of "old" that is now wearing out like a worn-out coat on modern cultural institutions, in order to market their offer.

Like all revolutions, there are positive and negative aspects.

We certainly cannot deny that social media today is one of the most powerful means of connecting with other people and realities that we never thought existed before. Here are some of the positive aspects<sup>40</sup>:

- Staying connected with friends and family in an immediate way that is much more effective than a simple phone call;
- Immediate access to information and opinions from different people all over the world;
- Possibility of simple and immediate purchase of products that you need and like;
- Opportunities for training and acquiring new skills - think free tutorials on YouTube;
- Organisation of charity events or online fundraising, the possibility of giving a platform and a voice to marginalised sections of society;
- Increasingly effective marketing and advertising opportunities for companies;
- Opportunities to work from home through jobs such as social media management or copywriting.

The downsides, on the other hand, mainly concern their impact on people's psycho-physical well-being<sup>41</sup>:

---

<sup>39</sup> Ivi p. 11

<sup>40</sup> Di Feo F., *Come è cambiata la cultura con i social: 7 pro e 5 contro della rivoluzione digitale*, 25 June 2022, <https://www.trend-online.com/marketing-digitale/rivoluzione-digitale-e-social-media/> (07/12/2022)

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem

- Real life vs. online life: this is more about how they are used outside the platforms. So many, especially frequent users, may come to confuse the real world with the online world, with devastating consequences on people's sanity.
- Overuse: the more time we spend on social networks, the greater their negative impact on our mental health. This is especially important for children and adolescents, who have not yet fully developed their cognitive abilities.
- Social media are addictive: when we get a positive result, our brain produces a dose of dopamine and other happiness hormones, making us happy. The same mechanism applies to likes on Instagram and Facebook: the problem is that these hormones cause addiction.
- FOMO. Translated as 'fear of missing something', FOMO is one of the worst downsides of social media. It drives us to constantly and almost obsessively check our feed on various social media out of fear of missing something by not being online all the time.
- Self-esteem issues. Social media posts offer an opportunity to gain the favour and appreciation of other people for how we appear. However, the problem is that often, appearing is very different from being, and not discerning this difference leads us to compare ourselves with influencers, often coming to dislike ourselves in relation to unobtainable standards of beauty.

Taking stock of what has just been said about Digital Culture, the decisive factor for socialisation and social order is the common culture of society. Industrialisation and technological improvements have influenced culture and completely changed society's way of life. With the change to mass culture then to popular culture, people found themselves in an artificial life that was imposed and promoted, and evidence of the changes in cultural forms. The production of mass culture led to the emergence of mass culture, branding and the promotion of popular culture. In a similar way, technological developments and digitisation have led to the rise of digital culture. Individuals transform their social identity that they created in conformity with the cultural codes of the real-world society around them to a digital social identity constructed in the digital age.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Çöteli S., *The Impact of New Media on The Forms of Culture: Digital Identity and Digital Culture*, 2019, p. 10



## 1.3 The necessary platforms that every cultural organisation should have

Talking now only about the cultural sector, after a brief overview of how these social networks differ and are gaining ground globally, Facebook is again the most widely used.

There are five platforms that every cultural organisation should have and use regularly: Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

The following will analyse how these should be used in order to be put to better use for good museum communication.

Although it has some weaknesses, such as its use by the younger segment of the population, it has implemented a number of initiatives over the past few years to captivate its audience<sup>43</sup>.

These include the introduction and possibility of colouring posts, emoticons, GIFs and even the presence of stories, as on Instagram.

A cultural organisation should use this social for the following factors:

- For its ease of use: writing, sharing and commenting on posts is very simple and intuitive. In addition, the social is easily accessible from all types of devices and browsers.
- There are continuous improvements in both technology and usability.
- It is flexible and always tries to react to the competition and if this is not possible, it is bought, as in the case of Instagram and Whatsapp.
- ADV campaigns work, both within the social and outside, bringing visits to external links as well as to sites.
- Images, photos and all graphic content are supported and displayed optimally.
- It keeps up with the times and tries to keep up with all the news events in the world.

For all these reasons, Facebook is a social networking site that can be described as flexible and multimedia.

---

<sup>43</sup> Ivi p. 126

If, however, it is used to show certain types of content, a question arises: how often should one post?

Everyone, as we will see in the cases analysed in this paper, has their own philosophy, but it is also true that for certain types of cultural entities (such as theatres), the idea is to post 7 days a week, as there are many events to talk about.

Generally speaking, the ideal is to post two/three times a week, mainly to wake up the algorithm and be rewarded by it.

Moving on to one of the other social networks in the 'main' category, we come to YouTube.

It would be important to use it in the cultural sector for the following reasons<sup>44</sup>:

- Because it is the third most visited site in the world after Google and Facebook and the second most visited search engine.
- If we are a cultural organisation and often deal with events, there are probably already videos about us, which may or may not be of a high standard and with good or bad reviews. Having your own YouTube channel shows a certain level of authority in communication.
- There is the possibility to easily share other videos on other accounts.
- Being owned by Google, it enjoys all the technical innovations of the latter.

In this case, unlike other social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, it is not important to post all the time and with a precise cadence, but one video at a time with a periodic, but certainly not daily, frequency.

It can be defined as the social linked to instant and brief communication, a kind of visual telegram. Initially born only as an app, it only saw the arrival of a web version a few years ago<sup>45</sup>. Since the arrival of stories in 2016, the app has seen major changes such as the increasing presence of filters, one of the reasons why it became famous, up to the arrival of reels, short videos of no more than 90 seconds, in a vertical format that we can identify as direct competition with TikTok.

---

<sup>44</sup> Ivi p. 134

<sup>45</sup> Ivi p. 137

With an audience certainly younger than Facebook, it is the social par excellence of photos and aesthetics, in whatever sense you want to understand it.

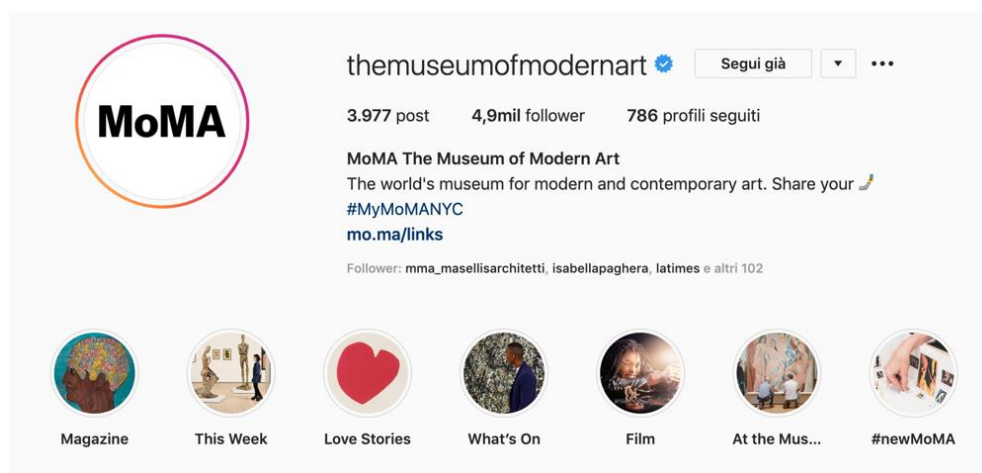
The usual question we ask ourselves is: why would a cultural organisation use Instagram?

Certainly to give a real and less institutional image of the organisation. But as we will see later, many organisations still do not know how to make the best use of this platform, the use of which could be summed up in a few simple rules:

- Always use the right format for photos and videos, to ingratiate yourself with the algorithm and appear more in searches;
- Publish continuously: something that many cultural organisations do not do;
- Use the right hashtags, given their great importance in this social;
- Use, when possible due to funds not always available, paid promotional campaigns;
- Creating a strong relationship with their users, through initiatives that directly involve them.

A few examples of cultural institutions that do not fare badly on this platform should certainly be mentioned:

- For museums: definitely the MOMA in New York with more than 5.6 million followers and the Louvre Museum with 4.9 million;
- For theatres: The Royal Opera House in London with 952,000 followers, the Bolshoi in Moscow with 377,000 followers and in Italy the Teatro Alla Scala and La Fenice (which we will see more about in later chapters).



*Fig. 1: MOMA New York's Instagram profile with more than 4.9 million followers*

*(Source - personal screenshot)*

Among those not essential to the life of a cultural organisation, but which it is always better to have in one's portfolio of social platforms, there is certainly Twitter<sup>46</sup>.

It is no longer essential, as it was some time ago, but it is useful for a cultural organisation to have it for the following reasons:

- For its target audience, which is adults, over 30 and committed to informing themselves;
- Because, again speaking of target audience, it is international. It is used a lot in Anglo-Saxon countries and the trend topics are often international and not just limited to Italy;
- It is the most useful platform for petitions, consensus campaigns and promotional activities such as crowdfunding. This is due to the massive presence on the platform of journalists and influencers, who are often involved in causes of great importance.

Unlike the other social networks seen above, here, the more one posts (or rather tweets) the better, precisely because the quantity of tweets is very large and one risks getting lost in the heap.

Although there are many more 'useful' social networks, as mentioned above, most cultural organisations, at least in Italy, do not make use of many platforms, but certainly among the most used is LinkedIn. It is the largest social network for the world of work and, as we will see in the next paragraph, one of the first to be created (even before Facebook).

Usually used for job offers and searching for collaborators or professionals, it is a great channel for business-to-business communication<sup>47</sup>.

A cultural organisation could benefit from its use for the following reasons:

- Being more visible to other companies;
- Profiling potential customers;
- Exhibiting and proposing exclusive and dedicated services to a specific clientele;
- Finding and contacting possible sponsors or partners

---

<sup>46</sup> Ivi p. 142

<sup>47</sup> Ivi p. 147

After having shown what the various social platforms can bring to the various institutions, what other insights can convince even the most reluctant cultural institutions to jump into digital with open arms?

Certainly, through digital it is possible to achieve goals (especially in communication) that are difficult to achieve with the limited resources given to culture.

There is the possibility of looking beyond mere communication and thinking about all the benefits that digital can bring to cataloguing, to local communities of scholars, to the training of insiders and users, to guaranteeing the accuracy of information, to rewarding users who follow a given cultural organisation and, finally, to increasing a sense of responsibility towards cultural heritage.<sup>48</sup>

## 1.4 The social age - an approach in everyday life

As we could understand from the introduction to the chapter, we have not always lived in a hyper-connected world, always in perpetual communication and with (too much) eagerness to appear. On the contrary, the first proto-socials were none other than e-mail, which made it possible to send messages easily, quickly and get replies in the same way.

But let's start at the beginning: what is meant by social media?

We can understand social media not only as platforms on which users post their content, of the most varied nature, but rather as the content itself that is placed on these platforms.

Moreover, of course, this content varies from region to region (if we look at it globally). It is very difficult, therefore, to make a single mapping of how these work or what might be the most posted topic on one specific platform rather than another, even though there are due differences between social and social.

---

<sup>48</sup> Natale M.T., Ruggieri N., (2010), *Contenuti generati dagli utenti sul web. Le istituzioni culturali sono pronte?*, Paper slides presentation al convegno OPD 2.0, Salone dell'Arte e del Restauro di Firenze, [www.opificiodellepietredure.it/documenti/OPD2.0presentazioneNataleRuggieri.pdf](http://www.opificiodellepietredure.it/documenti/OPD2.0presentazioneNataleRuggieri.pdf) (04/02/2023)

The common goal of all social media is to socialise: it is not just a means of communication to send messages quickly and get responses in the same way. Through social we can meet new people, create business relationships and why not, meet our possible soul mate.

Social media are able to build real digital networks of people, connections that in reality would be difficult to realise due to organisational issues or at least the great distances that separate people in the world. Over the years, through social media, we have learnt to inform ourselves, to recognise the types of news (the real ones from the fake ones) and make them become vehicles for public/institutional services and communications.

Just think, for example, of the Covid-19 bulletins shared on Telegram by the Ministry of Health channel throughout the emergency period that began in March 2020.

Social media are not a separate world apart from everything else. They have become part of our everyday life, just as making a phone call with an old friend is.

Who, nowadays, would say that making a phone call is outside one's real world? Probably no one. That is why even posting a photo, sharing an article or an idea has become part of our day, like reading the newspaper at the café while drinking coffee before work.

Before I begin the historical digression of how we moved from email to today's social platforms that engage a wide audience of both gender and age, I would like to address a point that has become a fundamental question for many: but does social media make people happy?

It is a very difficult question to answer, but surely the idea of being appreciated on social for our content that reflects ourselves and our ideas, if not making us happy, at least makes us fulfilled. First of all, the ideal of happiness is not univocal, but varies depending on many factors such as gender, age, level of education and many other characteristics that may vary depending on the world region we are in.

But there is also a scientific point of view. Let us go in order.

On average, a user in Italy spends about two hours a day on social media, scrolling through the news on the various platforms. This causes the power of the platforms to grow more and more, causing a psychological addiction. According to Jaron Lanier, author of the book 'Ten Reasons to Delete Your Social Accounts Now', the algorithm on which the main social networks are based pushes people to chase a mirage, i.e. to receive likes, comments and reactions. These feedbacks from other users are, in fact, considered to all intents and

purposes as a reward, which makes people feel socially accepted and triggers a feel-good reaction<sup>49</sup>.

A second aspect that makes social networking so toxic to our mental health is the herd effect, for example, the ruthless competition with other users to emerge. In this dynamic, confrontation becomes more and more aggressive, nuances are flattened in favour of a black-white separation, and people divide into polarised camps.

If, therefore, receiving likes and seeing oneself socially accepted causes us to feel a sense of pleasure and to feel good, not receiving the desired reactions can lead us into a state of sadness or even depression.

In the last five years, several popular news outlets (including Time, Forbes, The Huffington Post, The New Yorker and The Daily Mirror) have cited psychological studies suggesting that social media may increase depression, dissatisfaction, jealousy, negative body image and loneliness. These studies attribute negative feelings to a variety of causes. At times users may feel that their contacts ignore them on social media.<sup>50</sup>

There are, however, studies that state the opposite and claim that social media can cause beneficial effects on users. As with most things, it is not all black and white: on social media it is possible to learn, find sources of inspiration or personal growth. But just as it is easy to find all of this and also a community that supports us and becomes our friend, taking a false step and pointing digital hatred at each other is just as easy.

It is certainly a danger for the younger generations who, still immature, find themselves in a world that, despite being digital natives, they still know little about or, given their young age, are unable to manage and counter. And this is how cyber bullying and all those phenomena that wreak havoc in society are born, confronting us with questions of ethics and safety on the web for the new generations.

Wanting to paraphrase what I have just described, social media can be considered as the demons and angels of our millennium: they take a lot but also give as much.

---

<sup>49</sup> Williams Z., *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now* by Jaron Lanier – review, “The Guardian”, 30 May 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/may/30/ten-arguments-deleting-your-social-media-accounts-right-now-jaron-lanier> (09/12/2022)

<sup>50</sup> Miller D., “Does Social Media Make People Happier?” *How the World Changed Social Media*, 1st ed., vol. 1, UCL Press, 2016, pp. 193

It is our cross, which we have to bear but which could raise us to new aspirations and, why not, make us find a new life, perhaps the one to which we have aspired so much and which we would otherwise never have achieved.

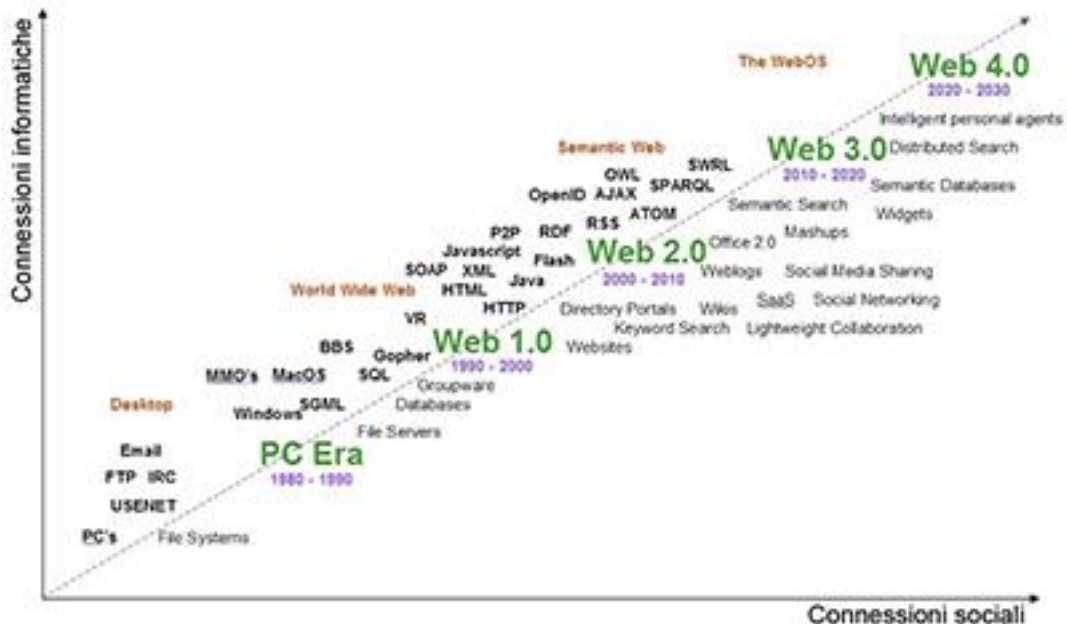


Fig. 2: the development of the web from the 1980s to the present day

(Source - Radar networks and Nova Spivack, 2007)

## 1.5 The history of social media: when were they born?

The history of cultural institutions is a fascinating one, starting with a small elite and ending with everyone.

In fact, during the 16th and 17th centuries, most European collections developed from those in the palaces of the nobility. Collections were an exclusive privilege of the aristocratic minority. The Enlightenment saw a trend towards the idea of a public place, where such collections would be available to most people and which included the concept of the museum as part of the life of the people. In their beginnings, museums were aimed at people belonging to the middle classes and well educated.

Today, museums are to be seen as public institutions with a distinct structure, function and social role. In other words, the role of social media in museums is very different from that



of a commercial company and goes beyond the goal of increasing profits and brand awareness.<sup>51</sup>

And now with social media?

Year 2022: the social platform currently most popular and on everyone's lips is definitely TikTok. Once known as Musically, it attracted very young users who had to sing in lyrics of trendy songs and add short dances.

Times have changed and hordes of very young people have moved from the older platforms of Facebook and Instagram (the latter still has its appeal, however), to a place where adults can hardly access them, at least because of the difficulty of creating content.

But Facebook was not the first in this long lineage of platforms.

In fact, if we want to talk about the origins of social media, scholars generally start from the 1980s and the Bulletin Board Systems (BBS), which was a kind of online meeting room that allowed various co-users to download games, files and leave messages with each other<sup>52</sup>.

From the 1980s, we then move on to the second half of the 1990s and the SixDegrees.com platform, founded in 1997.



Fig. 3: the home page of SixDegrees, one of the first social platforms created in the 1990s (Source - Drishtiias)

<sup>51</sup> Spiliopoulou A.Y., Mahony S., Routsis V., Kamposiori C., (2014), *Cultural institutions in the digital age: British Museum's use of Facebook Insights*, UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, UK, p. 288

<sup>52</sup> Biały B., *Social Media - From Social Exchange to Battlefield*, 2018, p. 70

The real revolution in social networking, however, only came in the 2000s.

Incredibly, even though everyone mistakenly thinks that Facebook was the Big Bang from which it all started, the first social appeared on the scene and which we still use today was LinkedIn. Born in 2003, its purpose was not to find friends, but business contacts.

Even today, it is still used by millions of users to find, offer jobs and exchange views on what is the job scene both nationally in their own country and globally with real-time news from around the world. And if LinkedIn set the tone, within a few years the great feudalists of this digital realm appeared on the scene.

In 2004, Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg together with his university colleagues launched Facebook, which grew to become one of the most powerful social platforms in the world with more than two billion active users (September 2016).

Since then, anyone who wanted to be there had to be there: likes, reposts, reactions (introduced in recent years) have become part of our everyday life; our legal drug that binds us to it and increases its power over us. Not only posts: over the years Facebook has added many functions such as the gaming area, the dating area, business profiles for companies and fundraising (to name but a few).

## 1.6 A world in constant connection

Social media are widespread in all countries of the world, even in Africa and developing countries, where there is the fastest growth in PC and smartphone ownership, and thus in web and social media use.

According to 2021 data, the most used social media in the world is Facebook with more than 2 billion users. It is followed by YouTube with almost 2 billion subscribers, Whatsapp, Facebook Messenger and the Chinese social app WeChat.

The social with the most growth is Instagram, followed by four Chinese-based socials, QQ, QZone, Doujin and Sina Weibo<sup>53</sup>.

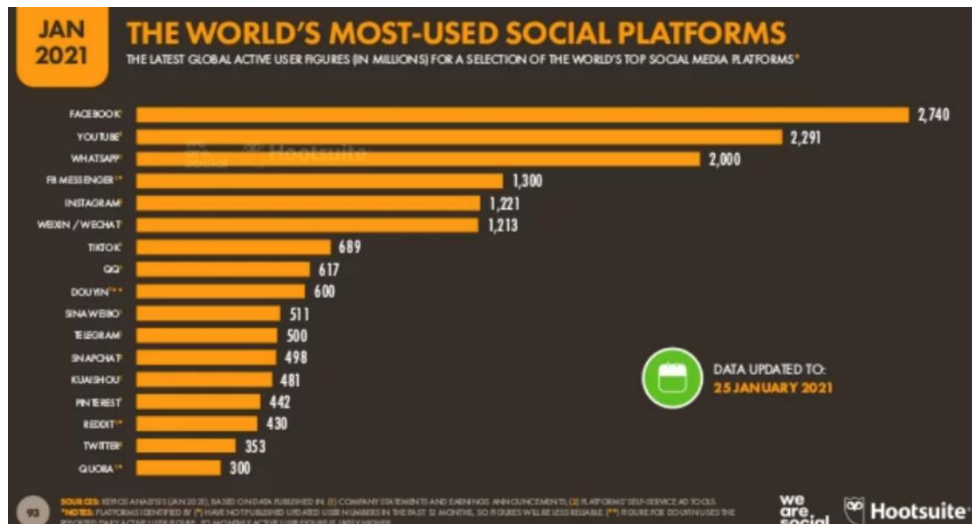


Fig. 4: The ranking of the most used social networks in the world, with Facebook in the lead

(Source – We are social)

Facebook is the most widely used social in almost all the nations of the world, although in some such as China and Russia with Russian-speaking countries have the upper hand over the indigenous social (if we can call them that). Italy too is catching up with the level of social use in other industrialised nations.

What changes, however, is the demographic group that makes use of one platform rather than another. On Facebook, it is men who prevail, but above all, it is interesting to see that the age of members is no longer very young: the under-18s number just over a million, while the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups are massively present<sup>54</sup>.

If the people who use certain social platforms are different, at least by age group, this is also due to the type of communication each one has.

In fact, we can subdivide the various social platforms into: main, important and useful. This subdivision can be applied to all sectors, thus also to culture.

<sup>53</sup> Maulini A., *Comunicare la cultura, oggi*, 2019, p. 96

<sup>54</sup> Ivi p. 97

The main social networking sites to be considered include:

- Facebook: because of its great popularity and flexibility;
- YouTube: which is also the second largest search engine after Google;
- Instagram: it is the fastest growing social network with the most innovations within it.

Among the 'important' ones are to be considered:

- Twitter;
- Pinterest.

While those considered useful include:

- LinkedIn;
- Vimeo;
- SoundCloud;
- Snapchat;
- The blog section with Wordpress or Tumblr.

## 1.7 How social media should be used consciously: rules everyone should follow

Using social media requires a certain kind of approach, which does not consist of writing something pseudo-interesting and blurting it out meaninglessly on the various platforms.

As already mentioned, each social has its own logic, prefers certain types of photo formats and different types of text.

Not to mention, as we will see shortly, everything that revolves around them and the large audience that certain figures, the influencers, manage to bring with them.

Starting from the beginning, for instance, how to use social media optimally, it is good to start with a rule: use clear and simple texts after first clarifying your ideas.

If your ideas, your corporate values and what you want to communicate are not clear, it will be much more difficult to get your message across to your audience.

Writing little, concisely but clearly is sometimes much more effective than writing a lot and in a confused manner. To write an effective post, it is useful to remember the famous five Ws: Who, What, Why, When, Where and How. Once you have answered that, getting the message across will be much easier.

I would like to mention how in smartphone viewing texts are usually cut off, so it is good not to write long texts that would detract from the user's attention.

The same concept also applies to visual content: if an organisation decides to publish well-done photos or videos, it is more likely to attract the public's attention than photographs taken hastily and without due attention.

The 'short is better' rule also applies to videos. Although many social media have a time limit for this type of content (take Instagram reels as an example), it is always better where possible not to overdo the timing, remembering that the general attention span usually does not exceed one and a half to two minutes. Of course, it is not only the technical aspects of how to write and plan a post that are important.

In this area, it is vital to start with a good foundation in storytelling, namely 'the art of writing or telling stories while capturing the attention or interest of the audience'. This, on social media, lends itself to a multiple use of media to achieve the result: text, video, images and all the other visual content that make up visual storytelling.

But what can be used in good storytelling, which can be used both in the cultural and non-cultural field?

Among the various topics that cannot be missing from the story of a company (term used in the broadest sense) are:

- Its history, its characters and major milestones;
- Its vision, mission and the values it pursues and wants to pursue;
- The people who work inside;
- What happens every day inside it: a kind of digital diary;
- The things that will happen;
- And all the other issues that every company feels dear.

Leaving aside these technicalities, which as we have already mentioned can vary from entity to entity and from possibility to possibility, all those digital public relations, which in some way through the intervention of others allow the content of a given entity to reach more audiences, are becoming increasingly popular.

In the next section we will see how some cultural institutions and, specifically, museums have behaved in certain situations. For instance, how they employed the presence of influencers in their halls.

## 1.8 Numbers, influencers and memes: some cases of virtuous cultural institutions

Which are the most visited museums in the world? And what are the methods used by the various institutions to communicate their collections to the public?

The idea of this paragraph is to show the big numbers worldwide, i.e. those museums that take into account only the three big social networks (Instagram, Facebook and Twitter) far exceed the one million total, and then to arrive at the virtuous examples in Italy and Venice and their communication styles<sup>55</sup>.

The days when the number of people walking through the door was the only indicator of a museum's attendance are over. More and more, the digital sphere is another frontier where institutions compete for the attention of culture seekers. The level of engagement on social media, the number of likes to posts and the total number of followers of an account are all taken into account when museums analyse the success of an exhibition or the popularity of an institution<sup>56</sup>.

---

<sup>55</sup><https://www.statista.com/statistics/1314343/museums-highest-social-media-followers-worldwide/> (11/12/2022)

<sup>56</sup><https://www.museumnext.com/article/museums-can-use-social-media/> (11/12/2022)

## 1.8.1 Who are they and what numbers do the largest cultural organisations have on social media

At the global level, calculating total followers on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, many American museums are among the most followed social accounts, followed by the largest European museum institutions.

The ranking is not surprising, especially considering that total followers far exceed one million.

Citing the most followed museums in the world we find: The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Tate Modern / Tate Britain in London, the Musée du Louvre in Paris, the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Saatchi Gallery in London, the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, the British Museum, the National Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum all in London<sup>57</sup>.

TOP 10 Social media		
	Social media followers	Actual number of visitors
<b>1</b> Museum of Modern Art NEW YORK	<b>12,442,000</b>	1,992,000*
<b>2</b> Metropolitan Museum of Art NEW YORK	<b>9,790,000</b>	6,480,000
<b>3</b> Tate Modern / Tate Britain LONDON	<b>9,312,000</b>	7,907,000
<b>4</b> Musée du Louvre PARIS	<b>7,701,000</b>	9,600,000
<b>5</b> Guggenheim Museum NEW YORK	<b>6,731,000</b>	1,283,000
<b>6</b> Saatchi Gallery LONDON	<b>5,842,000</b>	1,161,000
<b>7</b> Van Gogh Museum AMSTERDAM	<b>5,596,000</b>	2,100,000
<b>8</b> British Museum LONDON	<b>5,156,000</b>	6,240,000
<b>9</b> National Gallery LONDON	<b>3,369,000</b>	6,011,000
<b>10</b> Victoria and Albert Museum LONDON	<b>3,304,000</b>	3,933,000

Fig. 5: The top 10 most followed museums globally on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter in 2020

(Source - personal screenshot)

<sup>57</sup> Campbell T., Eye Candy: the Best Museum Accounts to Follow on Instagram, <https://magazine.artland.com/best-museum-instagram-accounts/> (11/12/2022)

Museums in London seem to be the most social media-savvy, with five of the ten most followed museums being based in the British capital, closely followed by New York with three. The Vatican Museums is one of the big upsets: despite being in third place in the global attendance ranking, its social media presence is less impressive<sup>58</sup>.

Taking a quick survey of only the most followed Instagram profiles, one can see that obviously, reaching the highest peaks of the Olympus of museum social accounts is the Tate, which always manages to surprise its followers on Instagram. The Tate account encompasses the network of four museums: Tate Britain, Tate Liverpool, Tate St. Ives and Tate. All of these together house the UK's national collection of British art and international modern and contemporary collections. On their accounts you can see posts showing a wide range of aesthetics and history. Content is also created through the use of video interviews with cultural figures who talk about what art and artists mean to them, wanting to make the collections accessible and relevant.

Then there is the world's most popular modern art institution, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which offers a wide variety of experiential content to its followers. With posts showing their extensive collection, but also photos of visitors, events or performances, MoMA's Instagram is a perfect example for museums with a diverse audience.

With more than four and a half million followers and more than 2,000 total posts, the Louvre is undoubtedly one of the most active and best-loved museum Instagram accounts in France and worldwide. With posts that tell an in-depth and interesting story about their renowned collection, as well as architectural photos and reposts from museum visitors, their Instagram account offers a glimpse into the history of French (and non-French) art.<sup>59</sup>

But if these are the top worldwide, Italy too has its pearls when it comes to museums using social media, but speaking more generally about new technologies.

Here are some examples of how our country is slowly becoming more and more at the forefront of the digital sector.

Indeed, it is no longer just a matter of clicks, selfies and likes. Today, almost half of Italy's museums, monuments and archaeological areas offer online workshops and educational

---

<sup>58</sup>Dawson A., *Which museums have the biggest social media followings?* <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2020/03/31/which-museums-have-the-biggest-social-media-followings> (12/12/2022)

<sup>59</sup>Campbell T., *Eye Candy: the Best Museum Accounts to Follow on Instagram*, <https://magazine.artland.com/best-museum-instagram-accounts/> (04/02/2023)



activities (48%), as well as tours and guided visits (45%). Furthermore, the number of museums that have published their digitised collection on their website has grown (from 40% in 2020 to 69% in 2021) and 13% have also ventured into offering podcasts. In spite of this, institutions with a real strategic plan including digital innovation still represent a minority (24%)<sup>60</sup>.

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok. Social media have become an essential driving force, and almost all communication goes through them, the Uffizi being first in Italy: "One third of visitors are under 25 and bring their parents. We are seventh in the world for admissions. Young people arrived after the visits of Chiara Ferragni and the ticktoker Martina Socrates," explained the Gallery's director in Florence Eike Schmidt, examples of how influencers are used by museums, which we will see in a moment<sup>61</sup>.

Moreover, after replacing previous platforms with digital archives, the Uffizi has launched 'The Medici Game: Murder at Palazzo Pitti' for smartphones and tablets, produced by the publishing house Sillabe in co-production with Opera Laboratori Fiorentini-Civita. It is a detective case set in the most sumptuous rooms of the ancient Medici palace in Florence.

The social data are record-breaking: on Instagram, 2,202 posts, 712,000 followers; on Facebook: 131,221 people follow the page, 14,216 people have "liked" it; on Tik Tok: 107.2K followers, 854.2K likes; on Twitter: 61.5K followers. But even the MART of Trento and Rovereto is no joke when it comes to the use of new technologies.

The first Italian museum to have hosted a 'Wikipedian' in residence, adhering to Wikipedia's GLAM project, after having realised the pioneering MartMuseumBot visit path with a chatbot on Telegram and Messenger, it has relaunched with a storytelling for enthusiasts and the curious available on Alexa, Amazon's voice assistant.

The Mart was among the first Italian museums to set up its own web team, Facebook is currently the leading social network.

Moving on to Turin, the Egyptian Museum has recently developed a new virtual tour for children and young people dedicated to two of its most important rooms. An educational experience realised in collaboration with the cooperative Indici Opponibili, specialised in video games and educational apps. On the site, children will be able to visit, from their

---

<sup>60</sup>Falcone M, *La comunicazione dei musei è cambiata*, <https://living.corriere.it/arte/musei-social-digital/> (15/12/2022)

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem

electronic devices, the room dedicated to the ancient village of Deir el-Medina, inhabited by artisans, artists and workers, who worked on the tombs in the Valley of the Kings and Queens near Luxor, and the room housing the funerary trousseau of Kha and Merit, the only intact New Kingdom trousseau preserved outside Egypt<sup>62</sup>.

## 1.8.2 New web professionals and cultural institutions: influencers as new vehicles of knowledge

After mentioning the Chiara Ferragni case at the Offices, which museums in Italy have involved influencers in their socials? And in what way have they done so?

The involvement of influencers by museum organisations is undoubtedly one of the most recently applied strategies by the latter to attract a younger audience.

Influencers, in the end, are nothing more than intermediaries who get the product to their audience, who also follow them thanks to the trust they have established with them.



*Fig.6: Fru by TheJackal in the video shot for the Archaeological Museum of Naples*

*(Source – TheJackal Video)*

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem

To give just a few examples of famous Italian influencers in museums in our country, it is worth mentioning<sup>63</sup>:

- Cristina Fogazzi (aka Estetista Cinica) in the Vatican Museums: Estetista Cinica in October 2020, urged her nearly 1 million followers on Instagram by simply saying: '[...] Give yourself a gift. Go there. Safely, with a mask on, nice and wide apart and with your eyes ready to be invaded by beauty'. And this time too, the message was understood and followed, so much so that there were immediately so many bookings.
- The Jackal at the Archaeological Museum of Naples: the video makers and youtubers who form the Neapolitan comedy group The Jackal have contributed from 2018 to today to the growing fame of the Archaeological Museum of Naples with a video on their YouTube channel with a non-institutional, but very funny tone, 'The Expert on Things at the Museum', has garnered around 2 million views and caused an increase in visits, especially by younger people.
- Mahmood at the Egyptian Museum in Turin: Singer and rapper Mahmood has always stood out for his musical style and very personal look. In 2020, in the midst of a pandemic, for the launch video of his new single 'Dorado', he decided to promote art by choosing as his location the Egyptian Museum in Turin, the second most important Egyptian museum in the world after Cairo<sup>64</sup>.

### 1.8.3 The Archaeological Museum of Venice and winning communication through memes

And what is done in Venice in terms of museum communication?

The use of the various social networks by the various museum organisations will be looked at more specifically in Chapter 2, going on to analyse case by case what civic, state and private foundations publish on their pages, how and with what success.

In this first chapter I want to give an example that will not be mentioned later, namely that of the State Archaeological Museum, part of the tour of the St. Mark's Square Museums, half

---

<sup>63</sup> Mangano F., *Influencer marketing: alcuni casi di promozione social dei musei*, <https://nagency.it/influencer-marketing-alcuni-casi-di-promozione-social-dei-musei/> (24/12/2022)

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem

state and half civic, which makes use of a very particular communication, namely through memes.

The term meme originated as an action of imitating a style or idea that spreads spontaneously in mass culture, becoming viral and famous. This is one of the most important characteristics of meme use: reaching millions of people quickly through social media in a very short time. Thanks to its quick, funny and light-hearted distinctive elements, memes have become part of the communication strategy of many companies.

One of them is the Archaeological Museum of Venice, the only archaeological museum and the oldest museum in the Venetian territory, which is trying to spread this primacy of its narrative on social networks, considering it an important aspect of identity and a way to stand out in the vast panorama of city museums<sup>65</sup>.

The museum has had a presence on Facebook and Twitter since 2012, and on Instagram since September 2017, but it is since 2018 that a communication strategy has been launched thanks to the work of Ilaria Fidone, Luca Trolese and the important contribution of Marcella De Paoli.

So, the approach and use of memes was only part of their strategy: since around mid-2018 they have been posting memes on Facebook and Instagram, which they considered functional for the narrative but above all for the tone and approach with the public. By choosing a colloquial tone, the aim is to bring the public closer and try to engage them, trying to combine a scientific rigour of the narrative with a light and ironic approach, capable of arousing interest in the museum's themes. The aim is to broaden the audience, so they are looking for a way to approach even those who are not passionate or interested in archaeology. Through social media, they have built a dialogue with the public, seeking interaction and proximity between the museum and possible future visitors.

Speaking of memes and communication in the artistic sphere, the Sandretto Foundation, which is very popular on social networks, has set the example. For the Archaeological Museum, the Turin institution has been a bit of a communication model precisely because of its irony and ability to express itself in an unconventional way.

---

<sup>65</sup> Palladino A., *L'utilizzo dei meme come strategia comunicativa: il Museo Archeologico di Venezia*, <https://martebenicult.wordpress.com/2021/05/21/lutilizzo-dei-meme-come-strategia-comunicativa-il-museo-archeologico-di-venezial/> (16/12/2022)

## 1.9 Which communication methods are most commonly used by cultural organisations?

As will be repeated several times throughout this thesis, each social platform used by cultural organisations, be they museums, archives, theatres or similar, has its own way of communicating, its own target audience and its own preferred type of post.

First of all, it must be said that the most explicit type of self-presentation is the one implemented through the use of photos or videos.

Looking at it, for a moment, from the point of view of the individual user (and not a cultural body), what we said in the introduction resurfaces, namely how social networks are now an integral part of our lives and are our self-presentation showcase. Indeed, the aspect of showing one's personal photos to other people emerges as the most important purpose of using virtual photo albums.<sup>66</sup>

So why shouldn't a cultural organisation also do the same on the various platforms? And where does it post and how?

For example, Facebook is the most multifaceted social platform: links to external sites or articles, photos, videos and events are the various types of posts that can be used by users.

The most typical posts are photo posts, preferring the 4:5 format, as browsing is usually done from a mobile phone, hence on a vertical interface. Unlike socials such as Instagram and the newer TikTok, videos can be of different lengths in terms of minute length and end up directly on the Home page or in the Watch section. Still speaking of the video format, but in a short version, Instagram Reels and TikTok are certainly the most popular contents at the moment, especially if one wants to approach a very young audience (see the case of the Uffizi in Florence).

In fact, the Uffizi became a real star on the various social platforms with the goal of 734,000 followers on Instagram reached in January 2023, making it the most followed museum in Italy and in thirteenth position in the European ranking led by the Louvre, behind the Prado in Madrid (1 million) and Rijksmuseum (777K). And to think they didn't even have a

---

<sup>66</sup> Schick L., Damkjær K., *Can you be friends with an art museum? Rethinking the art museum through Facebook*, In: Transforming culture in the digital age, International conference in Tartu, Tartu, 2010, p. 143

Facebook profile before the pandemic. An old memory overcome after the bang of the Page's opening and the hundreds of thousands of views reached in just a few hours from the moment of registration on the popular social network. What is published daily? Obviously the treasures kept in the Galleries' halls.<sup>67</sup>

But we can safely say that the Uffizi has not stopped at the more 'classic' platforms used by most cultural institutions.

For the past two years, the Uffizi Galleries' TikTok account has managed to bring the under-25s, an audience as important as it is difficult to approach, closer to art thanks to a very simple communication strategy: changing language. In a very short time, some cultural-themed videos have gone viral such as, one of the funniest and funniest, the one that ironically explains Petrarch's courtship of Laura.

In fact, the Uffizi realised the first live broadcast from an Italian museum on Tik-Tok. It started during the first lockdown with a series of comic clips dedicated to various icons of art history within the museum walls: from Michelangelo's Tondo Doni to Piero della Francesca's double portrait of the Dukes of Montefeltro.

The challenge launched by Director Schmidt in the hardest moment of the health emergency, when the doors of the art venues were still closed and no one knew when they would reopen, was to win over the youngest audience by capturing them on what is now considered the social reference point for teenagers. It does not matter if this would have meant somehow desecrating the museum's image.<sup>68</sup>

This winning, though much criticised by some, strategy, on the one hand has led in numerical terms to almost 120,000 followers and a total of more than a million likes in the last year, and on the other owes its merit to the creativity of Ilde Forgiione, a member of TikTok's creative team for the Florentine museum and PhD in Public Law and Economics at the

---

<sup>67</sup> Giraud, Claudia, *Uffizi mattatori dei social: tra Instagram e TikTok è il museo più seguito al mondo per follower*, s.l., «Artribune», 17/06/2021, <https://www.artribune.com/progettazione/new-media/2020/06/uffizi-mattatori-dei-social-tra-instagram-e-tik-tok-e-il-museo-piu-seguito-al-mondo-per-follower/> (29/01/2023)

<sup>68</sup> Bartezzaghi S., (2020) *Gli uffizi da ridere così i capolavori con Martina Socrate*, La Repubblica, Firenze, 12/06/2020, [https://firenze.repubblica.it/cronaca/2020/06/12/news/gli\\_uffizi\\_da\\_ridere\\_cosi\\_i\\_capolavori\\_con\\_martina\\_socrate-259053110](https://firenze.repubblica.it/cronaca/2020/06/12/news/gli_uffizi_da_ridere_cosi_i_capolavori_con_martina_socrate-259053110) (04/02/2023)

University of Pisa, listed by The Art Newspaper as one of the best social media managers in the world for managing museum accounts during the pandemic.<sup>69</sup>

Not many cultural institutions have a profile on the Chinese platform, nor do they make use of the Reels function on Instagram. Creating this type of content requires a certain amount of preparation for editing videos and photos and, above all, a greater amount of time to devote to the creation of these, from the moment of shooting to publication.

Studying this new social media in detail for a moment, Tiktok can be defined as a platform where people can create videos of about 90 seconds, which are then played in a loop on the home (or explore) wall until they choose to move on to the next video. The videos can incorporate music clips, filters, quick cuts, stickers and much more. As of February 2020, the platform had around 800 million users worldwide, 150 million of them in China, who, however, use the Chinese version of the app, called Douyin. TikTok has literally made a splash in Asian countries such as Cambodia, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. In comparison to Instagram, which took almost six years from its inception to achieve the number of active users that TikTok managed to have in less than three years, popularity has been largely explosive in these countries.<sup>70</sup>

Social networking sites such as Twitter, on the other hand, can be considered as a kind of 'update diary': short statements, photos or videos, always taking into account the character limit imposed on the length of texts. There are, then, many other platforms that not everyone uses: the opera house Alla Scala is also present on Pinterest, a social that wants purely aesthetic photos as publications, while YouTube does not allow any format other than video.

We have already noted in the previous paragraphs how there are some museums that use irreverent communication methods (this is the case of the Archaeological Museum of Venice) and others using partnerships with influencers and bloggers.

In general, one only has to take a look at the various profiles to see how much more aesthetic photographs showing objects, collections and events appear, rather than showing a scientific and research side.

---

<sup>69</sup> Maddalena R., *Chi è la social media manager degli Uffizi che ha avvicinato gli under 25 all'arte, grazie a TikTok*, Milano, «Forbes», BFC Media, 28/04/2021, <https://forbes.it/2021/04/28/ilde-forgione-la-social-manager-che-ha-rilanciato-gli-uffizi-grazie-a-tiktok/> (29/01/2023)

<sup>70</sup> Dilon C., *TikTok Influences on Teenagers and Young Adults Students: The Common Usages of The Application TikTok*, American Scientific Research Journal for Engineering, Technology, and Sciences, 2020, p. 133

As has been understood up to this point, social networks are an exceptional tool for museums, as they give them the opportunity to interact directly with actual or potential users.

The effect of these tools is only positive if they are used correctly and consciously, the relationship with the audience must be managed professionally and usually takes place in two phases: the first is identified as Reach and is the initial phase, the one in which the audience is intercepted and attracted, the other is referred to as Engage during which contact with the audience is activated through involvement and participation. These two phases form the process known as Audience Development. It is difficult to precisely define Audience Development because it is a relatively new mechanism that has been developed since the late 1990s when awareness of the incompleteness of the democratisation of culture became widespread<sup>71</sup>.

New media must be used in harmony with the museum's values, mission and vision. The term mission refers to the museum's *raison d'être*, partly described by the ICOM definition of a museum, partly linked to national, cultural and territorial identity. The term vision refers to the "projection of a future scenario that reflects the ideals, values and aspirations of those who set the goals and encourage action.

The communication strategy should aim at bridging the gap between assets (by which we mean the material and immaterial benefits related to cultural heritage) and the people interested in enjoying the heritage, we focus on this aspect because there is no perfect overlap between the visitor's perception of the cultural institution and the institution's perception of its own identity. In order to give voice to the museum through social platforms, it is important to avoid alienation and to maintain a language consistent with the message one wants to communicate, to transmit information in a simple and effective way and to produce reader-friendly remains, digital-storytelling activity allows for a stronger involvement of the public because it responds to requests for individual, authentic and emotional content. Social media are a tool with great potential: they allow the pervasiveness of messages and contacts to increase, but engagement occurs where a long-term strategy is in place.

We could, therefore, generally say that all communication has common ground.

It starts with storytelling is made up of the words story and telling, indicating a trend that has been very fashionable in many professional circles lately: 'storytelling'. In a 2008 article,

---

<sup>71</sup> Casarola F., *Musei e social media: esempi virtuosi, buone e cattive pratiche*, 2020 p. 9



the American scholar Gary Carson points out that storytelling is the main and fundamental condition for making a museum relevant to people<sup>72</sup>.

People who follow a given page must find themselves with these characteristics:

- trust. Do the people listening to the story trust the storyteller? Do they trust you? This aspect is crucial for the success of your storytelling;
- emotions. Stories need development that touches on emotions. Great narratives are based on great emotions: conflicts, solutions, tensions, mysteries and revelations;
- relationship. The audience must identify with the story. This step will allow us to create a special relationship: identifying with the character in a story means letting oneself be transported into the narrative;
- simplicity. A simple story is a strong story. Let's remove everything that does not serve the narrative: let's cut less important events, let's merge two minor characters into one, let's minimise mentions of other places;
- personal. The recipient wants to give personal meaning to the story. We can indicate the structure, we can suggest references, but we must leave room for people to apply their own moral to the tale;
- immersion. Sometimes the audience becomes completely immersed in a story, lives the experiences told in the first person and becomes the main character. That is the goal of every storyteller;
- familiarity. The audience evaluates new stories by comparing them with those they already know. Different stories can share a proven structure, a recognisable development that is easy to frame.

There are also three mantras for online communication<sup>73</sup>:

- one must be focused on the audience, write what they are interested in, not what they like;
- improvisation is abolished, everything must be designed and planned;
- constancy is everything, followers must be made loyal and eager for content.

---

<sup>72</sup> De Gottardo F., D'Amore A., Gasparotti A., Raimondi Cominesi A. con la collaborazione di Giannini F., Colella P. e D'Eredità A., *Comunicare la cultura online: una guida pratica per i musei - Progettazione di siti web, content management, social media e analisi dei risultati*, 2014, p. 49

<sup>73</sup> Ivi p. 56

Having specified these dynamics of how a cultural organisation must maintain its own identity on social media and tell its followers about itself without forgetting to say what they are most interested in, it is difficult to say museum by museum what is published.

In the sense that, as one can easily see in the individual profiles, what is told is not the purely scientific aspect of the institution, but more the story behind it, the anecdotes and curiosities that arise within.



Fig. 7: A storytelling example of an Instagram post from the Metropolitan Museum in New York

*(Source - personal screenshot)*

## 1.10 The precarious situation before Covid-19 and the aftershocks

What, in general, has the Covid-19 health emergency left us, speaking of the web world? The figure of the virologist, for example, has been brought to the fore, making those experts, capable of providing keys to interpreting the situation, the protagonists of the media scene.

The current digital revolution offers everyone the possibility of new communication scenarios inherent to the situation that is represented by the ephemeral nature of content and opinions. The flow of communication often runs the risk of producing forms of media

content overdose, which flow and fuel debate intensely for a short time, only to end up leaving no perceptible trace.<sup>74</sup>

A further characteristic of the current era is the difficulty for the information seeker to verify the reliability of sources. Although this issue is mainly raised in schools, it is a problem that society in general should address, because it concerns every stage of life, also involving adults and the elderly.

Speaking purely of the cultural sector, the Covid-19 induced digital acceleration is an excellent opportunity for experts and practitioners to examine the ways in which governments and organisations behaved and reacted in a short period of time, thereby providing relevant conclusions for the future.

First, in the rest of the world where digital had already been well tried in the cultural world, competition to get in on the action has become fierce. Museums and galleries around the world have sprung to attention to offer their audiences virtual tours, artwork of the day, seminars and web discussions, social engagement and, especially in the US, online fundraising. Audiences have begun to watch, download and save this type of content on their devices to a level that had never been seen before, responding, many times, to the call to action in creative ways: one only has to think of the hilarious responses to the challenges promoted by the Rijksmuseum and the Getty Museum to recreate works of art with household objects. The speed with which museums and the public have adapted to this forced shift from analogue to virtual operations has been astounding.<sup>75</sup>

Instead, in the Italian context, we begin this analysis of what the Covid-19 period brought by saying that the most relevant phenomenon imprinted by the Covid-19 pandemic that can be recorded in the museum field is the decisive push towards digitisation. A NEMO (Network of European Museum Organisations) survey showed that more than 60 per cent of the world's museums have increased their online presence, recording a 40 per cent increase in visits. In Italy, according to the Osservatorio Innovazione Digitale nei Beni e Attività Culturali of the Politecnico di Milano, 76% of museums have at least one social network

---

<sup>74</sup> Di Bari C., *Emergenza Covid-19 tra comunicazione e formazione*, Firenze, «Studi sulla Formazione», v.23, n.1, Firenze University Press, 2020, p. 46

<sup>75</sup> Koszary, A., *Has the digital museum finally come of age*, Apollo. The International Art Magazine, 04/05/2020, <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/digital-museums-today/> (04/02/2023)

profile. Only one museum in four (24%), however, has a strategic plan for digital innovation.<sup>76</sup>

Italy has arrived at the threshold of the pandemic below average compared to other European countries. Istat (2018 data) found that only 11.5% of state museums have digitally catalogued their heritage. As for digital equipment, 43.7% of state museums have a website, 65.9% have a social account, while only 9.8% offer the possibility of a virtual visit.

It also showed that 51% of museums are not equipped with wi-fi. Fortunately, however, 85% of museums have a website and the sale of images for research, reproduction and commercial purposes is widespread, while the offer of subscription-based access to services via website and app is still low (2%). The period of physical closure has also led to a rethinking of aspects related to logistics and the organisation of the user's visit: today only 23% of museums, monuments and archaeological sites have an online ticketing system and among the access control mechanisms the detachment of the entrance ticket prevails over automated systems such as barcode readers (11% paper-based and 6% display-based). Even today, about 86% of museum revenues are derived from on-site ticket sales.<sup>77</sup>

While international museums before Covid-19 were already light years ahead on the use of social media for their communication, I would like to focus on Italian state museums and their choices dictated by several factors, such as:

- The international demand for the museums' digital transformation,
- The Italian state museums are an example of user-centricity. In Italy, the state government in recent years has put pressure on national museums to increase their cultural participation.
- The balance online-onsite while pandemic; with the stop of on-site visits, museums can only provide their online services.

The closure of cultural institutions during the health emergency and their reaction to the closure changed, in a permanent way, the mode of cultural enjoyment by opening up new and important reflections on what had been there until then. The long period of physical closure of cultural venues led to creative responses from cultural institutions that, by

---

<sup>76</sup> Mazza S., *I musei e la sfida della digitalizzazione*, Torino, «Il giornale dell'Architettura, Allemandi Editore, 25/01/2021, <https://ilgiornaledellarchitettura.com/2021/01/25/i-musei-e-la-sfida-della-digitalizzazione/> (27/01/2023)

<sup>77</sup> Pirrelli M., *Nel lockdown musei più social, ma solo uno su quattro ha un piano digitale*, Milano, «Il Sole 24 ore», 24 ORE Cultura, 27/05/2020, [https://www.ilssole24ore.com/art/nel-lockdown-musei-piu-social-ma-solo-su-quattro-ha-piano-digitale-ADYWzPT?refresh\\_ce=1](https://www.ilssole24ore.com/art/nel-lockdown-musei-piu-social-ma-solo-su-quattro-ha-piano-digitale-ADYWzPT?refresh_ce=1) (26/01/2023)

leveraging digital technologies in particular, increased their cultural offerings and attracted new audiences.

In the pre-COVID scenario, strategic and structured digital adoption in museums (taking this category as a reference) was a privilege for a select few. In fact, out of the sample of 422 museums, only 6% had a strategic plan dedicated to digital innovation, 3% of museums said that they allocated more than 50% of their investment budget to digital, and digital skills were heterogeneous with 37% of museums having digital professionals but no dedicated team.<sup>78</sup>

Every cultural institution in Italy was forced to close its doors and to stop providing on-site services. This pushed museums to use social media to offer their services online, adopting a new format to try to engage with users<sup>79</sup>.

The circumstances changed with the closing, and museums no more use social media as communication tools, but as a means to provide a public service, covering parts of their core work, from virtual tours (as in the case of the Uffizi Gallery) to experts' meetings (Paestum Archaeological Park) and education initiatives (National Roman Museum). Museums, like everyone else, are facing the dilemma at the last minute.

I would like to expose the three dilemmas resulting from the COVID-19-driven ICT acceleration, which are fundamental for the digital processing of public service delivery in general. These dilemmas centre around the way in which the actual digital transformation is different from long-standing e-government approaches.

The first dilemma relates to the users' role in the services. Reading research on the subject, it was found that Italy's top 100 state museums increased the amount of daily posts in February and March 2020, a period when service increase was linked to an expanding followers base, but this was not reflected in the level of engagement (which we measured by counting the number of likes, comments and shares for a post by the museum as a proxy for online activity)<sup>80</sup>.

For instance, an engaged post at the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan included the artwork of Italian street artist TvBoy, who alt-edited a famous 19th century painting by Francesco

---

<sup>78</sup> Agostino D., Arnaboldi M., Lorenzini E., *Verso un new normal dei musei post-Covid 19: quale ruolo per il digitale?*, Roma, «Economia della Cultura», n.1, Il Mulino, marzo 2020, p. 80

<sup>79</sup> Agostino D., Arnaboldi M., Diaz Lema M., *New development: COVID-19 as an accelerator of digital transformation in public service delivery*, p. 70

<sup>80</sup> Ibidem

Hayez, *The Kiss*, with a thematic related to the pandemic. The entitled was *Love in the Time of COVID19*, playing on the Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez's title *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

In 2017, the Government of Italy initiated a major plan for the digital transformation of the public sector, which was implemented by means of guidelines and an agenda for public institutions. The Ministry of Culture has developed a digital strategic plan, while leaving museums to take and personalise their measures.

A number of Italian museums implemented a digital plan that includes infrastructure, visitors and staff, increasing from 3% in 2018 to 6% in 2019; 23% of more staff are digital-skilled in 2019 than in 2018. Italian museums always offered free digital initiatives on social media, either for communication purposes or to complement on-site service delivery.

However, this has not stopped them from offering a service via social media networks, which demands an ongoing effort as museum staff must rethink the service offering, plan the new digital offering and provide the digital service. A short video about a painting, for example, requires compressing the content into a five-minute slideshow to make it work on social media<sup>81</sup>.

During the first Italian lockdown, the media discussed the social relevance of museums by adopting the term 'digital bulimia' to illustrate the contradictory gap between the growing exponential amount of museums' digital content and the corresponding gap between the quality of that same content, which is frequently below the required standard, given the status of the institutions that provide it.

It is also interesting to note that after the first lockdown in 2020, the Directorate General for Museums wanted to reconnect with its audience with a questionnaire administered using its own social channels, those of the museums that have them and wanted to make them available, and those of important cultural associations such as ICOM Italy. Interesting, then, the use of social media to ask for an opinion on the museum situation in Italy and not just to divulge or narrate.

---

<sup>81</sup> Ivi p. 71

The intent was to be told about some qualitative aspects of the relationship with museums and whether and how alternative virtual offers of cultural content were received and sought after.

For a very large majority of respondents (83.9%), museums should adopt some changes with the reopening. Especially females (87.3%) and younger 25-34 year olds (89%) are convinced of this.<sup>82</sup>

Quite surprisingly, however, 44.2% do not believe that the ticket prices should change in the future. Mostly males (15.9%) and older people are convinced of this: 21.1% of those aged 65 and over and 16.6% of those aged 55-64. On the other hand, less than a quarter of the answers (23.7%) are in favour of a price reduction; among the youngest, this percentage reaches 26.5%.

Some hypotheses of facilitating access to museums are very successful. In particular, 79% of visitors would be interested in having an annual Card in order to visit all 452 state-owned museums, archaeological sites and monuments in Italy. Among young adults (25-34 years old) it is 88.6% of consensus, among the very young (14-24 years old) 84.8%.

59% of the respondents would be willing to pay 3 euros for a remote visit of a special museum (a large museum, a hidden gem that nobody knows about, a museum far away from home), guided by the director or an expert at their complete disposal. Females (62%), and adults 55-64 (62.4%) especially like the idea.

More than two thirds of the respondents (67%) would be willing to contribute a donation, even a small one, to a particularly significant museum. This percentage among young adults (25-34 years) reaches 71%. Among those who declared this willingness, one third indicated 10 euros as the amount of a possible donation.

Italian museums have been closed from March to May 2020, reopening nationally during the summer and then facing a new closure from November to January 2021.

In some cases, like the museums of Bologna and the Vatican Museums, it was merely a matter of accelerating communication projects that had been scheduled well in advance of the start of the pandemic and had already proven to be a success. In other cases, such as the

---

<sup>82</sup> Solima L., *Il pubblico dei musei. Indagine sulla comunicazione nei musei statali italiani*, Gangemi Editore, Roma, 2020, p. 17

Uffizi Galleries, the unexpected decision to join, for example, the social platform TikTok, only contributed to the above-mentioned 'digital bulimia'<sup>83</sup>.

The first partnerships between museums and influencers date back to the early days of social media use but, until the COVID-19 pandemic, the few personalities considered by institutions as appropriate to promote their cultural messages were those already operating within the cultural industry itself. An early attempt to introduce influencer practices in Italy was made by the Scuderie del Quirinale in Rome. To appeal to a wider audience, the institution engaged bloggers to publicise *The Universal Museum. From Napoleon's Dream to Canova*, a potentially 'difficult' exhibition to promote due to its highly scientific profile.

Communication responsibility helps to explain an institution's communication strategy and is an important indicator that assists the community to make a distinction between promotional and self-promotional practices. This question is at the centre of the many controversies concerning influencer posts in Italian museums. The public responds very favourably when the idea of using influencer marketing is directly from the institutions itself, as in the case of YouTuber Luis Sal's campaign for the Museums of the City of Bologna<sup>84</sup>.

By contrast, when museums are not the point of departure of the communication campaign, they run the risk of losing their centrality, as in the case of the post that the famous influencer Chiara Ferragni made on the Uffizi's Instagram page.

Quite the opposite of this narrative was a post by Silvio Salvo, social media manager of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo.

He reposted the Uffizi's content on his own Instagram account, which is connected to the Turin institution's official profile. Instead of the influencer, in front of the Botticelli painting he placed a montaged picture of Master Yoda, the Foundation's mascot, with a satirical comment in support of influencer marketing in museums. Leaving aside the meme industry that grew out of the post and all the sterile controversy that followed, this event has been commented on as part of the latest history of museum communication because it appears, in many ways, to be a divide<sup>85</sup>.

---

<sup>83</sup> Lisanti V., *How COVID-19 Changed the Digital Presence of Italian Museums: Comparing Influencer Marketing Attempts at the Uffizi Galleries and the Museums of Bologna*, Art, Museums and Digital Cultures, Rethinking Change, Lisbon, MAAT Museum/online, 2021, p. 209

<sup>84</sup> Ivi p. 211

<sup>85</sup> Ivi p. 214



The Municipality of Bologna had accepted the difficult challenge of addressing the target audience of young people in 2018. The city was able to attract to its cultural venues the 'non-museum audience' for excellence, the age group between 13 and 24, by adopting its own language. The highly successful museum communication campaign was assigned to YouTuber Luis Sal, with a channel that had more than 1.5 million subscribers by March 2021<sup>86</sup>.

The influencer's introductory statement: 'I've never been an intellectual, I've never liked museums and exhibitions - what an ignoramus I am!' captures the young visitors' attention at once. They identify with this statement, thereby breaking down the barrier of prejudice that separates cultural institutions from the public and becoming intrigued by the video's message.

The promo video achieved more than 115,000 views in March 2021, a considerable number for a 'non-blockbuster' exhibition, which would have been impossible to obtain without the influencer's popularity. The video shows Sal in the rooms which had been set up for the show, but were not actually opened due to the pandemic. In this way, he not only publicized a cultural event, but also meaningfully documented the moment in history of the institution's closing.

The Italian museums' communication efforts were thus at last confronted with pressing issues such as affordability and inclusiveness, due to the open attitude adopted to social media audiences and in specific terms to the influencer communities with which each institution chose to collaborate<sup>87</sup>.

The case studies presented here shows how social media marketing approaches can fit naturally into the museum environment, which is a place of social and cultural phenomena. In addition, these new practices need to be included critically in the digital communication strategies of cultural institutions so as to consciously construct new communities. And this does not imply necessarily a loss of the centrality of the museum mission.

Not to be forgotten, of course, in the light of the emergence of this digital content of cultural institutions is the discussion of their use to reach Generation Z. It is important to understand the gap that existed (and still very often exists) between the often elitist context of cultural content and the need to make cultural heritage accessible to this latest digital native

---

<sup>86</sup> Ivi p. 218

<sup>87</sup> Ivi p. 219

generation. Digital, the identifying element of post-millennials, can facilitate their approach to culture and their accessibility to cultural heritage. The above examples refer to wanting to communicate with this age group as well, hence the decision to land on the newest platforms.<sup>88</sup>

To conclude the picture of what the various lockdowns have meant, it is also necessary to analyse what has happened to cultural activities concerning the performing arts, which have witnessed a complete shutdown of cultural work (obviously speaking also in its broadest sense) except for a few brief summer breaks.

Everything has been cancelled, with the closure of theatres, cinemas, museums. With the blocking of most activities, due to the (in principle inevitable) measures, the effects were devastating: both for spectators and for professionals in the various sectors.

The gradual resumption of activities led in many cases to a reduction in the workforce, considering that the situation created penalised first and foremost the weakest actors on the contractual side.

Beyond all rhetoric, it is incontrovertible that those working in the performing arts, and in the theatre in particular, will in the future have to deal with a very different reality, which, in addition to the always burning issue of employment, has brought with it many new challenges.

One above all concerns the relationship with audiences, where we will have to deal with a drop in the number of spectators caused by the arrival of a crisis almost unprecedented in contemporary times. It should be noted that the same global economic crisis that started in 2008, whose consequences were less than those we are currently experiencing, caused downturns in all consumption. There were fears that previously loyal or even occasional viewers belonging to the groups most affected by the pandemic would not return, and this was partly the case. In the same way, the former 'non audience' (especially the younger one) might prove even more difficult to reach, having identified streaming as the cultural mode of fruition of reference.

Obviously, it must be said that another challenge to be faced will be the technological one, which is explained in this thesis: the digital revolution has brought about substantial innovations in products and processes, leading to the emergence of new markets but also to

---

<sup>88</sup> Taormina A., *Lo spettacolo dal vivo: scenari e prospettive a un anno dalla pandemia*, Antropologia E Teatro – Rivista Di Studi, N. 13, 202, p. 5

the imposition of new professions (such as the now vitally important one for communication in general of the Social Media Manager) and the transformation of existing ones. The activation of platforms such as ITsART pave the way for new protocols, as well as new collaborations on both the artistic and business sides.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Ibidem

## 2 The cultural network in Venice: some cases among museums, foundations and cultural institutes in the city

As we have been able to understand from the previous chapter, every cultural institution, whether a museum, an archive or more closely related to the performing arts such as theaters, has its own way of communicating online and its own style.

This style, as has been noted, can be declined through colloquial language, or even by making use of external figures such as influencers, but usually overly scientific language that would tend to alienate the audience is never used.

The Web and cultural organizations in all their forms can be considered two media (albeit very different) and as such they place themselves before their target audiences. The idea of putting the audience at the center is a very common one on the web and one that can be borrowed for museum (or cultural whatever) marketing. Social media, for example, offer the possibility of creating an information campaign, which has the advantages of communicative immediacy and makes it possible to reach a wide audience as well as a specific target audience very quickly.

Thus, social media allow to integrate and develop parallel and complementary actions with respect to the marketing strategy of the cultural institution, but also to act in speed with advertising actions for, for example, an event. A social media marketing strategy serves to create a web community that can (potentially) be a community in reality as well, to be brought into the cultural institution. Social media for these entities are effective direct marketing tools. Knowing how to use social media with a communication strategy that puts the museum's narrative at the center (doing storytelling), does not disregard the need to determine objectives and target audience.<sup>90</sup>

You have to interact on social, knowing how to do it:

- Distinguish communication between website and social media channels.
- The museum must know how to respond promptly to requests for information and criticism

---

<sup>90</sup> *I social media e lo storytelling per il museo - Forme di valorizzazione museale attraverso i social media*  
<https://www.art-museum.it/social-media-marketing-per-museo.html> (28/01/2023)

- Combine the simplicity of the language typical of these tools, with the authority of the institution
- Avoid over-communication
- Tell interesting things and build a digital trail
- Define its narrative identity

For this, as was mentioned earlier, it is necessary for the institution to employ the figure of the Social Media Manager, who must be:

- Up-to-date: this figure must be familiar with the tool he or she is dealing with and must keep up-to-date at all times;
- Organized: the importance of multitasking. One must create content on social, respond to comments, analyze follower data, design campaigns in advance and study new approaches based on responses to content that has been generated. You also have to be up-to-date on trends, know in advance what might create hype, new strategies and channels to connect with your audience;
- Creative: one has to increase one's creativity by exercising it every day by reading books, watching movies, TV series, drawing, listening to music, talking to people, traveling, exploring the web world in its entirety, stretching one's ear to all points of view.

But then, in Venice, is all this present in its cultural bodies?

Before analyzing individual profiles, it is a case of going to see what kinds of cultural entities are present in the city.

So, the case study I want to bring to light is that of the city of Venice, which is rich in cultural institutions of all kinds. There are theatres, state and civic museums, private foundations, libraries, etc. in the city.

One of the definitions of a network is: "a group or system of interconnected people or things.". So if each person on a social platform can be interconnected with another, so can the various institutions of a city, which are interconnected not only in the virtual reality, but also in the physical one.

Each of them has its own social pages (sometimes more than one if the individual organisation is under a management that also has its own account), each with its own way of communicating and its own characteristics.

Whether these can be considered right or wrong, successful or not, is not for me to judge: each social media manager follows his own way of thinking and interprets the use of platforms as he sees fit.

What I want to do in this chapter is, instead, first of all to present what is the cultural scene in the city that many may not know and then to analyse its presence on social media with updated data. In fact, many people mistakenly think that individual museums (the famous Doge's Palace is one example) are "islands in their own right", capable of making their own decisions and communicating independently of all the others.

The reality is totally different. Contrary to popular belief, the city's most famous museums and cultural institutions are part of directorates or foundations with at least a dozens of them.

As in the previous example, the Doge's Palace is part of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia (MUVE), which brings together eleven museums in the historic centre and on the two largest islands in the lagoon, Murano and Burano. The museums in question are: Palazzo Ducale, Museo Correr, Torre dell'Orologio, Ca' Rezzonico Museo del Settecento Veneziano, Palazzo Mocenigo - Centro Studi di Storia del Tessuto e del Costume, Casa di Carlo Goldoni, Ca' Pesaro - Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna, Palazzo Fortuny, Museo del Vetro di Murano, Museo del Merletto di Burano and Museo di Storia Naturale.

But the MUVE Foundation is not the only "big collector" of museums in the city. As we will see later in detail, there are museums under state management, private ones and also temporary exhibitions such as La Biennale, although obviously the physical location is present all year round in the city, but its exhibitions (of art and architecture in alternate years) last only 6 months a year.

Finally, I would like to bring to light a case that I followed closely for six months, which is that of the Fondazione Teatro La Fenice. In fact, I had the opportunity to do an internship in the Foundation's Press Office where I was able to support the digital department, which consists of following and updating the website ("the house", where all digital activities begin) and I independently managed two of the theatre's social platforms, one of which I started myself, which are Instagram and TikTok, the latter to try to involve an increasingly young audience of users who are apparently far from the dynamics of an Opera-Symphony Foundation.

The Fenice Opera House, in fact, cannot be considered merely a theatre but is also a museum, as its halls welcome hundreds of tourists visiting the city every day.

It is therefore interesting to analyse how this hybrid institution fits into the overall scenario of the city and what relations it has with the rest of the institutions. In fact, some of the concerts are realised together with other institutions such as foundations (e.g. the Ugo and Olga Levi Foundation) or the Municipality.

Finally, I would like to show which are, in terms of numbers, the main competitors of La Fenice Opera House, among which we can surely already imagine Alla Scala Opera House in first place.

The Venetian museum system, and the Italian museum system in general, underwent a major change after the reform of Title V of the Constitution in 2001. This, defines how the various competences are to be distributed over the territory, analyses the types of collaborations that have been activated between Italian museums, and reveals a rather complex and multiform reality with, at times, unclear contours<sup>91</sup>.

The first museum management instrument in Italy was created during the 1980s and was the 'museum network', which provided for consortium-type management. From this idea arose a reflection on the state of neglect of many small museums, which had few resources at their disposal, especially financial resources<sup>92</sup>.

What was desired was a collaboration between museums, which would allow a greater relationship between the individual units and their cultural heritages. The aim was to enhance the individual through networking and, among other things, to spread fixed costs by achieving an economy of scale.

Today, a more heterogeneous way of thinking has emerged: starting from an audit of collaborations, it has become clear that there are various types of museum collaborations and that the same network is often combined with the concepts of "cultural district" and "integrated cultural system"<sup>93</sup>.

This conceptual problem, i.e. understanding what kind of network one is referring to, does not only extend to the theoretical field, but also to the practical field, since in many regions the concept of network is not only used. We can, in fact, witness the creation and proliferation of parks, systems, routes, ecomuseums and districts.

---

<sup>91</sup> Direzione generale Musei, Sistema museale nazionale, <http://musei.beniculturali.it/progetti/sistema-museale-nazionale> (26/10/2022)

<sup>92</sup> Di Salvo C., *Cos'è un sistema museale italiano*, <https://terpress.blogspot.com/> (26/10/2022)

<sup>93</sup> Ibidem

It should also be emphasised that the decision to set up one of these realities very often only implies the choice of activating a common promotional strategy or an alternative itinerary to be proposed to the public to replace the traditional one<sup>94</sup>.

In such a delicate and seemingly disordered environment 'territorial museum systems' are born, which concern the cultural organisational form of the region and specifically the museums are the individual service units.

These systems can be categorised as bodies within a given geographical area, or very simply within a specific territory, having the same characteristics and documenting existing cultural differences and seeking to organise the management of services and resources more efficiently.

Through all this, smaller local authorities can implement policies of cooperation, qualification and at the same time promote the protection and enhancement of their own cultural and environmental heritage in the area. If one analyses the structure of the territorial museum system more closely, one will see that within it there is the 'urban museum system', with the aim of co-ordinating the different museum realities of the same city in order to offer visitors a common cultural proposal from the point of view of scientific and didactic activities and the design of integrated visitor routes.

Thematic museum systems, in which the entire regional territory is taken into consideration, differ from these. They can be considered as a functional tool through which individual museum or exhibition organisations organise, together with the support of their region, a co-operation aimed at enhancing, studying, disseminating and researching topics of relevance to them.

A museum, therefore, possesses a dense network of relationships that can be compared to a universe. In fact, there are not only the intense relationships it has with the public (i.e. the visitors), but with time various collaborations and sharings are created, of different forms and types, with other subjects, such as general stakeholders, who bring value and try to enhance it as much as possible.

It should also be borne in mind that cultural institutes have very close collaborations with associations or, more generally, with bodies involved in tourist reception and promotion of the territory.

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibidem



Undoubtedly, a museum system, which connects several realities "under one roof", gives those who visit it and those who work in it a different way of conceiving things: the organisation itself changes and the knowledge and enjoyment of our cultural heritage take on a vision that is amplified and enriched by all the connections that make up the system. Put simply, the museum steps out of its confines made of bricks and mortar and projects itself onto the whole surrounding area.

Summarising, the website of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism outlines this new organisational formula, implemented in this way:

"The National Museum System, which reports to the Directorate General for Museums, aims to create a governance of heritage characterised by sustainability, innovation and participation, which involves, along with the museums and places of culture of the State, also the structures owned by regional, municipal, diocesan, private, university or military museums."

Membership is an opportunity for growth and improvement for all museums and places of culture, regardless of their ownership, size or region. In fact, far from hierarchical approaches, the National Museum System is founded on networking, to strengthen the collaboration between the central state, the regions, the municipalities and other local authorities, the universities and the entire education system.

Multilevel co-ordination and cross-sector co-operation offer advantages in terms of quantity and quality for visitors and enhance Italy's competitiveness in the international tourism scene. Connected museums can mark a turning point and open up to new audiences, in particular social groups traditionally excluded from cultural consumption. Networked museums make it easier to find solutions to really bring people together and guarantee real knowledge experiences.

Among the purposes, we find those of

- to enhance the enjoyment of the cultural heritage as a whole, from the smallest and lesser known museums to the big attractions;
- to guarantee quality access for the public and an improvement in the protection of cultural heritage, through the definition of uniform levels of quality for all places of culture in the network;
- encourage the promotion of cultural development;

- encourage the generation of economies of scale, including the shared provision of services and professional skills among the institutions that are part of the System<sup>95</sup>.

Each system can have different declinations: it can be identified with a single ticket, an educational project spread over several municipalities in the territory or a single heritage management.

The structure is realised 'horizontally' and a great participation is created around it; a sort of large community that welcomes professionals from the world of culture, who allow the visitor to get to know all the existing opportunities to experience the visit.

The city of Venice has within it a great variety of museum managements that paint a dense and diverse panorama of offerings. A first major division of management could be made between public and private. The Musei Civici di Venezia, for instance, are an important museum reality in the city and are managed by the Foundation of the same name, which is also co-managed by the Municipality of Venice.

The museum system that concerns this direction unites all the museums owned by the city plus the Doge's Palace, which is state-owned but managed by the city<sup>96</sup>.

Specifically, the museums belonging to this group (which we will see in more detail in the next section) are: The Doge's Palace, the Correr Museum, Ca' Rezzonico - Museum of 18th-century Venice, Ca' Pesaro - International Gallery of Modern Art, the Glass Museum located on the island of Murano, the Museum of Natural History, the Museum of Palazzo Mocenigo, Palazzo Fortuny, the Lace Museum located on the island of Burano, Carlo Goldoni's House and lastly the Clock Tower<sup>97</sup>.

In addition to the semi-public municipal management, there are museums in the city that are fully state-run. These are managed by the Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico ed Etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Venezia e dei comuni della Gronda lagunare.

This large group of museums includes the National Archaeological Museum, the Museum of Oriental Art - Ca' Pesaro, the Giorgio Franchetti Gallery at Ca' d'Oro, and the Museum of Palazzo Grimani. There are other museums under this management, but they are scattered throughout the region. Also part of the state museum system in Veneto are the Museo

---

<sup>95</sup> <http://musei.beniculturali.it/progetti/sistema-museale-nazionale> (02/11/2022)

<sup>96</sup> Stinco E., *I Musei Civici di Venezia*, p. 1

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.museivenezia.it/> (27/10/2022)

Nazionale Concordiese, the Museo Archeologico di Quarto d'Altino and the Museo Nazionale di Villa Pisani<sup>98</sup>.

Also managed by the state, but no longer part of the Polo Museale del Veneto, are the Gallerie dell'Accademia, another 'piece de resistance' in terms of the number of visits to the city's museums.

The remaining Venetian museums have other types of management, different from the public one. These include private individuals, foundations, various types of organisations or religious institutions<sup>99</sup>.

Mentioning a few famous names of non-publicly managed museums, it is impossible not to know the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, the St Mark's Basilica complex with the museum, the Pala d'Oro and Treasure and the bell tower, the Jewish Museum of Venice, Palazzo Grassi, Punta della Dogana, the Naval Historical Museum of the Navy, the Querini Stampalia Museum, the Museum of Music, the Leonardo da Vinci Museum, the Scala Contarini del Bovolo, the Giorgio Cini Foundation, the Wagner Museum (at Ca' Vendramin Calergi, the seat of the Casino), La Biennale di Venezia, the Andrich Torcello House Museum, the Prada Foundation - Ca' Corner della Regina, the Anton Maria Traversi Museum of Physics, the House of Corto Maltese, the San Servolo Asylum Museum, the Museum of Byzantine Icons - Hellenic Institute, the Diocesan Museum / Pinacoteca Manfrediana, the Provincial Archaeological Museum on the island of Torcello and the Venice Planetarium on Lido<sup>100</sup>.

There is also a circuit of churches with an entrance fee whose name is Chorus<sup>101</sup>.

It is easy to see how the city of Venice has a vast museum offer, branched out into several managements and with different types of offerings that do not stop at 'paintings and statues' alone. One can therefore deduce how a standard cultural holiday in recent years, based on short and ill-informed stays, does not help to bring out all the beauty and heritage the city has to offer. It ends up targeting and directing visits only to a few museums that are taken by storm in the busiest periods, leaving others with more niche collections empty and therefore not sufficiently valorised and publicised.

---

<sup>98</sup> Ibidem

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.museivenezia.it/> (27/10/2022)

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.veneziaunica.it/it/content/fondazioni-ed-altri-musei> (28/12/2022)

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.veneziaunica.it/it/content/chiese-di-chorus> (28/10/2022)

I will start from an analysis of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia.

## 2.1 The Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia (MUVE)

The Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia or MUVE abbreviated, includes eleven museums, which will be analysed in detail in the following section.

If one analyses the various heritages contained within each museum, one can count approximately 700,000 thousand works of art, five specialised libraries, an important photographic archive and a state-of-the-art depository just outside the city, more precisely at the Vega Stock in Marghera<sup>102</sup>.

This museum system has been managed by the Foundation since its establishment in 2008. Recently the Foundation has been joined, through a partnership, by two important realities in the mainland area: the Candiani Cultural Centre and Forte Marghera, both in Mestre<sup>103</sup>.

It is important to specify that the Foundation is private and that the heritage it manages is public. It is managed by a board of directors and its activities are all self-financed. The Municipality of Venice is involved, being the only founding partner.

Quite simply, the Foundation is a network of autonomous museums that have a single management center behind them.

Within it, traditional museum activities (study, conservation and valorization) are carried out alongside others that also include services. These are research, training, teaching and the creation/promotion of events of limited duration. All this is carried out with a view to dialogue with the surrounding area.

Among the aims of MUVE are to encourage the coming together of new members, who must share the same goals. Essential are the relations with other cultural bodies, such as: museum systems (national and international) and other institutions with different natures from the cultural one. In addition, there are collaborations and partnerships that are devised with private entities for the realisation of specific projects.

---

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.visitmuve.it/> (28/12/2022)

<sup>103</sup> Ibidem

The Foundation's objectives include increasing international visibility and consequently the associated reputation and developing strong links with local communities. All this while ensuring maximum accessibility for its visitors. Along with these, the Foundation's aims include outlining strategies to enhance the heritage of its museums through specific development plans.

Analysing the period of time from 2013 to 2020, it can be seen that the Musei Civici have proved to be a winning reality within the city.

First, a necessary premise must be made, which will be valid not only for this analysis of the MUVE Foundation but also for the subsequent ones of the other museums.

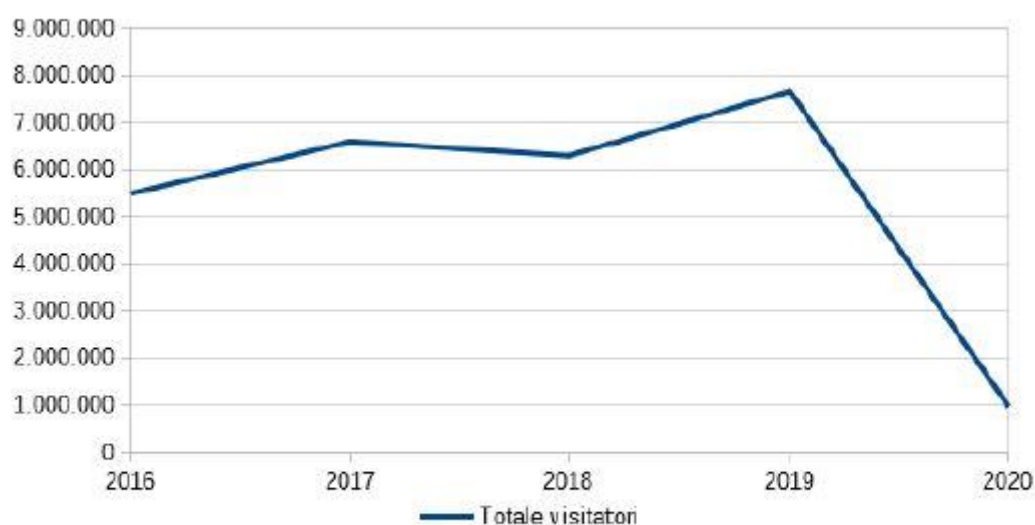
In 2020, despite the limitations due to the pandemic, 92% of Italian museums remained open to the public, albeit partially<sup>104</sup>.

In 2020, following the legal measures that ordered the compulsory closure of museum facilities to contain the spread of Covid-19 (between the end of February and May and between November and December) almost all museums (92%) managed to guarantee services and activities, reopening exhibition spaces to the public of visitors when permitted<sup>105</sup>.

---

<sup>104</sup> Assessorato al Turismo, *Annuario del Turismo 2017*, Città di Venezia, 2017, p. 109

<sup>105</sup> Report ISTAT, *MUSEI E ISTITUZIONI SIMILARI IN ITALIA, Musei aperti ma visitatori in forte calo nell'anno della pandemia*, 2020 [https://www.istat.it/it/files/2022/02/REPORT\\_MUSEI-E-ISTITUZIONI-SIMILARI-IN-ITALIA.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files/2022/02/REPORT_MUSEI-E-ISTITUZIONI-SIMILARI-IN-ITALIA.pdf)



**Figura 9.1:** Totale visitatori dei musei e istituzioni culturali veneziane

*Fig. 8: visitor trends for the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia. From the graph it is possible to see a great variation in the number of visits due to closures because of Covid-19 (Source: Annuario del Turismo 2020)*

But if we look at pre-Covid-19 years, i.e. those provided by the previous Tourism Yearbook, during the period 2016-2019, it was found that the numbers were on the rise, to a peak of visitors in 2019. In calculating the number of visits, admissions to temporary exhibitions organised in some of these museums were also taken into account<sup>106</sup>.

Fifty per cent of the tourists who arrive in Venice and decide to visit cultural institutions visit museums that are part of the Fondazione Musei Civici group. They are then followed by the Chorus Circuit for visiting churches and State Museums such as the Gallerie dell'Accademia and the Galleria Franchetti Ca' d'Oro<sup>107</sup>.

Focusing specifically, only four museums belonging to this Foundation exceed 100,000 visitors per year and they are: Palazzo Ducale, Museo Correr, Museo del Vetro and Ca' Rezzonico.

Certainly, a series of targeted interventions in different sectors has helped in the establishment of this system. Over the years the very structure of this organisation has been changed, the aggregation of the museum venues, the management method and the tariffs themselves, with which the aim was to improve a permanent and non-permanent tourism

<sup>106</sup> Assessorato al Turismo, *Annuario del Turismo 2019*, Città di Venezia, 2019, p. 110

<sup>107</sup> Assessorato al Turismo, *Annuario del Turismo 2017*, Città di Venezia, 2017, p. 112

offer and rationalise the flow of visitors. This whole policy of change had already begun in the 1990s<sup>108</sup>.

After being established, the Foundation had to contend with a very heterogeneous museum reality, in which the Doge's Palace and other state- and church-owned venues in the area stole the show from the civic ones. After the Doges' Palace, the most visited museum venues were the Gallerie dell'Accademia (state-owned), the Guggenheim Foundation and the Scuola di San Rocco.

The Foundation has eleven museums within it, of various kinds and with different needs.

Undoubtedly, the symbol and 'golden goose' of this group is the Doge's Palace. The palace can certainly be regarded as one of the masterpieces of Gothic art in the city. It can be identified as a grandiose stratification of construction and ornamental elements.

The foundations and parts of the building date back to the early Middle Ages, more precisely around the 10th and 11th centuries. The rest of the building consists of three large bodies that united the previously existing sections to form a unicum. The wing of the palace overlooking St. Mark's Basin is the oldest and has been under reconstruction since 1340. The wing facing the Piazza, which was previously the seat of the Palace of Justice, has the famous Sala dello Scrutinio inside; finally, on the opposite side, the Renaissance wing housed the Doge's residence and many government offices. The public entrance to the Doge's Palace is located at the Porta del Frumento (which has this curious name due to its proximity to the 'Ufficio delle Biade'), which opens under the portico of the 14th-century façade adjacent to the Bacino San Marco<sup>109</sup>.

After the end of the Venetian Republic (1797), the Palazzo changed its function of being. The various vicissitudes experienced by the structure during the 19th century led to major restoration work being carried out towards the end of the 19th century. Parts of the external portico were replaced during this period and placed in what is now the Museo dell'Opera. Inside the Palazzo, more precisely on the first floor, we find several offices for the protection of cultural heritage, including the Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici di Venezia e Laguna.

---

<sup>108</sup> E. Stinco, *I Musei Civici di Venezia*, p. 5

<sup>109</sup> <https://palazzoducale.visitmuve.it/> (28/12/2022)

Since 1923 the management of the Palazzo passed from the hands of the state to those of the municipality and since 1996 it has become to all intents and purposes part of the Musei Civici di Venezia system.

Among the Foundation's other most visited museums are the Correr Museum, the Glass Museum and Ca' Rezzonico.

The Correr Museum is currently connected to the Doge's Palace: it can be accessed with a cumulative ticket for all museums in St. Mark's Square<sup>110</sup>.

The museum began its activities in 1922 and the Napoleonic Wing and part of the Procuratie Nuove were chosen as exhibition sites. The museum is named after the Venetian nobleman Teodoro Correr (1750-1830), a famous collector of his time. On his deathbed, in 1830, he decided to leave part of his estate, his art collection and palaces, to the city, and all this was to become a fundamental part of the Civic Museums' heritage.

His idea was to leave the city a place that could not only be of help to scholars and researchers, but could also preserve and protect the immense cultural and artistic heritage it possessed.

After various transfers and additions during the 19th century at the hands of different directors, the museum was relocated back to the Napoleonic Wing in 1922. These years also saw the creation of the Natural History Museum (which took its seat in the Fondaco dei Turchi) and the acquisition of the Glass Museum based in the Palazzo Giustiniani on Murano.

As the years went by, Ca' Centanni, known for being the birthplace of playwright Carlo Goldoni, was added to the group of Civic Museums, donated in 1931, and the following year Ca' Rezzonico was acquired by the Venice City Council, destined to become the home of the city's 18th-century history. The eighteenth-century part of the Correr collection was placed here.

During the 1950s the Casa Goldoni collection was enriched with new pieces from the Centre for Theatre Studies and in 1956 a new museum joined the group<sup>111</sup>. It was Mariano Fortuny's house-atelier, which, together with his collections, was donated to the city by Henriette Fortuny. The Fortuny Museum, however, did not open until 1975, and six years later the

---

<sup>110</sup> <https://correr.visitmuve.it/> (28/12/2022)

<sup>111</sup> <http://carlogoldoni.visitmuve.it/> (29/10/2022)



Lace Museum was opened on the island of Burano, more precisely in the old Andriana Marcello School<sup>112</sup>.

Among the last museums of the group to take shape is Palazzo Mocenigo, opened in 1985, which houses the Centre for the Study of the History of Textiles and Costume and also the textile collections of the Correr<sup>113</sup>.

There is one last museum that is part of this system and that is the Clock Tower, located next to the Procuratie Vecchie complex in St Mark's Square. The Tower can be identified as a large astronomical clock that marked the life of the Republic, between religious and public functions. In operation for more than five hundred years, it can be associated as an object symbolising the passing of time in the city<sup>114</sup>.

During the 1990s, Venice's civic museum system was completed and renewed with a new organisational structure under a single directorate.

### 2.1.1 The MUVE Foundation's social platforms: strengths and weaknesses

With the increasing use of new technologies and social platforms, the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia also created its own web page together with the 'personal' ones of each of the museums.

The platforms chosen by the Foundation to communicate with its followers are the most widely used on the web, namely: Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

Certainly the best social media to approach a young audience is Instagram. The Foundation boasts more than 23,000 followers on its profile and has an almost daily publication of posts, although not well organised into defined days.

There are also 'personal' profiles for some of the group's 11 museums. These include those of: The Doge's Palace, the Glass Museum, Palazzo Fortuny and Ca' Pesaro. It would

---

<sup>112</sup> <http://fortuny.visitmuve.it/> (29/10/2022)

<sup>113</sup> <http://mocenigo.visitmuve.it/> (29/10/2022)

<sup>114</sup> <http://torreorologio.visitmuve.it/> (29/10/2022)

certainly be more desirable to provide all museums with a 'personal' profile and to use the Foundation's only to re-post particular events and for general information. If this technique were applied, it would be possible to give more space in the panorama of the civic museum system to all the museums and not just a few 'white flies'.

The same does not apply to Facebook. It is probably the social network most used at the moment by a target group of adult users and therefore more interested in cultural events.

As with Instagram, there is a Foundation page with more than 58,000 followers, and unlike this, each museum has its own personal page where its activities are promoted.

Facebook also publishes posts on an almost daily basis, and the common profile mostly reports the common news of all the museums or news about the Foundation in general.

It would be interesting to create a link between the two social platforms, with common posts and others differentiated for each of them. To create a sort of bridge between a platform (Facebook) almost exclusively, by now, used by an adult target audience and Instagram with a much younger audience, almost to be weaned on art and cultural offerings.

Certainly, if Instagram can bring a certainly younger audience into the halls of museums, Facebook is just as important for the advertising of museum-related events and facilitates telematic word-of-mouth among people.

Following the serious crisis created by the Covid emergency, in the summer of 2020 important influencers such as Aurora Ramazzotti were also invited to visit museums (in this case it was the Doge's Palace) to relaunch the destination of Venice and others around the Veneto through social media with a good response, even though the work of influencers is often underestimated and labelled by the general public as nothing.

Leaving aside the case of Venice (which did indeed use this new tactic of communication and promotion) and citing only the "Ferragni and the Uffizi" episode, one can see how the visit of the well-known digital entrepreneur to the Galleries increased visits in the following week by 27%, with a higher percentage of young people.

If, therefore, the world of culture has always been a little reluctant to these forms of publicity, almost demonising them, in these post-crisis months from Covid-19 come demonstrations of how there is a will to rise up and create a dialogue with the new generations. We are talking about a generation that can hardly tear itself away from its smartphone and social media and focuses everything on appearance, but thanks to these and the new technologies,

it is possible for them to establish relationships and have experiences that would otherwise be impossible with the lifestyle they have arrived at.

It would be interesting if all museums (and not only the world's most renowned ones such as the Louvre or New York's Metropolitan Museum) launched social initiatives more often to involve more and more people in fun, but above all instructive challenges.

A case that went around the world during the lockdown period was that of the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, which proposed to its followers or anyone in the world to recreate with what they had at home the painting they liked best.

Returning to the main topic, i.e. the Foundation's relationship with its social networks, it should be noted that on all platforms there is a constant presence and a desire to grow both in terms of numbers and in terms of what it offers visitors. All that remains is to improve the dialogue between them all and not create individual unconnected universes that do not dialogue with each other and do not give a sense of homogeneity.

As with all things, there can only be improvement, but I would say that on the city's social panorama, Venice is not at fault, even if it is surpassed (again in terms of numbers) by the Gallerie dell'Accademia and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, which is part of the large Guggenheim group headquartered in New York and famous worldwide.

As you can see from the images below, although MUVE's social pages are not the first, numerically speaking, in the city they still have a nice following in factor of followers.

In this paragraph, as in the following ones, I have chosen to show only the Instagram and Facebook profiles.

This is due to the fact that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, at least all the museums mentioned in this paper have a profile on one of these platforms (both of which are part of the Meta group), while their presence on other social networks such as Twitter or the newer TikTok is more difficult.

I wanted, therefore, to give an evaluative basis based on very similar types of profiles.

As previously mentioned, the MUVE Foundation has both a single profile for all eleven museums under its direction, and some so-called 'private' profiles for some individual museums such as the Doge's Palace, the Fortuny Museum and the Glass Museum.

I have decided to report the profile of the Doge's Palace, since it is certainly the museum under the Foundation that is also the best known worldwide, and it alone manages to reach a fairly considerable number of followers, if one considers that there is already a page that manages all the museums, including him.

The MUVE Foundation is quite active on its profiles, having more than one weekly publication.

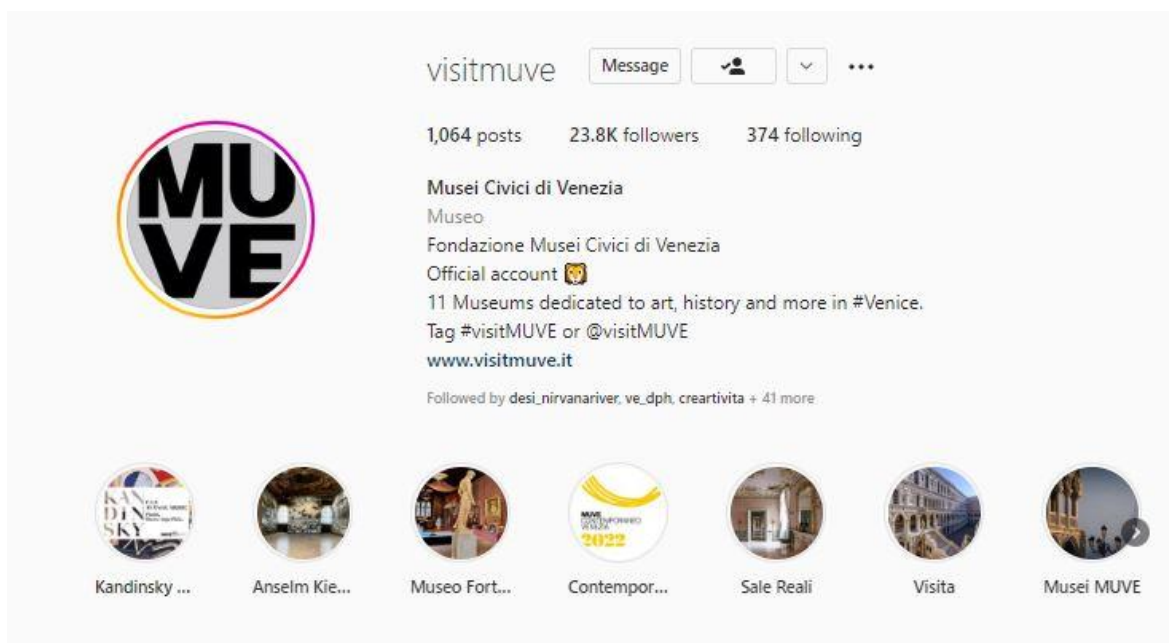


Fig. 9: the Instagram profile of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia (Source - personal screenshot)



Fig. 10: the Facebook profile of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia (Source - personal screenshot)



Fig. 11: the Instagram profile of the Doge's Palace (Source - personal screenshot)

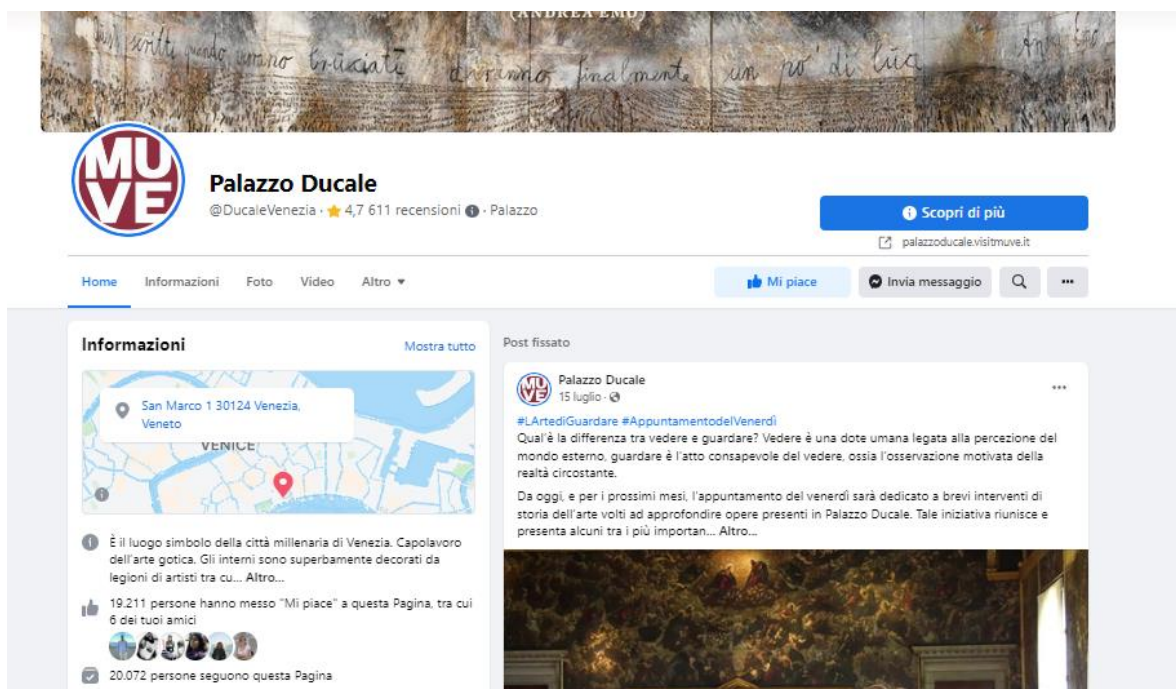


Fig.12: the Facebook profile of the Doge's Palace (Source - personal screenshot)

## 2.2 Veneto Regional Directorate of Museums

Along with the Civic Museums, there is another directorate that administers the state-owned museums on the island and in the rest of the region.

This is the Polo Museale del Veneto, which has now become a directorate, but with the same principles.

Starting from the beginning, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism (MIBACT), following the D.P.C.M. of 29 August 2014, no. 171 of 11 December 2014, created a new type of organisational structure, which gave rise to the birth of the Regional Museum Poles, i.e. the peripheral branches of the General Directorate for Museums.

Among the tasks incumbent on the Regional Museum Complexes are those of ensuring the provision of public services in their area of competence and enhancing the value of state institutes and cultural sites. Furthermore, they have to define strategies and planned objectives with regard to enhancement. Finally, they have the task of promoting the integration of cultural roots of enjoyment and cultural tourism itineraries.

In order to guarantee these aims, and more generally that of the development of culture, the aim has been to build a regional museum system that brings together all the cultural sites and institutes of this kind in the state, the public administrations present in the territory under its jurisdiction, and the other public or private subjects with which the Museum Pole must aim to guarantee high quality standards and maximum accessibility.

Of primary importance for a Museum Pole is the increase of museum collections through new acquisitions, the organisation of temporary exhibitions and also through the promotion of cataloguing, study, valorisation, restoration and communication activities. It is certainly as important as the activities listed above to encourage the creation of consortial and non-entrepreneurial forms of joint office management with local authorities. This can be done through conventions with cultural and/or voluntary associations whose purpose in their statutes is the promotion and dissemination of knowledge of cultural heritage.

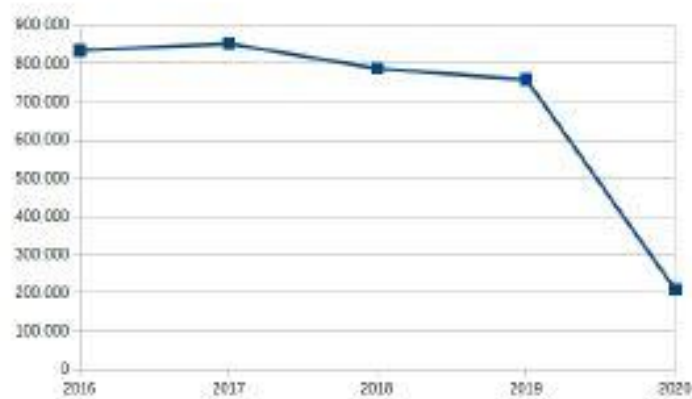
At the end of 2019, some museum poles were definitively changed to directorates. These include the Polo Museale del Veneto, which managed fifteen museum sites scattered throughout the Region.

This new Directorate is specifically called 'Territorial Directorate of the Museum Networks of Lombardy and Veneto' and groups twenty-nine museums within it, eleven of which are in Lombardy and 18 in Veneto and Trentino. The reform took place under the ministry of Alberto Bonisoli<sup>115</sup>.

This reorganisation brings together regions with very different cultural heritage. It is also noteworthy that the autonomy that the state museum institutions had acquired with the previous Franceschini Reform was considerably reduced, if not completely cancelled in some cases, returning all decision-making power to the Ministry.

Despite this very recent change in the organisational system, the substance does not change. The museums that are part of the former Pole do not change and are in any case among the most visited sites in the lagoon city.

In fact, according to the statistics of the 2020 Tourism Yearbook, the state-owned museums, i.e. those under the General Directorate of Veneto Museums and the Gallerie dell'Accademia, are the second most visited system in the city. The figures below put together the numbers of all state museums without making any distinctions of directorates, as they have not yet been divided.



**Figura 9.38:** Totale visitatori quinquennio 2016-2020.

*Fig. 13: the number of total visitors for all museums of the Museums Directorate of Veneto for the years 2016-2020 (Source - personal screenshot)*

<sup>115</sup> F. Girardo, *Polo museale veneto cancellato, è rivolta*, 19 August 2017, [https://corrieredelveneto.corriere.it/veneto/politica/19\\_agosto\\_17/polo-museale-veneto-cancellato-rivolta-8599c932-c0d9-11e9-9815-b24d90df5666.shtml](https://corrieredelveneto.corriere.it/veneto/politica/19_agosto_17/polo-museale-veneto-cancellato-rivolta-8599c932-c0d9-11e9-9815-b24d90df5666.shtml) (29/10/2022)

As can be seen from the chosen graph, the visits to the various museums of the Directorate were taken into account cumulatively for all museums, and as for all of them, the great crisis in 2020 due to the pandemic closures is visible.

As with the civic museum system, the state museum system also presents a great heterogeneity of types of museums and cultural sites. In contrast to the first case presented in this chapter, the Directorate also administers and manages institutions outside the city of Venice and, as mentioned before, scattered all over the region.

The following is a brief description of the various sites, which is useful to understand the vast and diverse offer that the Directorate provides to its visitors.

The Giorgio Franchetti Gallery at the Ca' d'Oro houses the collection of works of art collected by Giorgio Franchetti during his lifetime. Following his donation to the Italian State in 1916 and in preparation for the museum's construction, several state collections owning most of the bronzes and sculptures on display, as well as numerous Venetian and Flemish paintings were placed in the Gallery<sup>116</sup>.

Among the works most admired and sought after by visitors are Andrea Mantegna's St. Sebastian, Antoon van Dyck's Portrait of Marcello Durazzo, Tullio Lombardo's Double Portrait, Titian's Venus in the Mirror, Francesco Guardi's Views, Paris Bordone's Sleeping Venus and large portions of Giorgione and Titian's frescoes from the two facades of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi. Very popular with modern art lovers are the three canvases by Vittore Carpaccio and workshop with the Stories of the Virgin from the Scuola degli Albanesi.

The museum is also known for the workshops offered to the public on the subject of conservation and restoration of works of art.

Located on the island of Lazzaretto Vecchio is the National Archaeological Museum of the Lagoon of Venice. The island itself has a fascinating history: from 1846 to 1965 it was in the hands of the military authorities, first Austrian and then Italian. During this period, two wings of the church cloister, the bell tower, the parlor and other buildings were demolished<sup>117</sup>.

---

<sup>116</sup> <https://www.cadoro.org/> (30/10/2022)

<sup>117</sup> <https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-archeologico-nazionale-della-laguna-di-venezia> (30/10/2022)



In the 1960s, the Lazzaretto Vecchio was given in concession by the municipality to a dog-loving association with the task of establishing a shelter for stray dogs.

During the 2000s and more specifically between 2004 and 2008, the island was the subject of some major restoration work by the Ministries of Public Works and Cultural Heritage. This was achieved thanks to the provision of the

Museum of the City and Lagoon of Venice. Excavations begun for the occasion have unearthed individual and communal burial pits with over 1,500 skeletons of plague victims. Scholars will attempt to reconstruct their lives and obtain more information on 16th century Venetians. The museum project failed at the time due to a lack of funds and there was a risk that the island would be abandoned and deteriorate again.

Fortunately, since September 2013, the Veneto Archaeological Superintendency has enabled the activation of a memorandum of understanding for a surveillance service, public visits and minor maintenance, thanks to the free contribution of the Venice Archeoclub Association, which had already been mobilising for years on the island of Lazzaretto Nuovo. Thanks to the help of volunteers and efficient word-of-mouth, the island is opened every month and hosts thousands of visitors every year.

Continuing the list of museums in the city, one of the most visited sites is undoubtedly the National Archaeological Museum of Venice, which houses an interesting archaeological collection and is located at the Procuratie Nuove in St. Mark's Square. Its collection houses a collection of antiquities, with examples of Greek sculptures from the 5th-4th centuries BC, the Grimani Galati, i.e. portraits from the Roman era, reliefs, inscriptions, ceramics, ivories, gems and a numismatic collection<sup>118</sup>.

In 2013, thanks to its presence in the museum circuit of St. Mark's Square, it was the 19th most visited Italian state site, with 265,034 visitors. In 2015 it did better with 298,380 visitors, improving further in 2016 with 344,904 visitors, making it the 18th most visited state site.

Rounding out the Directorate's presence in Venice are the Museum of Palazzo Grimani and the Museum of Oriental Art.

The latter is among the most important collections of Japanese art from the Edo period in Europe. Since 1928 it has been located inside the Ca' Pesaro palace and more precisely on

---

<sup>118</sup> <https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-archeologico-nazionale-di-venezia> (30/10/2022)

the third floor. This was due to a convention between the State, which owns the collection, and the City of Venice, which owns the building<sup>119</sup>.

It is now possible to admire these exotic objects thanks to Enrico di Borbone, Count of Bardi, who during his 'long journey around the world' with his wife and entourage, which lasted from 1887 to 1889, visited several countries in Asia including Indonesia, China and Japan. During this time in the Orient, he acquired more than thirty thousand works.

After returning to Venice, the Count placed the art objects purchased in Asia on the second floor of Palazzo Vendramin Calergi, his home during part of the winter months. After his death, the collection was partly sold until the outbreak of the First World War, after which it was seized for a time being under the ownership of an Austrian company. It became the property of the Italian government as part of the war debt Austria owed Italy.

After an agreement was reached with the municipality in 1925 on where to relocate this priceless collection, Eugenio Barbantini was entrusted with the difficult task of setting up a new museum of Oriental art; all of this in a building with stuccoes and frescoes not related to the collection. On 3 May 1928, the museum opened: an exhibition of Japanese art from the Edo Period (1603-1868) with a Chinese and an Indonesian section.

Going outside the confines of the city of Venice, one can see how the management has grouped together other very different realities in terms of numbers and museum types that, analysing only the Veneto region, range from the province and city of Verona to Polesine.

The National Archaeological Museum in Adria, a museum opened in 1961, is one of the ex-Polo museums outside the Venetian borders. It houses artefacts from the Bocchi family's collection and archaeological sites from the pre-Roman era (especially evidence of the first Greek emporium and the subsequent Etruscan city) and the Roman era discovered in the city's surroundings.

This is followed by the National Archaeological Museum in Fratta Polesine, opened on 21 February 2009, which is located in the northern barchessa of the Palladian complex of Villa Badoer and is the result of more than 40 years of archaeological research in the Polesine area, particularly regarding the Late Bronze Age. The artefacts on display, which are among the most remarkable and important in Europe, refer to the villages that were present near the ancient river Po during the Final Bronze Age: the most consistent set of artefacts relates to

---

<sup>119</sup> <https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-d%E2%80%99arte-orientale> (30/10/2022)

the village of Frattesina and its associated necropolises, discovered in the Narde and Fondo Zanotto locality in Fratta Polesine<sup>120</sup>.

Also in the southern part of Veneto is the National Archaeological Museum and Archaeological Area of Altino, near the archaeological site of Altinum. The museum houses the most representative archaeological finds from this area, which was a Venetian and Roman centre of great importance on the northern edge of the lagoon that was to become Venice<sup>121</sup>.

Together with the nearby archaeological site, it is included in the UNESCO World Heritage site 'Venice and its Lagoon'.

The area of Portogruaro and Concordia Sagittaria is home to the Concordia National Museum in Portogruaro (and Concordia Sagittaria Archaeological Area), which falls within the metropolitan city of Venice. It houses important artefacts found in the Concordia Sagittaria area. Inaugurated in 1888, just 22 years after the Veneto region was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy, it is one of the oldest state museums in Italy and the first one founded in the Veneto region<sup>122</sup>.

The Museo Nazionale Atestino, also known as the Archaeological Museum of Este, is located in the Padua area. Since 1902 the museum has been housed in the 16th-century Villa Mocenigo, destroyed by fire in the 18th century and later rebuilt near the 14th-century walls<sup>123</sup>.

The National Museum of Archaeology of the Sea is divided into two sections.

The visit begins with the first exhibition part TERREDACQUE from exhibition to museum, set up back in 2014 by the then Superintendence for Archaeological Heritage of Veneto. These rooms, located on the first floor of the museum, display the most significant finds discovered in Caorle and neighbouring sites, dating from a wide chronological span from the Recent Bronze Age (13th to the first half of the 12th century BC) to modern times<sup>124</sup>.

---

<sup>120</sup><https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-archeologico-nazionale-di-fratta-polesine> (30/10/2022)

<sup>121</sup><https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-nazionale-e-area-archeologica-di-altino> (30/10/2022)

<sup>122</sup><https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-archeologico-nazionale-concordiense> (30/10/2022)

<sup>123</sup><https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-nazionale-atestino> (30/10/2022)

<sup>124</sup><https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-nazionale-di-archeologia-del-mare> (30/10/2022)

Returning to the area surrounding Venice, 20 minutes from the city, on the Riviera del Brenta, is the National Museum of Villa Pisani. First the home of the Venetian nobleman Pisani, then a French and later an Austrian possession, it effectively became part of the local Soprintendenza ai monumenti in 1947, which is still responsible for the restoration and management of the museum complex. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the decline of this site seemed uncontainable, and from the 1950s to the 1960s, the complex experienced a long period of neglect and disinterest until almost all of the rooms were closed and many of the garden areas were obliterated. Since the mid-1980s, numerous restorations have taken place, restoring lustre and splendour to many areas of the park and some of the villa<sup>125</sup>.

Last but not least, the National Archaeological Museum in Verona, the National Museum Collezione Salce and Villa del Bene are part of the group and should be mentioned.

The last is a Venetian villa located in Volargne, in the municipality of Dolcè (Verona), along the ancient Via Tridentina that runs along the Adige River. The villa was built in the 15th century and underwent extensions in the 16th century by its owners, the Del Bene family. Due to its historical-artistic value, in 1926 the villa was declared a monument of national interest and since 1956 the complex has been owned by the Italian State<sup>126</sup>.

## 2.2.1 The social platforms of the Veneto Regional Museums Directorate: a SWOT analysis

Before starting with the analysis of some of the museum pages of the Veneto Museums Directorate, I would like to specify that I will only consider the platforms of Facebook and Instagram, platforms widely used by all museums and where they work the most.

As can be seen from the reference images, the Veneto Museums Directorate does not boast a large number of followers on its page, with the exception of one of its museums, Palazzo Grimani, which, as we will see later, boasts a particular form of communication with which it reaches its target audience.

Here too, as with the MUVE Foundation, there is a Management page that accumulates all the museums under it, and then the various institutions have their own pages.

---

<sup>125</sup> <https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-nazionale-di-villa-pisani> (30/10/2022)

<sup>126</sup> <https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/villa-del-bene> (30/10/2022)

Here again, I wanted to take two museums that are very dear to me as reference: the National Museum of Villa Pisani in Stra and Palazzo Grimani in Venice.

Unlike MUVE, however, the choice to take under study only two museums is also due to the fact that some of the museums' pages have a small number of followers and the lack of internal social media managers in each museum means that these are hardly updated.

In fact, as was mentioned in the description at the beginning of the chapter, the directorate is a public body and an open competition is required to become a state museum employee.

Unfortunately, in recent years there has been a scarcity of public competitions and those that have been offered did not provide for the recruitment of this figure.

Looking first at the Directorate's page, it can be seen that publications are scarce and no schedule is maintained for publication.



Fig. 14: the Instagram profile of the Veneto Museums Directorate (Source - personal screenshot)

Even on Facebook, there are not many posts and the full potential that a good social strategy could provide is not exploited.



Fig. 15: the Facebook profile of the Veneto Museums Directorate (Source - personal screenshot)

As far as the National Museum of Villa Pisani is concerned, I can say that I had the pleasure of doing a curricular internship with them and being able to take care of their social pages myself.

When I arrived at the Museum, the institution had a good Facebook page, which was (and still is) often updated with the various events that are hosted.

As far as Instagram was concerned, on the other hand, Villa Pisani had a page that it did not manage directly and this meant that a new one had to be opened with direct management by the Museum.

After opening it in June 2020 and managing it until September of the same year, the management of this one passed into the hands of the Museum's management, while for the Facebook one help came directly from the offices of the Regional Museums Management of Veneto.

As can be seen from these images from October 2022, the followers of the Instagram and Facebook pages are not very many compared to their colleagues in Venice, although not having a social media manager on staff is to be rewarded for the effort to maintain a page that is at least up-to-date.

As with all museums, the pattern here is to post events and mostly aesthetic photos showing the beauty of this villa on the Riviera del Brenta, especially the garden, the museum's great pride.

Instagram has no real posting schedule because, while Facebook is the institution's main platform for institutional communication.



Fig. 16: the Instagram profile of the Museo Nazionale di Villa Pisani (Source - personal screenshot)



Fig. 17: the Facebook profile of the Museo Nazionale di Villa Pisani (Source - personal screenshot)

The other museum I want to consider in this close study of some of the museums of the Veneto Regional Museums Directorate is Palazzo Grimani.

Although its Instagram page is one of the most followed within the Directorate, it is not the one with the highest number of followers, a medal that the Archaeological Museum of Venice wins instead.

The thing that strikes me most about this museum, and which for me deserves a lot of attention, is the type of communication it conveys.

Although aesthetic photos are always present, extensive use is made of memes, i.e. "content of a humorous nature or the result of creative reworking of scenes from films, series or TV programmes, artistic works that have become cult in the common imagination and that spread quickly on the Net and go viral. "

It is very interesting to see how a very pop and sometimes somewhat incorrect communication lends itself to museum/cultural communication.

A different approach, one that appeals to the young, or at least to the generation of Millennials who will not be young for long.

This has certainly, over the years, helped the Museum of Palazzo Grimani to gain a certain notoriety in the social scene in Venice and to create its own niche in the communication of historical content that is quite important for the city.



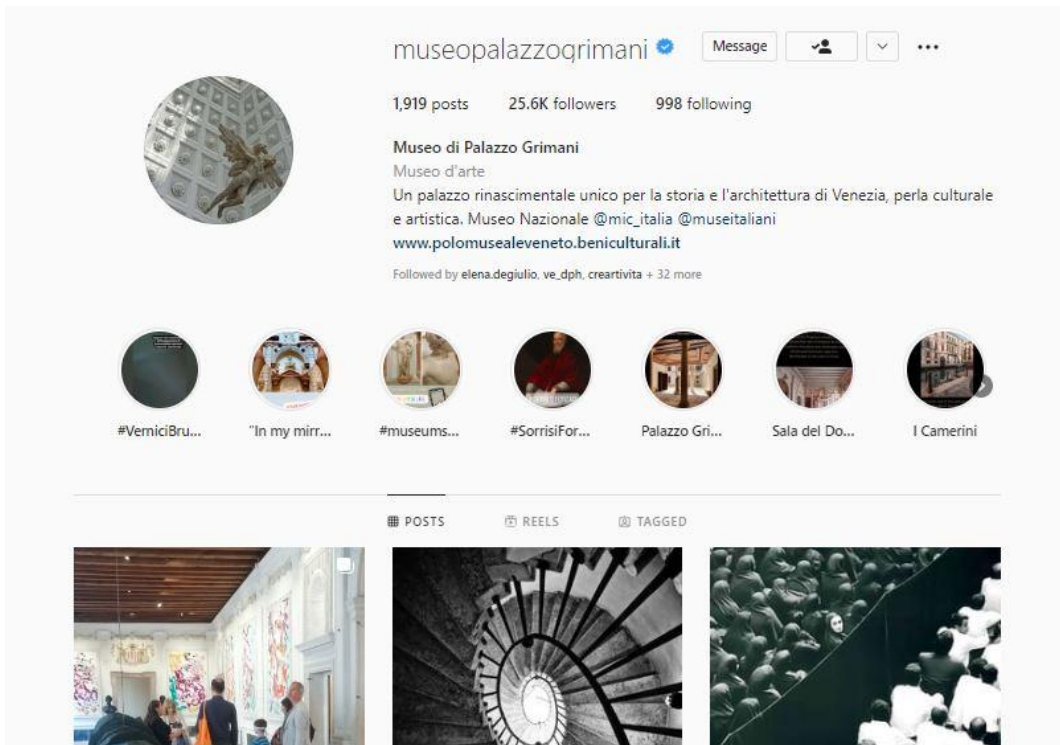


Fig. 18: the Instagram profile of the Museo Palazzo Grimani (Source - personal screenshot)

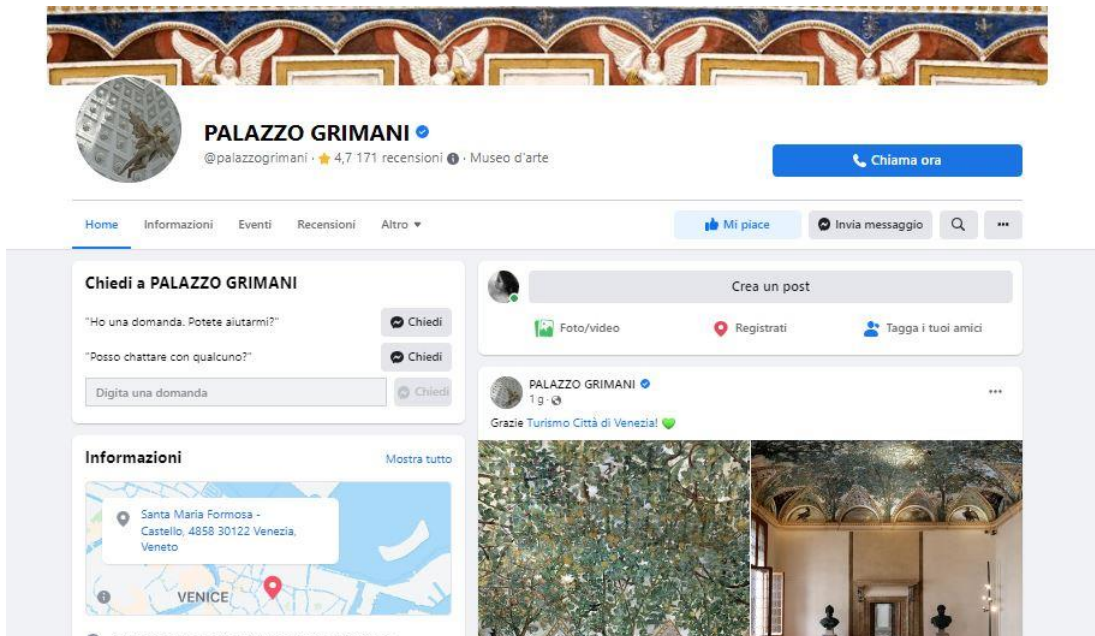


Fig. 19: the Facebook profile of the Museo Palazzo Grimani (Source - personal screenshot)

## 2.2.2 Two museums compared: Palazzo Grimani and the National Museum of Villa Pisani

During my university course and, more precisely, for the Digital and Public Art class held by Professors De Vincentis and Mantoan, I had the opportunity to deepen my knowledge of the management of the social pages of the Villa Pisani National Museum, which I dealt with first-hand during my curricular internship in the summer of 2020, and of Palazzo Grimani, thanks to an interview with their social media manager Marco Mazzocco.

I would like to quote, below, the reflections I made on that occasion to specify what I explained earlier in the paragraph dedicated to the social pages of the Regional Directorate of Veneto Museums with these two specific cases.

Before bringing to light what were my reflections matured during the course and during the internship/interviews I did with the "insiders", I would like to show in more detail what is successful communication within the Regional Museums Directorate of Veneto and how there are differences between museums within it.

Therefore, I refer specifically to the Museum of Palazzo Grimani, which has been able to respond well to those rare moments in recent history when museums have defined themselves in the face of an unexpected and global event, which has had a major effect on their management and valorisation, such as the recent Covid-19 pandemic. This catastrophe, which has now lasted for more than three years with a series of sudden and unplanned developments, is perhaps only comparable to war situations in that it has forced institutions into a totally unexpected forced closure to the outside world.

The lockdown phases ensured valuable space and time for experimentation, especially in the area of communication for museums and cultural institutions, which were different but at the same time similar and were united by the fact that they communicated solely in a digital environment: that of the web and, above all, social media. It should be emphasised that the use of digital was not one of the many possibilities available, but a necessity, if not an obligatory choice. Since spring 2020, analyses have been conducted on the relationship between museums and pandemics, which have had the merit of collecting, structuring and

making readable data on a considerable number of experiences, focusing in particular on the use of digital, which from the outset emerged as a salient feature of this historical phase.<sup>127</sup>

Analysing Palazzo Grimani, from the creation of the first Facebook page, social communication suffered from numerous problems related to the very nature of the institution: a museum new to the city of Venice, surrounded by an abundance of cultural offerings. The palace had been closed for many years and was now unknown even to almost all Venetians. The lack of knowledge on social media was gradually overcome once the management of the Facebook page was fully taken over and the Instagram profile opened, with a strategy based essentially on images. Numerous photo campaigns were carried out to create a database of appealing images, always designed for use on the phone. Extensive research work was also carried out on the shots published by visitors on the various platforms, to understand what the museum's strengths were, but from the point of view of the users themselves.

Social publications have always favoured images with a vertical or square format (to occupy the phone screen as much as possible), harmonious, bright, contemporary photos.

This mode of communication has immediately generated excellent feedback, benefiting first and foremost from the novelty and beauty of the museum's monumental rooms, as well as the exhibition operations launched in 2019 with the refurbishment of the Grimani Tribune.

Also thanks to this newly acquired baggage, the outbreak of the pandemic in February 2020 had an impact on a staff somewhat 'prepared' to react to the event, although in the very first weeks the prevailing feeling was one of great despondency, causing a sort of suspended condition, which nevertheless proved providential. Thus, during the first lockdown the museum's communication veered towards a reassuring and evocative mode, thanks to the creation of original content that made visible what could not be grasped during an ordinary visit in presence.<sup>128</sup>

The project, titled #Grimaniacasa, played with words in the wake of the newly launched government awareness campaign #iorestoacasa. A series of videos of the duration grouped in a playlist was made, in which the primary object of communication was not the work

---

<sup>127</sup> Finocchi V., Mazzocco M., *Re-Inventing the Museum and Its Narratives The Experience of Palazzo Grimani During Lockdowns*, «magazén», [Re]Constructions, no. 2, 2022, p. 262

<sup>128</sup> Ivi p. 268

itself, but the emotion it could arouse in the viewer. Consistent with the methodology already positively experimented during the first lockdown, an attempt was made to re-interpret the user and to respond through the narratives that the heritage could hold in store. The chosen modality went from the reassuring to the ironic, wanting to offer moments of 'playful reflection' that could even entertain users, lightening a very heavy moment for collective morale. Thus, the #Sorrisiforzati campaign was conceived, conducted in November and December 2020. Applying a photographic filter, a small series of images were produced, showing the reactions of our works to the museum's new forced closure: an irreverent smile accompanied the roundup of painted and sculpted characters.<sup>129</sup>

The experience of the second lockdown strongly influenced the development of a new methodology for the use of social pages even in a situation of post-Covid 'normality', and made irony and desecration one of the characteristic traits of the Palazzo Grimani Museum on Facebook and Instagram. This was done through the massive use of memes, always in function of a communicative or enhancement objective related to the museum itself. On the other hand, the importance of maintaining a constant link with a reference space, as well as the need for the museum to remain anchored, almost 'immersed' in its own time, has remained.

So, I started with this question, which is: can social media, and more specifically Instagram, bring more visitors to a museum? And speaking more generally, can they create with their audience, which doesn't match with real visitors, a solid relationship based on likes, comments, and shares?

Perhaps yes, indeed, certainly if we talk about large and famous institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum in New York or the Louvre in Paris, which on social media base a large part of their promotion activity managing to attract even financiers and donors. But if we are talking about medium/small museums and not in the nerve centers of the world, the situation changes. Going in order, the situation in Italy regarding the museum-Instagram relationship is not the best: in 2018 an article on the Mus.E website reported how only 15% of Italian museums used the now king of world social media, despite the abundance of artistic material spread throughout the national territory on which to base solid stories.

Palazzo Grimani is a state museum, under the Regional Directorate of the Museums of Veneto, located in the castello district in Venice. Under the same organization is also the

---

<sup>129</sup> Ivi p. 272

National Museum of Villa Pisani, only that unlike the first, it is located in the municipality of Stra, halfway between Venice and Padua and more precisely in the territory of the Brenta Riviera.

Despite the same kind of direction that governs them, the two museums have huge differences in social media management and content publishing and sharing.

Palazzo Grimani, for the management of its social pages, can count on the help of its social media manager, Dr. Marzo Mazzocco who between a meme and a more traditional content tries to attract more and more audiences. Villa Pisani, on the contrary, does not have such a figure at its disposal within its staff and for the publication of its contents can count only on the forces of the Director of the museum, the Arch. Zega together with the support of the social media manager of the entire Management, Ing. Della Sala. Of course, the two results are very different and also make in a different way. If to date, the first counts on his Instagram page more than 25 thousand followers, the second, after seeing the opening of his Instagram page almost two years ago, has not yet reached 2000 followers.

It is clear going to scroll the two pages notice how they are managed in a very different way starting from the publication that for Palazzo Grimani is daily, while for Villa Pisani occasional. The same goes for publishing other types of content, such as stories, known as a means to attract an ever-growing audience and build a solid relationship with them. Through these simple moves it is possible for museums of this type, therefore medium-small, to establish solid relationships with their audience and to be able to intrigue them so much that they physically take it to a museum. In these months of pandemic, this is an aspect not to be underestimated in view of the upcoming openings.

As will be understood from the previous lines, Villa Pisani does not have the figure of a social media manager and in Italy this figure is still very underestimated. If we were to think of a special strategy for Villa Pisani, considering the discreet success of Palazzo Grimani given the size, I would start from hiring a specific person who takes care of the sharing of this type of content. Unfortunately, in reality, being a state museum to hire any worker you need the creation of a public competition. The problem could be circumvented by using an external body that works for the museum and manages the pages in collaboration. In addition to this, I would proceed with the drafting of weekly plans of what will be published, on which platforms, on what days and at what times. In addition, it would be nice to create virtual partnerships with other museums with more following.

The audience that follows the two museums differs according to the social media used. If Facebook, to date, pushes away a younger band favoring a more mature audience, it is on Instagram that you can definitely recall a younger following, but as time passes even more heterogeneous. Facebook is now seen as an antiquated social network, full of fakenews and the stage of continuous quarrels among its users, while Instagram is the perfect combination of the birthplace of many influencers and a purely artistic platform. The ideal, given the period that sees young people move away from culture, would be to plan the presence not only of these two specific museums, but in general of several bodies on TikTok, where all the children take refuge to move away from the publications of the so-called boomers, that is, the generation of parents.

In order to plan a social strategy, you don't just need a smartphone and direct access to the major apps. it's also important to know the tools of photo post-production, graphic creation and knowing how to schedule your publications appropriately. From this point of view, Palazzo Grimani is certainly at the forefront being, perhaps, one of the few museums on the "square" to use memes as a vehicle of almost ironic knowledge. Villa Pisani, on the contrary, on Facebook manages to give its best in publications, while on a younger social like Instagram it still fails to attract a lot of public and even to publish with a regular frequency or with periodic rubrics.

If Villa Pisani, at the m omento, aligns itself with the publications of most museums, favoring self-promotional posts on Facebook and somewhat banal photos on Instagram, Palazzo Grimani, as already mentioned, manages to differentiate itself from the mass through the creation of content of the most ironic character, almost mocking the culture it hosts in its rooms.

During my research I had the opportunity to interview Dr. Marco Mazzocco, social media manager of Palazzo Grimani, who told me about how his work works. Below is a short excerpt from my interview:

"There are substantial differences between public museums and private foundations. For a few years now, the figure of social media manager has been included in the state bodies, who many times have to work for different museums with different types of collections. Speaking of Palazzo Grimani, its appeal on social media is almost obvious and until 2016 it was a museum for its own purpose with temporary exhibitions. For years, together with the museum activity, other cultural activities such as concerts and plays have been organized in

its spaces. In order to better communicate this museum, we have turned to a heterogeneous audience differentiating the type of posts. What the audience doesn't think is all the work behind the scenes, from photos to text creation. Also interesting are the collaborations on social media between the museum and other pages such as that of Monstre. The catastrophic events of the last two years have marked the activity of the institution, but they have not bent it: strategies have been applied to maintain and call more public, as if to create a kind of friendship between the museum and its followers."

As can be understood from this short excerpt from the interview, and as can be read in chapter 3 in the interview with the social media manager of La Fenice Opera House, Pietro Tessarin, the sentiments on how social media is managed by most Italian cultural institutions, regardless of whether they are of the museum or performing arts type, are similar.

There is a wish for a better future, in which one's followers understand that there is a lot of work behind a single post and more relationships can be forged between various entities.

## 2.3 Le Galleria dell'Accademia

Also under state protection but no longer part of the old Polo Museale del Veneto are the Gallerie dell'Accademia.

Their establishment dates back to 24 September 1750, when the Veneto Senate sanctioned their creation and they were endowed with a statute in 1756. In the beginning, it was an academy of fine arts headed by an academic board of thirty-six professors from which the four masters were chosen annually for the teachings of figure, portrait, landscape and sculpture. The first president of the Academy was Gianbattista Piazzetta, while Gianbattista Pittoni and Gianmaria Morlaiter are remembered as the first councillors. The teaching of perspective and architecture was included in 1768 with a course taught by Francesco Costa. Already from its foundation, the Accademia di Venezia was concerned with the conservation and restoration of public paintings, and in 1777 Academician Pietro Edwards is remembered as the creator of a singular technical and critical elaboration in the art of restoration, such that it can be recognised as an authentic Charter of Restoration, contributing later in the 19th century to the "Institution of a Formal Public School for the Restoration of Damaged Paintings". In 1807, the 'Venetian Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture' was

reformed into the 'Royal Academy of Fine Arts' and moved to the premises, no longer used for worship, of the convent, church and school of Santa Maria della Carità<sup>130</sup>.

The president of the Accademia began to hold office for life, as did the masters. In the meantime, since 1798, many masterpieces from convents and churches in the Veneto arrived at the Academy, and after the expulsion of the French and the return of the Austrians, many works were returned from France. On 10 August 1817 the Galleries were opened to the public while continuing to expand the collection thanks to donations from the masters themselves and from various private collections. It was not until 1879 that the Gallerie dell'Accademia were detached from the direct control and protection of the same teachers of the Accademia di belle arti who had previously fulfilled this conservation role.

The Accademia is, among other things, remembered for its representative artists, whose contributions fostered the growth of new generations. These certainly include Piazzetta, Tiepolo, Selva, Canova, Hayez, Grigoletti, Politi, Ciardi, Cesetti, Saetti, Giuliani, and Arturo Martini, Carlo Scarpa, Afro, Santomaso and Emilio Vedova. These names are certainly part of all that the Accademia di Venezia has been able to bring out, becoming in fact one of the most prestigious art institutes in the international arena.

Some two hundred and fifty years after its foundation, the Accademia di belle arti di Venezia moved from its historical seat of the Carità, now destined to house the complete collection of the Accademia's galleries, to the restored complex of the former Ospedale degli Incurabili<sup>131</sup>.

Today the Academy is left with the hard task of education and training at the highest level in the field of culture and art production. With this noble purpose in mind, the courses have been renewed in a more functional manner and new ones have been activated, with the aim of providing, in relation to the interests of its students, their vocations and motivations, more avant-garde cognitive and operational tools and the definition of further professional profiles and possible job opportunities<sup>132</sup>.

---

<sup>130</sup> <https://www.gallerieaccademia.it/il-museo> (31/10/2022)

<sup>131</sup> <https://www.gallerieaccademia.it/storia-della-collezione> (31/10/2022)

<sup>132</sup> <http://www.gallerieaccademia.it/sites/default/files/inlineimages/Decreto%20di%20approvazione%20dello%20StatutoGallerie%20dell%27Accademia%20di%20Venezia.pdf> (31/10/2022)



Since 2008, the partly still experimental didactics dedicated to 'new media' and the technological elaboration of the image, due to the lack of space at the headquarters, has been forming a homogeneous pole on the Island of San Servolo.

The Academy of Fine Arts in Venice is an institution of high culture in the arts, located in the segment of education at university level.

Speaking only of the museum, the Gallerie dell'Accademia occupies over 10,000 square metres of exhibition space in the Carità complex.

The Galleries are famous for their extensive collection of medieval and modern art, but also for the rich cabinet of prints and drawings, which houses graphics from the 15th to the 19th century.

In addition to all this, the museum is visited en masse, as it is home to the world's largest collection of paintings and works from the Venetian school.

The museum is spread over two floors: the first one follows a chronological itinerary with Italian and Venetian authors from the 14th century to the late Renaissance and the ground floor continues with both pictorial and sculptural material.

As well as being rich in charm and history, the Galleries also have more technical aspects, being one of the most important state museums in the Veneto region and beyond. They have organisational, technical, scientific, financial and accounting autonomy.

Like all museums, the Academy pursues the general aims of the protection, management and enhancement of its heritage (exhibited and not) and promotes cultural growth with its social contribution to the local community.

Obviously, it is a permanent non-profit institution, open to the public and serving society and its development in terms of culture.

Citing just a few of the museum's activities and purposes (which I recall are similar in all cultural institutions) there are those of: research, study, conservation, restoration, maintenance, valorisation of assets, education, cataloguing of collections, management in its various forms, lending of assets, communication and promotion, fundraising, marketing and all the other activities put in place to create the best possible experience for the visitor and insiders.

One of the museum's tasks is to relate to the surrounding area, stakeholders and the media. I would like to remind you that at Venetian level it is one of the most followed cultural institutions on social networks with around 43 thousand followers on Instagram and 24 thousand on Facebook.

At the top of the Museum is a Director, who liaises with the Board of Directors, the Technical and Scientific Committee and the Board of Auditors.

The Galleries also offer the opportunity to take part in educational workshops designed for children and high school students. It is possible to take part in these playful activities even without school sponsorship, but by signing up for the various proposals advertised periodically on the museum's website.

For example, during the lockdown period in spring this year, the museum launched a social campaign to test the creativity of its followers and increase feedback to them. The initiative was called 'I take the museum home' and involved virtually placing a museum work 'displayed' in the online collection in one's own home.

Finally, the Galleries are part of the school-to-work alternation project, offered to high school students.

### 2.3.1 How the Gallerie dell'Accademia behave on social media

As with the previous museums, here too I wanted to analyse only the Facebook and Instagram profiles so as to give an equal basis for analysis.

With more than 66,000 followers on Instagram and 28,000 on Facebook, as an individual museum it is certainly among the most followed on social media.

Probably also thanks to its history and the great works of art contained within it, such as Giorgione's 'The Tempest' or other works by Veronese and the entire golden age of 16th-century Venetian painting, its social accounts could not fail to attract a large following.

Very attentive to aesthetics in their Instagram, many times favouring compositions created by photos in their grid, they too divide their communication between showing the beauty

contained within the museum's walls and recalling current events such as temporary exhibitions or monthly appointments in which the museum participates such as the #domenicalmuseo, an event that occurs every first Sunday of the month in all state museums in Italy.

The same goes for the Facebook page, although here events take precedence over showing everything that is preserved and visible to the visitor.

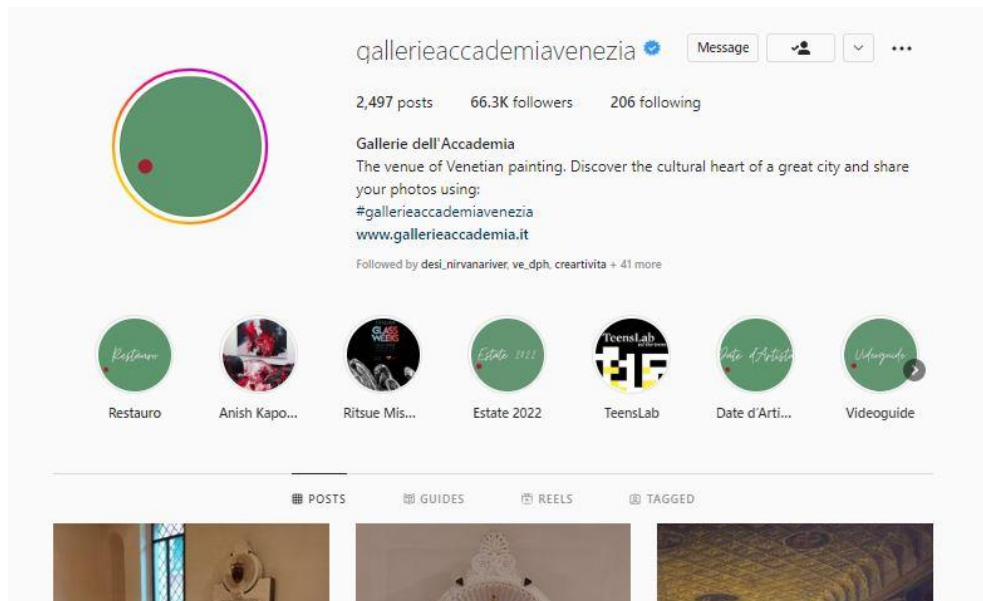


Fig. 20.: the Instagram profile of the Accademia Galleries (Source - personal screenshot)

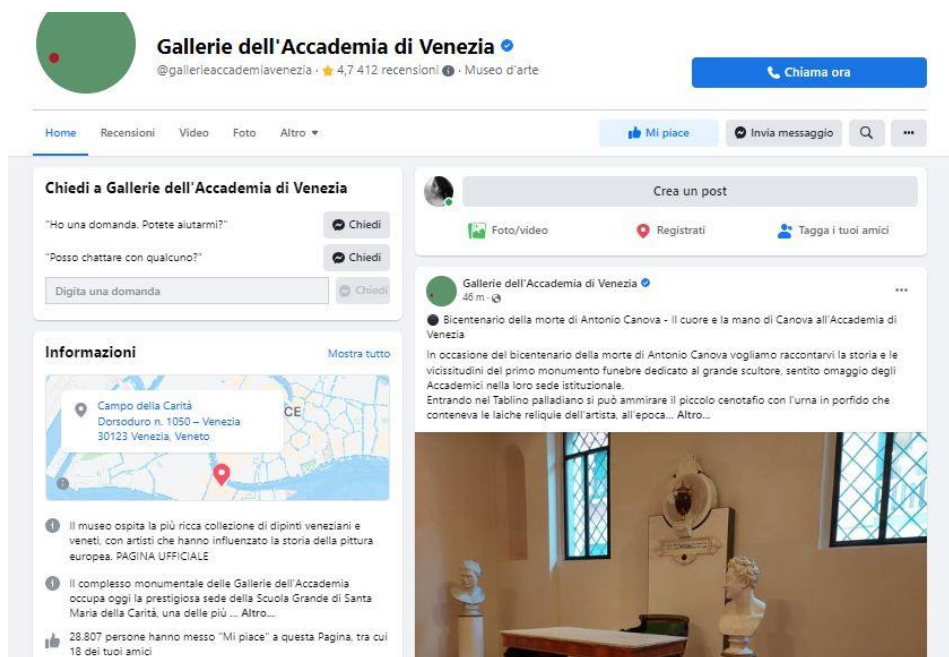


Fig. 21: the Facebook profile of the Accademia Galleries (Source - personal screenshot)

## 2.4 Other private institutions

As in all tourist destinations, but especially in cities with more than one museum, there are other managements outside the state or more generally the public one.

Venice is no exception and offers tourists visiting it a wide range of choices between private foundations and sacred museums.

Here I will only mention a few of the existing ones, certainly the most famous and most visited.

Among the other museums in Venice, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, home of the American heiress of the same name who had found her 'little paradise' in Venice, must certainly be mentioned. It is certainly the most visited museum of contemporary art and one of the most avant-garde in terms of the creation of workshops and educational services, especially for children<sup>133</sup>.

Mention must also certainly be made of the Querini Stampalia Scientific Foundation Museum, Palazzo Cini (Vittorio Cini's house-museum), the Punta della Dogana Contemporary Art Centre, the Naval History Museum, and the Archaeological Museum of the Province-Torcello (a collection of Greek-Roman antiquities, archaeological finds from the Paleovenetian and Etruscan periods).

There are also tours designed to introduce the sacredness of the city of Venice and based on the riches of various churches and cults. It is not only a Catholic Venice, but a meeting place for various religions that have coexisted together for centuries.

Among the churches, devotional schools and sacred museums that can be visited and that are part of the cultural visits are: St Mark's Basilica with admission by ticket to the Golden Pall to the Treasury and the museum, the Bell Tower of St Mark's Basilica, the Basilica dei Frari, the Basilica of Sts. John and Paul, the Basilica of S. M. Assunta di Torcello and its bell tower, the Church and Bell Tower of San Giorgio Maggiore, the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista, the Scuola Dalmata di San Giorgio e Trifone, the Scuola Grande dei Carmini, the Oratorio dei Crociferi, the Jewish Community

---

<sup>133</sup> <https://www.guggenheim-venice.it/it/> (31/10/2022)

Museum, the Museum of Sacred Byzantine Paintings and the Hellenic Institute, the Mekhitarist Monastery, the Diocesan Museum and the Convent of S. Francesco del Deserto, also known as the 'Ancient Franciscan Convent located on one of the most picturesque islands in the Venetian lagoon'.

### 2.4.1 Some examples of social platforms of private entities: the positive and negative aspects

Of all the private entities in the city, which when it comes to art and culture are truly many and of various entities/sizes, I wanted to mention the virtuous examples in terms of the use of social media of the Peggy Guggenheim Gallery and the Pinault Collection at Palazzo Grassi/ Punta della Dogana.

Part of the large Guggenheim family, the Venetian gallery is also affected by the great fame of its siblings abroad, especially the 'mother house' in New York.

On Instagram, it is the most-followed museum in Venice with more than 401,000 followers, thanks in part to the fact that it writes posts in two languages (something that is sometimes left out), to the creation of headings in their content, and to the extensive use of certain types of content such as reels, short videos that Instagram has introduced as competition to the TikTok, more in vogue in GenZ.

As with all other museums, the divisive 'Instagram-Aesthetics/Facebook-News' pattern is repeated here.

By now, Facebook can be seen as a noticeboard for events, thanks also to the type of noticeboard called a diary and the way events are presented to users.

A great social success, with an American twist, on Venetian soil.

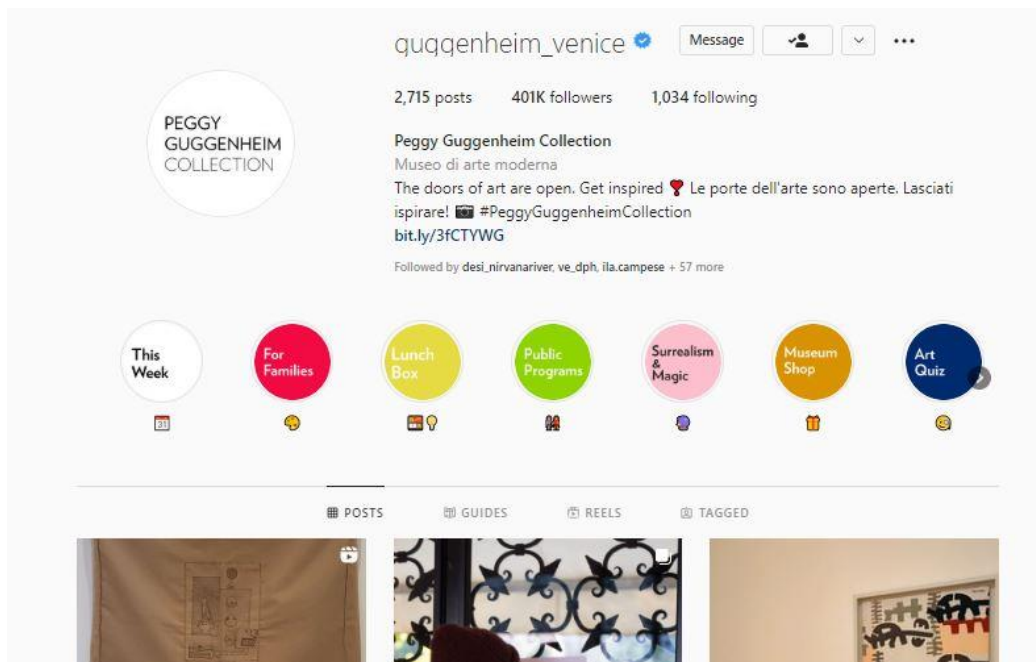


Fig. 22: the Instagram profile of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection (Source - personal screenshot)



Fig. 23: the Facebook profile of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection (Source - personal screenshot)

Another different social management, which seems to bring good results given the number of followers on the profiles analysed, is the one concerning Palazzo Grassi and Punta della Dogana, venues of the Pinault collection.

Two souls with the same profile; the choice of two separate profiles for the two venues of the same group (something we have seen happen for museums under the same directorates,

even if the type of administrative management is obviously different) has therefore been avoided.

By now, the pattern applied is always the same for the two social networks: the museums change, but not the type of use made on the platforms.

Among the most followed museums in the city, followers on Instagram exceed 100,000, while those on Facebook exceed 70,000.

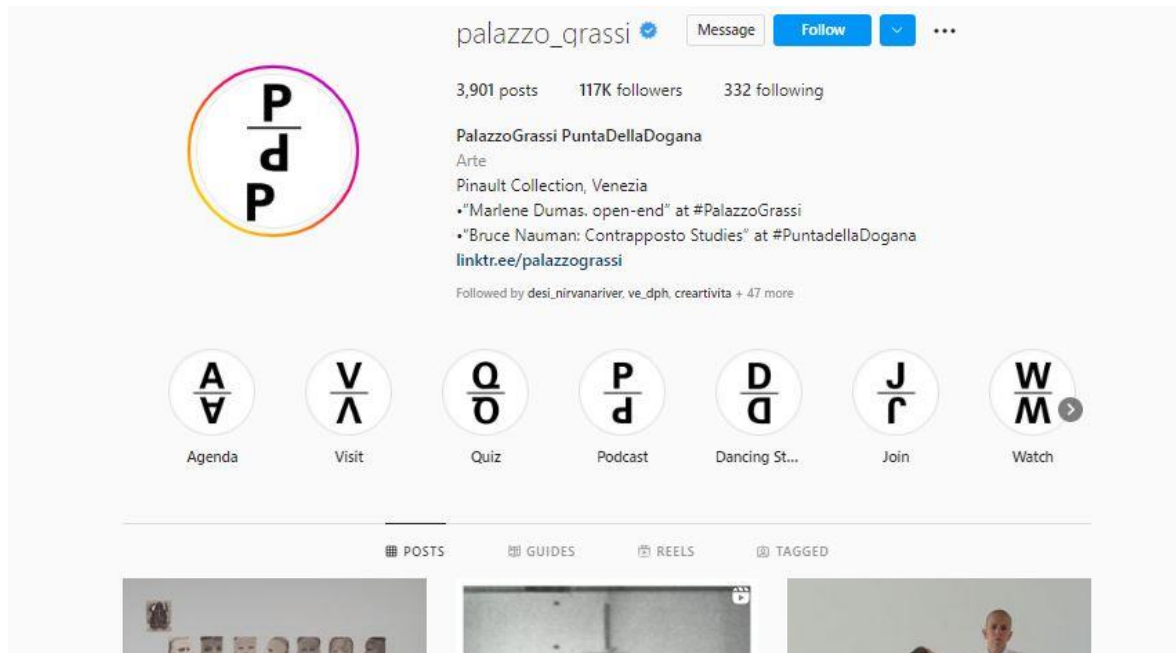
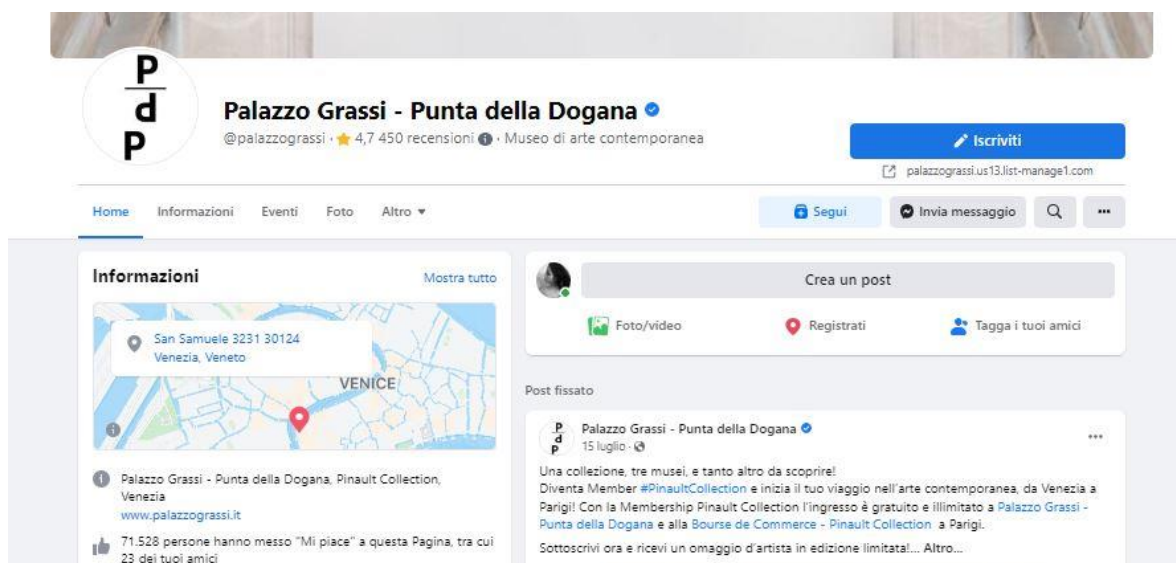


Fig. 24: the Instagram profile of the Palazzo Grass – Punta Della Dogana (Pinault Collection)  
(Source - personal screenshot)



*Fig. 25: the Facebook profile of the Palazzo Grass – Punta Della Dogana (Pinault Collection)*

*(Source - personal screenshot)*

At the end of the observations on the various social pages in the city, an almost spontaneous observation comes to mind: does having management or contacts with foreign management make you more successful in the social sector? That the job of social media manager abroad has become indispensable for museum organisations and not just an ancillary figure that many, even now, do without (especially in the public sector)?

To these questions, unfortunately, there is no answer, but one can only hope that also the Italian directorates in Venice, not all of them of course, will increasingly focus on their communication.



### 3 La Fenice Opera House - its history as a cultural body, opera house and institution in Venice

Venice is certainly also known throughout the world for its long history of theatre and the tradition of the art of music, dance and acting.

The city itself can be seen as a great stage where plays, dances and secrets have come to life for centuries, before everyone's eyes. Quite simply, we could say that light, water and architecture combine to create a dreamlike scenario.

The city that invented the modern theatre in the world is gradually seeing the number of its specific buildings, dedicated to the spectacle, dwindle, as if as the water advances, the flaps retreat. It even seems that Venice and the theatre are united by a common destiny of decadence and marginalization.

Ever since the 16th century, Venice has adorned itself with masonry buildings, stable public theatres run by a strong aristocratic class (among which we can recall the names of the wealthy noble families of the Grimani, the Vendramin, etc.). These, with grand festivals, popular games, jousts, tauromachie, tournaments of chivalry, entrées for weddings and royal visits, in the squares, in the fields, in the water basins where the entire population was invited to express approval, used the new genres of indoor theatricality and contiguous to the birth of professionalism, one thinks of melodrama, as a source of prestige and image enhancement for themselves.

It is difficult, in this period, to distinguish normal houses from theatres.

In fact, it was only in 1792 that with the construction of La Fenice that a true monument to the theatre was erected, different from the rest of the buildings in the city.

The differentiation of the performances and the increase in them required that there be more and more specialised labour and that this, together with the performances, succeeded in bringing more and more people into the theatre, to win them over and keep them well seated in their ranks.

When there was the collapse of the Venetian Republic, with the consequent handover to Austria and then the annexation to the new Italian state, the theatres moved, as far as ownership was concerned, from the nobility to the bourgeoisie.

New uses sprang up and the same space thus saw a succession of often unrecognisable and distorting tasks over the years.

Of the various theatres that had been present in the city up to that time, that of S. Moisè was transformed into a workshop, as well as housing marionettes, the Novissimo opened to horses and then became a soap factory, or the Samuele dissolved into the current primary school. For others, more fortunate and enduring, there is the cinema, which alternates with opera, operetta and other musical products.

The two greatest theatres of melodrama, the Giovanni Grisostomo, today's Malibran, and the S. Benedetto, today's Rossini, named after operatic myths in the 1800s, confirm that the temples of dramaturgy in music, i.e. not based on the word, have found an almost physiological continuity in the art that in the 20th century has opposed prose in an attitude of escape from the world and of phantasmic seduction, namely film. And the cinema harks back to its humble origins, to the fair of the casotti, from the shacks mixing wax masks and optical boxes, and from the photographic pavilions, to the 'panoramas' set up by hawkers, between circuses and merry-go-rounds, on the riva degli Schiavoni at the end of the 19th century and the first permanent theatres. Plenty of theatres, in any case, for a long time to come. Check the index of shows in the 'Gazzetta di Venezia' after the First World War. December '18 saw small and medium-sized theatres open and in operation, where cinema and entertainment for children (there is still a sizeable children's audience in the city!) competed for supremacy. Fifteen years later, the shrewd planning of the regime promoted further spaces in favour of theatrical entertainment.

In the years from the 16th century to the present day, we have seen a great transformation: theatres were more like meeting places, where performances, however spectacular and always seeking the spectator's attention, were only the backdrop to business, pleasure or play meetings.

Today, the few remaining theatres in the city have differentiated in terms of style and type of performances: La Fenice Opera House and the Malibran, which have the same management and are under the same ownership, offer a classical music and opera programme, also offering themselves as venues for private parties and receptions.

The Teatro Goldoni, now under the direction of the Teatro Stabile del Veneto, after a very long history that began in 1622, has remained in its present role as a theatre dedicated to comedies.

### 3.1 A case study: La Fenice Opera House

La Fenice Opera House is one of the most prestigious opera houses in the world, and the place where world premieres of operas have been staged of artists including Giuseppe Verdi, Gioachino Rossini, Vincenzo Bellini, Gaetano Donizetti; it stands in the sestiere of San Marco, not far from the church of Santa Maria del Giglio, the Scala Contarini del Bovolo and the church of San Moisè<sup>134</sup>.

The choice of this case study was due to the opportunity I was given from September 2021 to the end of February 2022 to do a curricular internship within the Press Office of the opera house and to be able to follow their social media closely.

It was very interesting to be able to deal with profiles already well-nourished both in terms of posts and followers, after my first experience in the social sector with the smaller and recently opened profiles (or with me) of the National Museum of Villa Pisani in Stra.

The decision to study this example is to demonstrate how an extra person on the staff, hired directly by the institution and not relying on external agencies, is optimal and pays off in terms of performance and efficiency of both the social profiles and the internal organisation of the opera house itself.

Before starting with a detailed analysis of the communication style of the various profiles, I would like to explain the context in which the opera house is set and give the floor to those who work within those golden walls.

The opera house is located in the beating heart of the city, close to some of Venice's most famous tourist attractions, making it easily accessible not only from a transport point of view, as it is also close to the vaporetto landing stages, but also from the point of view of the streets that have one of the city's largest traffic flows

---

<sup>134</sup> <https://www.teatrofenice.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/storiaFeniceBreve.pdf> (02/11/2022)

The Opera House, designed by Gian Antonio Selva and built between 1790 and 1792, risked total destruction in 1836 due to a serious fire. It was the architects Tommaso and Gian Battista Meduna who restored it, readjusting the original design. Subsequent renovations were carried out, from 1936 onwards, by Eugenio Miozzi<sup>135</sup>.

A vast staircase precedes the neoclassical façade, which features a pronaos with four Corinthian columns, at the apex of which is a balustrade.

Sculpted in the niches are Dance and Music, works by Gian Battista Meduna, and above them are reliefs with masks, made by the same author. The frieze in the centre depicts the Phoenix.

Busts and commemorative plaques of illustrious personalities, such as Carlo Goldoni, Antonio Selva, Gioacchino Rossini, Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari and Giuseppe Verdi, are located in the atrium and below the pronaos.

Inside, the neoclassical Apollinea hall, with four levels of boxes and gallery, is the largest in the theatre and was designed by architect Selva.

Then there is the Theatre Hall, with a capacity of one thousand five hundred spectators, lavishly decorated with stucco, painted panels and carvings in gold and fully restored in 1936.

In 1937, Nino Barbantini renovated the stage and entrance halls.

On 29 January 1996, a disastrous arson attack destroyed the theatre, which was later rebuilt.

Fact: The reconstruction after the 1996 fire was based on the motto 'as it was, where it was', taken from the reconstruction of the bell tower of St. Mark's.

The theatre houses a permanent exhibition dedicated to Maria Callas and to her years of activity in Venice.

---

<sup>135</sup> Ibidem

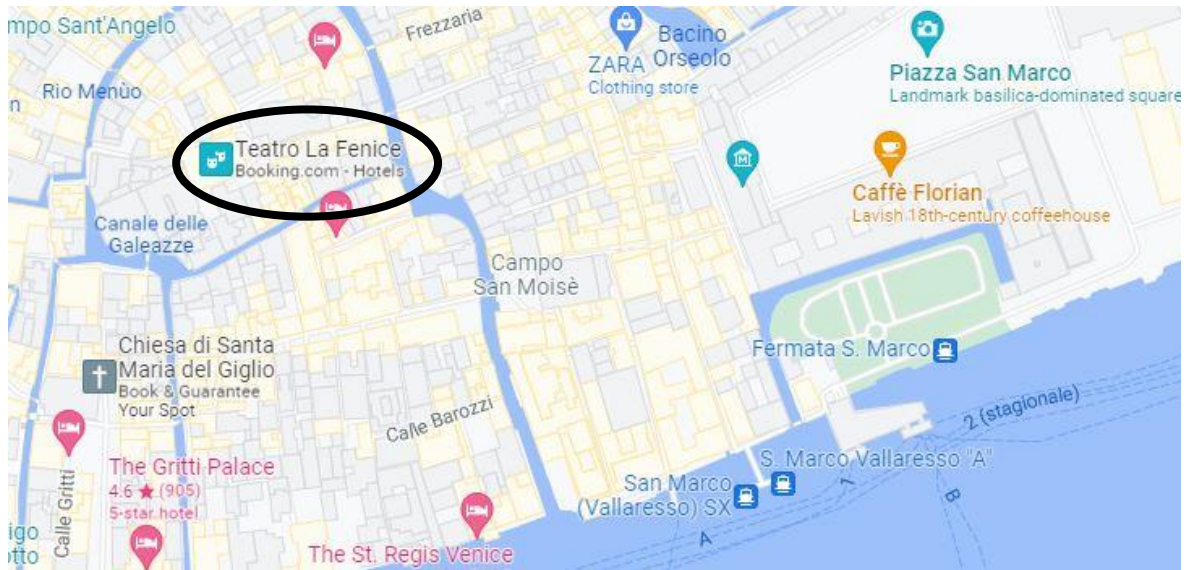


Fig. 26: the centrality of La Fenice Opera House to the city of Venice and the Sestiere di San Marco

It is also worth mentioning, obviously speaking of contemporary times, the importance of La Fenice for the territory of the metropolitan city of Venice and the events that take place outside the halls of the opera house.

In fact, 'La Fenice per la città' and 'La Fenice per la Città Metropolitana' are two initiatives promoted by the Fondazione Teatro La Fenice in collaboration with the Municipality of Venice and the Metropolitan City of Venice respectively, aimed at opening the theatre to the territory through a cycle of operas and concerts addressed, at a reduced price, to residents in the municipality or in the province of Venice. In addition, a series of events and concerts have been organised in collaboration with the Amici della Musica di Mestre, as well as a series of events and concerts in collaboration with the Venice City Council.<sup>136</sup>

La Fenice also has an Education programme, which provides for the participation of schools of all levels in performances, educational workshops, musical itineraries and general and ensemble rehearsals of the Opera and Symphonic Seasons. The programmes are not only aimed at training students, but also want to be an educational reference point in the field of music for teachers. The Teatro La Fenice also wants to be for families a place of knowledge, sharing, experience and fun. With this spirit, some projects have been designed to allow adults to spend time with children in the wonderful place that is the theatre. Practical workshops and musical narratives offered to both schools and families to get to know the Fenice theatre space and its secrets.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Fondazione Teatro La Fenice di Venezia, *Bilancio di esercizio*, 2021, p. 14

<sup>137</sup> Ivi, p. 15

## 3.2 A further minor theatrical reality: the Goldoni Theatre

Located near the Rialto Bridge, in the historic centre of Venice, the Carlo Goldoni Theatre is an Italian-style theatre, with the auditorium structured in stalls and four tiers of boxes-gallery, for a total capacity of 800 seats<sup>138</sup>.

The Teatro Goldoni is home to the Teatro Stabile del Veneto 'Carlo Goldoni', which organises the prose season, the Teatro Ragazzi review, and other concessions, ballets and concerts. Inaugurated in 1622, it is the oldest surviving theatre in Venice and the fourth oldest in the city, after Teatro Michiel, Teatro Tron (1581) and Teatro di San Moisè (1613).

First of all, we must say that the inauguration of the Goldoni Theatre in San Luca was a memorable day that ended the very long 'post-war' period in Venice, which had fortunately emerged from the conflict certainly tried, but in its monumental and building structure almost unscathed. Thus the closure of the most important theatre for 'prose' performances became the emblem of the suffering that had not spared the island centre.

In Venice, where the modern theatre was born and grew up, in the years of reconstruction the fact that it was deprived of a theatre dedicated to prose sounded like an insult to its tradition, like proof that its centuries-long decadence could not be halted. Venice was languishing theatrically, at best able to offer modest hospitality to the companies 'di giro' in the cramped hall of the Ridotto, on the first floor in Calle Vallarosso. That left La Fenice, while at the Malibran theatrical performances took place before film screenings.<sup>139</sup>

Thus the theatre where Goldoni had worked until the day of his departure for Paris and which proudly bore his name reopened its doors and began its new adventure, reknitting the threads of a centuries-old tradition. Venetian theatres, then and for a long time to come, however large and spacious they may be, are concealed in the dense and intricate urban fabric: what counts is the splendour of the interior, where the party finally takes place.

Talking a little about its recent history, of the Goldoni theatre, which we are dealing with in this brief excursus, in order to understand the cultural project behind the reopening of the space, it is useful to leaf through the Draft Report on the Management of the Goldoni

---

<sup>138</sup> [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teatro\\_stabile\\_del\\_Veneto\\_Carlo\\_Goldoni](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teatro_stabile_del_Veneto_Carlo_Goldoni) (03/11/2022)

<sup>139</sup> Alberti C., *Il Teatro Carlo Goldoni di Venezia 1979-2009, immagini e memorie sceniche di trent'anni d'attività*, Marsilio Editori, 2009, p. 80

Theatre, prepared by the Venice City Council's Department of Culture and Fine Arts, which explicitly defines the importance of building an effective relationship between the theatre and the territory. The document recalls, again, how the beginning of the process for the public acquisition of the scenic site dates back to July 1947, while the renovation work saw the emergence, year after year, of an infinite number of problems, accompanied by a consequent increase in costs. In the second part of the document, however, the management of the theatre and its 'cultural function'.<sup>140</sup>

So, after the Great War there was a remarkable revival of theatre activity and Venetian audiences never missed appointments with the great companies of the time. In 1923 the theatre celebrated its entry into its fourth century of life, but the year before another exceptional event put the Goldoni on all the artistic and social news of the time: the return of Eleonora Duse to the stage in Venice after twenty years. In March 1922 (just two years before her death) she presented two extraordinary performances: Ibsen's *La donna del mare* and Marco Praga's *La porta chiusa*<sup>141</sup>.

The sudden death of Antonio Marigonda brought this happy moment of artistic blossoming to an abrupt halt, a phase that led to a rapid decline of the activity until it closed. After a brief period under the management of Antonio Marigonda's sons Piero and Andrea, in 1937 the theatre changed hands again and was purchased by the lawyer Giacomo Baldissera Baron Treves De' Bonfili, and the management was entrusted to ICSA (Imprese Cinematografiche Spettacoli e Affini).

The last decade of the Goldoni Theatre was of little significance, with the programming of decidedly commercial entertainment genres such as operetta and revues. It is important to note that the Venetian public managed to oppose the transformation of the Goldoni into a theatre-cinema, something that happened to other theatres, such as the Rossini (former San Benedetto theatre) and the Malibran (former San Giovanni Grisostomo)<sup>142</sup>.

During the sad years of the Second World War, the theatre remained operational, also because Venice was home to the Ministry of Popular Culture and thus also to the General Directorate of Performing Arts. On 15 June 1947, the theatre was declared unfit for use and was definitively closed due to the precarious structural conditions that required almost total rebuilding. In that summer of 1947, no one would have imagined that the old Goldoni would

---

<sup>140</sup> Ivi p. 16

<sup>141</sup> <https://www.teatrostabileveneto.it/sedi/goldoni/storia-goldoni/> (03/11/2022)

<sup>142</sup> Ibidem

remain closed for such a long time, and that the route would be so bumpy and repeatedly revised, with infinite patience on the part of the population and with a novel-like progression and relative twists and turns.

Expropriated in 1957, it was reopened in 1979 after a lengthy renovation to improve its capacity and facilities. The first performance of the new course took place on 22 April 1979, when Carlo Goldoni's *La locandiera* was staged, directed by Giancarlo Cobelli with Carla Gravina and Gabriele Ferzetti.<sup>143</sup>

The play went on a successful three-year tour and a television version was also produced, which can still be seen on DVD today.

For more than a decade, the Venice City Council managed the theatre on its own, gradually entrusting it to different directors, including the unforgettable Giorgio Gaber, until, from 1992 until today, it was handed over to the management of the Teatro Stabile del Veneto<sup>144</sup>.

Legally speaking, the Teatro Stabile del Veneto 'Carlo Goldoni' was founded in 1992. Founding partners were the Veneto Region, the Municipality of Venice and the Municipality of Padua. It was then joined by the Municipality of Vicenza (from 2003 to 2011), the Province of Padua and, the Fondazione Atlantide - Teatro Nuovo di Verona (from 2015 to 2017) and in 2019 by the Municipality of Treviso and began a collaboration with the Municipalities of Bassano Del Grappa, Cortina d'Ampezzo and Badia Polesine as well as the Padua Chamber of Commerce, the Treviso-Belluno-Dolomiti Chamber of Commerce and the Venice-Rovigo Chamber of Commerce as Ordinary Members<sup>145</sup>.

Since its foundation, the Teatro Stabile has managed the Teatro Goldoni in Venice and the Teatro Verdi in Padua.

---

<sup>143</sup> <https://www.sgaialand.it/il-teatro-goldoni-di-venezia-il-piu-antico-ancora-esistente-della-citta/> (03/11/2022)

<sup>144</sup> <https://www.teatrostabileveneto.it/sedi/goldoni/> (03/11/2022)

<sup>145</sup> <https://www.teatrostabileveneto.it/organizzazione/> (03/11/2022)



### 3.3 La Fenice Opera House: the interview with the insider

Having reached this point in my research, I also wanted to give a voice to those who work inside La Fenice Opera House and who deal with the inner workings of this huge organisation on a daily basis.

I decided to interview the person behind all the work that is published daily on social media, namely the Social Media Manager and member of La Fenice's Press Office department, Pietro Tessarin.

***Q: Pietro, thank you very much for seeing me. There's a lot of work, especially at this time preparing for the new 2022/2023 season (October 2022). My first question is really to ask you how much commitment there is behind this work, which many still consider to be 'a matter of a few hours'.***

Let's start with the assumption that for us there are no Saturdays or Sundays, but we are greatly saved by scheduling tools such as Twitter and Meta.

In practice we work 24 hours a day and you have to be there at all times if you want to make a difference. Quite simply, you have to cover the whole day. Every social has its own logic and its own gears and every day you have to feed them. For the Prima in November there is always a lot more work, compared to other times of the year, whereas for other events you can communicate more in advance.

For the Prima you have to start a few weeks beforehand, beginning by circling around it and then going deeper and deeper. It is the most important event for an opera house and nothing can be left out.

***Q: If you could describe how an opera house works, what would you say? What is "hidden" that a spectator would never expect to know?***

Before the opera house, I would like to talk about the characters within it. Outside, on the outside of the walls, it is not yet understandable how much study goes into a character that is to be staged and sung.

We recently did a tour in Berlin and were talking informally to the singers who came with us that each of them has, on average, 10 roles to learn each year. For example, a soprano in an opera by Verdi is different from one by Donizetti. There are different companies and different conductors and we don't always get on well.

The singers have a lot of training before each performance and whereas in the old days there was a stage hunchback, today there is nothing. They remember everything with the help of the conductor and the music being performed.

This, in my opinion, is very nice to tell because it is not always understood: you go on stage here and now and if you forget something you can spell it out, but forgetting more than two words makes it difficult to continue.

Outside, in my opinion, you don't realise how many personalities work here and with us. There are so many offices, from organisation to communication, that we come into contact with for each work.

Within our theatre alone, there are so to speak many administrative departments, to which we must add all the others, from the orchestra to the seamstresses to the electricians, etc.

It is very often forgotten that inside a theatre there are not only musicians, but also employees.

There are around 300 of us in the whole theatre.

***Q: How do you see the combination of theatre and museum? Is the coexistence of both possible, or does one disturb the other?***

I see it very well. We have invented the so-called guided tour, with a voice that guides you during the visit.

The theatre is open every day from 9.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and patrons with a €10 ticket can visit the theatre, photograph it and listen to its history.

In certain can also see rehearsals that may be more interesting than the performance itself.

***Q: My next question is about organisation and a typical day at La Fenice socials: you arrive at the office and what are the first things you look at in the morning?***

The first thing I do in the morning is to hear the news and understand what is going on that day. This is through video news and press reviews.

You arrive at the office around 9am and you have to be ready to understand the mood of the day.

Then you start with the planning of the day: 3 posts on Facebook, 2 on Instagram, as much as you can on Twitter, 1 on LinkedIn.

The first thing to do in the morning is to get informed. Communication is structured within the press office, so it is good to communicate after getting informed.

***Q: The social networks you manage are really many and you have been joined by a new colleague for some time now. How necessary is it for an organisation, in this case a cultural organisation, to have a good social team?***

It's a matter of life; regardless of whether it's a nice or dislikeable colleague, it allows you to have a wingman. There are so many events and it is not humanly possible, after saying we work 24 hours a day, to attend all the events on the calendar. So, you divide the tasks by going once to one and once to the other.

This is even better with a stable contract. Unfortunately, contracts are always provisional and this does not help. There must be a will to structure an area that you cannot do without.

***Q: Now for a perhaps somewhat peculiar question: which is your favourite social media and which, on the other hand, has the most potential for a theatre?***

The communication tool, both personal and professional, that I like the most is Twitter because there are a lot of media professionals behind it who take photos and information from there, like the tweet about the Notre Dame fire. It rarely happens on Facebook and even less on Instagram which works more for numbers of followers.

Although we have few numbers, we are second in Italy for communication on social media and first in Italy for Twitter.

The first in terms of numbers are La Scala's social networks, but on Twitter, for example, their posts are, so to speak, compilative and less creative.

***Q: Let's move on to the practical part: how many connections are created via social media with other realities in the city and also outside? Do these relationships also exist outside of social? How do they come about?***

It is important that, for certain events involving other institutions in the city such as the municipality and the mayor (in the case of events in city life), they are always mentioned and relaunched.

I like, on Twitter, to create a hashtag every now and then with MUVE and other institutions.

The last one was #arteincoro in which the other cultural institutions in the city retweeted with this hashtag their works and together essential information for visiting their museums.

This creates many connections and the ones we now have are made through social media.

On the second date of Falstaff some of these connections will be in the theatre to enjoy the opera with us.

***Q: Do social media help in maintaining relationships with other institutions in the city? How has this changed in recent years?***

These connections are used under the guise of conveying culture, you manage to attract more people and have more engagement.

You have to have an audience that is used to interacting with us. Quality must be greater than quantity, but sometimes this is not understood by sponsors.

***Q: Social media helps to show a lot of the behind-the-scenes of the theatre. What is your favourite thing to show?***

I like to show a lot of the backstage stuff, when things are more buzzing and show how the show is created for the audience.

***Q: We are down to the last few lines. What do you hope for in the future for La Fenice socials? What do you think needs to be done more?***

From a content point of view, you can see that we are good. We need to change the technique of them a bit and show more structured things, with more particular videos.

We focus a lot on content, but we are not able to change the techniques with the times. The means are also very important to us.

***Q: What do you think, in general, is the future of the opera-symphonic foundations? How will they evolve?***

Good question, I think about it a lot.

Before COVID-19 you could already see that the live performance sector had some flaws, but it will be maintained because live performance has the beauty of being live; there is an emotion and an energy that comes from the stage and the audience that cannot be described.

These two types of energy make for a theatre experience that will always be different from the experience of prose theatre, which needs, for example, an understanding of language to be fully understood.

I fear a lot for cinemas: people go to the theatre for the live experience, but after COVID-19 people have also become impatient because of on-demand platforms that have outclassed the experience in a movie theatre, which is now increasingly empty.

The weakest link in live entertainment is the cinema, then the performance ones and we would be the ones to survive the most.

*Q: Thank you very much for all your help. And as you say in all your posts: "Good music everyone!"*

### 3.4 Italian competitors on social media

What are the competitors of La Fenice Opera House? Has anyone decided who is the best in the various areas covered by the Press and Communication Offices of the various theatres?

This article by Pierachille Dolfini of 25 October 2022 compares Italy's biggest opera houses and paints a picture of the various strengths of each Opera House, after a jury of twenty music journalists voted on the best press office, but also the most effective website, the best-kept social accounts<sup>146</sup>.

What emerged was a detailed and detailed snapshot, a very interesting overview of the communication of Italian opera houses, between tradition and innovation.

If they always like the programmes with musicological essays and listening guides, they also understand (especially among the new generation of journalists) that for an opera foundation or a traditional theatre, it is now essential to be on social networks, on the most popular platforms such as Facebook (which is now a thing for the over-40s) and Twitter, but also on Instagram (posts, but above all stories produced in-house or by relaunching those of followers), right up to the pioneering experiments of opera houses that have landed on TikTok, such as the Teatro alla Scala.

Starting with the Press Offices of each Opera House, that of the Teatro alla Scala in Milan was the best Italian press office, ahead of the staff of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. Barbara Montagner and her collaborators at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice take the third step on the podium. All 'historical' names like those of Cecilia Bosaro of the Arena di

---

<sup>146</sup> Dolfini P., *I giornalisti votano la comunicazione nella lirica: ecco quali sono i migliori uffici stampa d'Italia*, 2022, <https://www.pierachilledolfini.it/2022/10/25/i-giornalisti-votano-la-comunicazione-nella-lirica-ecco-quali-sono-i-migliori-uffici-stampa-ditalia/> (10/11/2022)

Verona, Paolo Maier of the Teatro Regio di Parma, Cosimo Manicone of the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma and Giacomo Mariotti of the Rossini opera festival.

Going on to analyse the various websites of the institutions, which can be considered as the "houses" of the digital sector of each opera house and symphony theatre, the Teatro alla Scala comes first here too and its is the best website of an Italian opera house with 20% of the consensus. It is made up of slides scrolling down the homepage with the shows on stage and those coming up, a daily calendar with all the appointments, a link to the ticket office to purchase tickets, and many sections, including a historical archive that can be accessed after registering. This scheme is repeated, with different graphics, in the sites of the other theatres, the very vertical one of the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, the site with a strong iconographic impact of the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome and the linear and all horizontal page of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino<sup>147</sup>.

Going now into the specific area of social media, we can see how the various Opera Houses behave in this sector.

Often theatres' communications go through social media first rather than through press releases, which are a more immediate, direct channel that encourages interaction with users who comment (sometimes inappropriately) on news, cast changes, and performances. But they are also used to tag theatres and artists in their posts and stories, which are then relaunched by the theatres to create traffic and user loyalty.

The most popular Facebook page is that of the Teatro alla Scala in Milan and is structured with a cover photo with a shot of the opera being performed, a weekly calendar of appointments, news about the start of ticket sales, and direct links into the theatre, often at the end of rehearsals. It happens on the Facebook page of the Teatro alla Scala with 425,000 followers, that of the Teatro la Fenice in Venice with 373,000 followers, and then continues on the wall of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino with 67,000 followers and of the Comunale di Bologna with 55,000 followers.

As already mentioned in the interview with Pietro Tessarin, the Teatro La Fenice di Venezia's Twitter account is the first in Italy in terms of type of content and use. News, information, communications are the hallmark of this platform, and these are reflected in the profiles of Italian opera houses. That of La Fenice has 75,900 followers, that of the Teatro

---

<sup>147</sup> Ibidem

dell'Opera di Roma, which came second on the podium, has 13,550 followers, and that of the Teatro alla Scala has close to 310,000.

Photos of stagings, reels with excerpts from performances, interviews with the protagonists: these small clips of stagings on stage to capture the audience's attention and "pieces of history" of the theatre with playbills from yesterday and black and white photos are just some of the content that is shared by the various theatres every day.

Of course, there is no shortage of stories with the day's birthdays, reposts of user stories or artists tagging La Scala. The Teatro alla Scala in Milan is the best Instagram profile, with 319,000 followers. The Teatro La Fenice in Venice takes the second step of the podium with its 86 thousand followers. Equal merit, on the third step, for Donizetti opera of Bergamo, which gathers 3 thousand and 900 followers, Teatro Regio of Turin with its 11 thousand followers and Rossini opera festival, a profile followed by 18 thousand and 500 users.

As you may have gathered, the analysis made in this article does not want to relate the various competitors merely on the basis of the number of followers they have on their profiles, but rather to show how Opera Houses with smaller followers can, in some cases, surpass their larger competitors in terms of type of content.

I would just like to mention, as a final point, the various behaviours that occurred in communication during the pandemic, which irreversibly changed the lives and perspectives of all of us.

The way of communicating has been revolutionised as has the way of interacting between people and also the way of enjoying a show: the word streaming has taken over the scene, but above all the reality, the shows broadcast on the web, on platforms, on sites, on Facebook pages

Not only streaming, but a communication strategy made of videos, music pills, networking initiatives (hashtags on social networks, challenges...).

This has been done more or less (depending on the means available) by all the theatres. The one put in place by the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome was the best, but the initiatives of the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and the live broadcasts of the Donizetti opera in Bergamo were also much appreciated.



### 3.5 The communicative differences between a museum and an opera house

Are there any real differences between what an opera house publishes and what a museum publishes?

I would say that this depends from institution to institution.

This is meant to be a personal commentary on what is published every day on the various social platforms by some of the cultural institutions examined in the previous chapters.

Starting with the case study of this paper, i.e., La Fenice Opera House, this is yes an opera house that uses the platforms to advertise and showcase its events (such as concerts, meetings or shows in general), but it also talks about the theatre itself as it can be visited every day like any museum by tourists and the curious, paying a ticket.

It is therefore possible to see mixed posts between what is the concert activity on offer and what is the museum nature of the same.

A similar thing happens with other museums in the city, such as those of the MUVE Foundation, which show their heritage through videos and photographs, but also mention events and extraordinary and/or free openings that are offered throughout the year.

Other opera houses, such as La Scala in Milan, focus more on talking and telling only about the performances offered rather than the theatre itself.

Below are the differences in posts that are proposed on Instagram by La Fenice Opera House and Alla Scala Opera House:



Fig. 27: One of the La Fenice opera house's posts showing the aesthetic side of its rooms (Source - personal screenshot)



Fig. 28: A post from the Alla Scala opera house showing the final applause of the 7 December 2022 premiere (Source - personal screenshot)

## 4 The communication style of La Fenice Opera House as seen in each of its social profiles

In the third chapter of my paper I want to go into detail about the communication approach of La Fenice Opera House in the various social platforms.

In fact, each platform has its own communication style and its own target audience, which differs according to age, gender and origin.

Very often we are led to think that most cultural institutions are present on a couple of platforms, usually Instagram and Facebook, sometimes even Twitter. This is obviously not a mirror of reality.

There are many different types of platforms used by various cultural institutions, including image sharing, event sharing, video sharing and news sharing.

La Fenice Opera House has six communication platforms through which it can reach its users all over the world.

As we will see later in detail, the first platform for number of followers is Facebook. But the Opera House is the first Opera Foundation in Italy for number of followers on YouTube as it took advantage of the situation of closure in 2020 caused by the first epidemic wave of Covid-19 to stream all the concerts and operas that should have been performed with the audience present in the auditorium.

It is thus obvious that all the viewers who should have been there live and were not were able to take advantage of this situation-related novelty by creating a new type of product use and a new target market.

If, therefore, YouTube brought a very big revolution to what was the pool of users that frequented the channel of La Fenice, also the rest of social media saw the increase of their followers in their respective profiles thanks to the sharing of exclusive materials designed specifically for that audience.

In this chapter, I am going to explain specifically the communication, the type of approach and the way in which the different types of content are conveyed for the most efficient result possible.

## 4.1 La Fenice Opera House on social media: platforms, content and audience

As we have seen in the previous chapters, we have realised that each museum institution (and not just the cultural world) has its own method of using social platforms and its own way of publishing content.

Having been able to witness first-hand how things are managed within La Fenice Opera House, it is now much easier for me to explain in detail how a social media manager works and how ad hoc content is constructed, chosen and edited for each type of platform used, in this case, by La Fenice.

Before, however, looking at each individual case, I would like to report on the *modus operandi* that I used to perform in the theatre during my internship days in order to have a constant presence on these platforms that could increase the numbers not only of followers but in general of the online presence.

First of all, one has to prepare an editorial plan of what will be published. Although, I admit, I did not have to create a physical one to present to my superiors every week - which is something that companies generally always ask their social media managers to do - but in any case I had to have in mind what events would be publicised in that time frame, since, in the end, one of the goals is also to sell tickets for individual shows.

So, after I knew what my goals would be, I proceeded with the creation of the content and then photo and video material to be posted on the platforms.

At the beginning I was talking about how, very often, social media managers make use of materials made by professionals such as photographers and videomakers. It is absolutely true that, even at La Fenice, we used to use their help, but it is also true that most of the time (especially due to time constraints) it was necessary to have self-produced material, especially for content that requires a certain speed of publication, one of them being Instagram stories.

Usually, creating photo and especially video content requires not only a certain amount of preparation and aptitude for the subject matter, but also many hours of work: you cannot

'just shoot'. There is a lot of post-production work behind it, editing and arranging what you have done. Preparing extra material to keep as an archive is always a good idea.

After this, one moves on to the design and production of the content.

Since these are not private profiles, but pages, they make use of tools such as Business Suite (and Creator Studio) for Facebook and Instagram, and Twitter Desk for Twitter. TikTok has the possibility of scheduling posts only in the desktop version, and YouTube does not distinguish between private and business, since it is always channels.

So, once you are in the system, from these real workstations you can create and schedule posts, going to insert the texts, video content and/or photos and any hashtags, mentions or tags of people we want to include in our post.

Obviously, once the mechanism is understood, these tools are quite simple to use and can prove to be valuable allies in the creation of our posts.

Moreover, through them, it is possible to organise work well in advance, as we can take advantage of scheduling and create a publication schedule that meets our needs.

Unfortunately, to date, some content cannot yet be scheduled on these desks, such as Instagram reels, which must be published in real time.

For stories, on the other hand, scheduling is possible but with limits on additional content such as music, GIFs, etc.

As, therefore, one could understand from this introduction on the subject, each social platform has its own characteristics and its own working methods/content scheduling.

It is the social media manager, based on the directives given to him by superiors/clients (if he works on his own) who adjusts what and when to publish. It is not as easy a job as it sounds, and nowadays specific skills such as being able to plan and organise work impeccably, knowing how to use photo post-production and video editing programmes are required in addition to specific skills.

Now, however, I would like to analyse in detail the type of communication that is used by La Fenice Opera House in every single social platform it uses and how the messages it wants to launch are conveyed.

As for the numerical data, the so-called insights on coverage, followers, likes, etc., these will be analysed in detail in the next chapter.

## 4.1.1 Facebook

As the first platform to be analysed, I chose Facebook, as it was the first to be used by La Fenice.

It is probably the platform with the most versatile content, as photos, videos, news (one's own or others') can be uploaded and events can be created to act as reminders to those interested in a specific activity

What the theatre has been doing for years now is to provide all-day coverage of posts with news, video/concert clips and fun trivia.

One type of post that always attracts users and that in the Venice area the theatre was among the first to use is the post-morning post.



Fig. 29: the daily good morning post on Facebook (Source - personal screenshot)

Usually, using a beautiful photo of Venice, they wish their followers a good start to the day, thanks also to the use of a striking aphorism, different from day to day, which can act as a warning about situations that we are experiencing as a community or that can simply make their followers reflect on those few words used.

This is followed during the day by at least 3 or 4 other posts that can be about upcoming events in the theatre, such as concerts, meetings or operas, or so-called entertainment content. Very popular is the #nascevaoggi column that remembers who was born on that particular date in the world of the arts, be it music, painting or art in general.



Fig. 30: the daily personality post of the day on Facebook (Source - personal screenshot)

The important thing, as on all platforms, is not to bore or overdo it: making too many posts can be just as counterproductive as making too few. Followers would no longer recognise the novelty, but on the contrary would get tired of too much content and might even judge it as meaningless or repetitive.

A winning horse, on the other hand, can be to create columns that build audience loyalty, bringing them back to the page every day in search of the latest news on that topic.

As mentioned earlier, Facebook today has a much more adult audience than years ago, and simple, easy-to-understand content is preferred.

It is for this reason that La Fenice relies on 'Almanac of the day after' and 'Good morning' columns that see the comment section filled with glittery and flashy stickers.



*Fig. 31: one of the responses below one of the Facebook posts. From the type of responses, many times, you can determine the type of user behind it: from boomers to Gen Z (Source - personal screenshot)*

Facebook's audience has changed over the years: the 2010 teenagers who were born here digitally are now adults, who may not have opened any other profiles on other social platforms and are therefore fossilised on what was the golden past of these platforms.

Like everything, communication evolves and more articulate content is preferred in other areas as we will see later.

Facebook is the safe house of social platforms, where one can easily find information, events, links to external articles and sites.





Fig. 32: one of the posts linking back to the site, thus creating a bridge link between two sites, a social and a website (Source - personal screenshot)

One of the goals of the posts is to bring clicks to the site, the home base where all social activities must converge and bring results.

## 4.1.2 Instagram

Let us now look at the social network that in recent years has certainly created the largest following among the young and not so young, launching new jobs (see the influencers), new fashions and new ways of communicating that Facebook had not managed to propose.

Obviously we are talking about Instagram, which I personally consider to be the platform that is most able to help cultural institutions launch themselves on new markets and attract a younger audience... provided they know how to use it in the best possible way and propose a constant and interesting publication.

But what does La Fenice Opera House publish on its Instagram page?

When I started my internship there in September 2021, the page published little more than a couple of posts a week, usually photos or videos about events, particularly concerts and operas.



*Fig. 33: one of the types of posts used on the Instagram account: the promotion of upcoming shows (Source - personal screenshot)*

As I have a predilection for this platform, I wanted to propose the use of reels in the feed, a new type of video, launched in the last two years as competition to TikTok, which was (and is) gathering more and more followers in the very young segment.

My first post as an intern in the digital department of the theatre's press office was therefore a reel that reached more than 25 thousand views and over a thousand likes in just a few hours.



*Fig. 34: the first reel posted on the theatre's Instagram page. Reels are types of content that, at the moment, manage to bring more coverage and reach a larger audience (Source - personal screenshot)*

I was therefore exclusively entrusted with the management of the Instagram page, being free to decide what to publish, when and why.

So, I decided to raise the stakes from two/three posts a week to two posts a day, plus stories and making use of reels as published content, which have their own home page and manage to bring in big views in a short time.

Being able to consider Instagram as an almost purely aesthetic social site, where appearance plays the leading role, I decided to alternate posts dedicated to events with aesthetic ones where I show the architectural and artistic beauty of the theatre and through them tell anecdotes and curiosities.



teatrolafenice

teatrolafenice Questa sera ci sarà la terza recita di "Apollo et Hyacinthus" di Mozart alle ore 19:00 nella nostra seconda casa, il Teatro Malibrán.

Belle parole sta ricevendo l'opera del giovane Mozart pensata dalla regista @ceciliaigorio insieme ai ragazzi dell' @abavenezia . Complimenti e in bocca al lupo per stasera!

@barbaramassaro94 @danilopastorecountertenor @raffaele\_pe @kimisyellow

Tonight will be the third performance of Mozart's "Apollo et Hyacinthus" at 7pm in our second home, the Malibrán Theater. Beautiful words are being received by the young Mozart's opera conceived by the director Cecilia Ligorio together with students from Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia. Congratulations and.. toi, toi, toi!

#teatrolafenice #teatromalibrán #apolloethyacinthus #mozart #classicalmusic #opera #operalife #operalover #operalovers

255 likes  
1 DAY AGO



teatrolafenice

teatrolafenice Chiunque entra nel Palco Reale, almeno per un momento, si sente sopraffatto da tanta bellezza 🌟

Anyone who enters the Royal Stage, at least for a moment, feels overwhelmed by such beauty 🌟

#teatrolafenice #lafenice #fenice #venezia #venice #details #dettagli #overwhelmed #opera #operahouse #operalovers #loveopera #teatroitaliano #teatrovenezia

48w

emmanuelle.fv  
47w 1 like Reply

sigmundbrotmeth Heavenly 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟  
48w 1 like Reply See translation

Liked by adventure.juan and 1,728 others  
NOVEMBER 5, 2021

Fig. 35 and 36: the contents that are generally focused on the most, those of an aesthetic nature and those promoting the shows (Source - personal screenshot)

I then used the stories for good mornings (creating a bridge with the Facebook post) and to alert followers of planned events in the theatre. I then made temporary 24-hour content that would take them back to the website via a sticker (so called in the jargon) and could raise the click-through level.



*Fig. 37: an example of a story that uses a button to link to another site, in this case YouTube (Source - personal screenshot)*

I also continued with the proposal of live video broadcasts during the first few minutes of the concerts, so that I could gain the loyalty of a number of users who, for various reasons, were unable to attend the live performances.



Fig. 38: an example of a post with the hashtag #livelafenice. The hashtag symbol (#) is associated with one or more keywords to facilitate thematic searches in a blog or social network<sup>148</sup> (Source - personal screenshot)

Another interesting aspect to take into account when managing the content of this social media is undoubtedly, as with Facebook, the creation of themed and periodic headings and that of publicising with the hashtag #livelafenice the presence of celebrities in the Opera House, who usually appear during events.

During my internship, I wanted to create some columns that would enhance the beauty of the theatre, such as #icoloridelafenice or its play of light given by the chandeliers with #lafenicesillumina.

The festive season also helped me in the creation of period-specific content such as the 'Advent calendar' stories, which led the user to follow what was published day by day to discover curiosities about the theatre, events of the weeks or any scotics of the period.

The creation of the columns certainly helped to retain users who were motivated by the desire to learn more and more about that specific opera house topic.

I wanted to have a constant presence on this platform too, and I admit that the use of reels has helped a lot in bringing new audiences to the page, so much so that some videos have

<sup>148</sup> <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-it/> (20/12/2022)

been reposted by pages such as Italy (page of the national tourist board), not to mention the reposts of the Municipality of Venice, Mayor Luigi Brugnaro and Italian government authorities such as Minister Brunetta visiting the Opera House in various situations such as the New Year's Eve Concert.

Instagram is definitely the social network that allows networking the most, through tags and mentions in posts and stories. Everything goes through there and if you want to reach people interested in the world of culture and art, that is the right way.

As we said at the beginning, social media are for socialising and networking. With the events organised by La Fenice this happens, because it starts with the theatre, and then reaches the municipality, other cultural bodies that collaborate on certain events (the Ugo and Olga Levi Foundation has already been mentioned), to fashion houses that rent the theatre for private events (e.g. Dior, which organised a concert plus dinner in March 2022), and not forgetting the performers who perform there (who are not the musicians employed by contract in the orchestra) such as conductors, singers for individual productions, directors, set designers, costume designers, etc.

A dense spider's web that, on closer inspection, leaves the city of Venice and crosses the borders of other states to reach individual performers or large companies that want to organise their own exclusive party there.

All this, more than on other social networks, travels on Instagram and leads to greater visibility.

If, therefore, you want to aim to be seen and to be taken into consideration by a young but mature audience that could become regular spectators, that is where you should aim, or at least that is where I would aim.

Despite the fact that, as we will see later in the data analysis, Facebook's audience is significantly larger than Instagram's in numerical terms, one should not forget the years of difference between the birth of the two pages on the two platforms and the fact that one was used much more than the other.

### 4.1.3 Twitter

Twitter is a social network as peculiar as it is, for me, difficult to understand.

I have always seen it as a kind of diary or a collector of thoughts, mainly used by political or high-ranking personalities.

Usually, I have rarely seen it used by middle-class people; and by used I mean that they publish content and are not merely passive observers of the scene.

I must say that The Phoenix makes diligent use of this platform.

As with Facebook and Instagram, the day's posts start with a good morning that attracts a lot of likes and retweets from users.

The day's schedule then continues with about 5/6 posts that vary depending on what you want to publicise, whether concerts, operas or activities.



Fig. 39: the Twitter homepage of La Fenice Opera House (Source - personal screenshot)



As with Facebook, the Almanac of the Day is also posted here, with trivia about the specific day. This is usually light content, which attracts the user because he is intrigued by the story the piece tells and returns to the profile even the next day because he wants to feed his desire to know.

These are quick posts: as is well known, Twitter sets a maximum length of 160 characters per post, and this ensures that people do not get bored by an overly long post, but rather scroll down the wall because the brevity of these does not make the things written heavy.

The day of posts usually ends with a good night (and how else?).

A video of classical music is chosen to be posted between 9 and 10 p.m. and accompany users to their rest.



*Fig. 40: one of the daily Opera House posts, a goodnight song greeting followers until the next day (Source - personal screenshot)*

Personally speaking, Twitter is not one of my favourite platforms, but it is certainly a bridge to the various important institutions and personalities there. Suffice it to say that it is the favourite platform of political figures, right up to the Pope.

During my internship I almost never personally published posts on Twitter because, as I said, it is far from my personal vision of communication, but it certainly helps La Fenice to create

new connections and let's not forget that one of its tweets of proximity to Notre Dame after the devastating fire of 2019 made the rounds in all national and international newspapers.



*Fig. 41: one of La Fenice's most famous posts, reported by many Italian and foreign media, the one in support of Notre Dame after the horrendous fire in 2019 (Source - personal screenshot)*

#### 4.1.4 TikTok

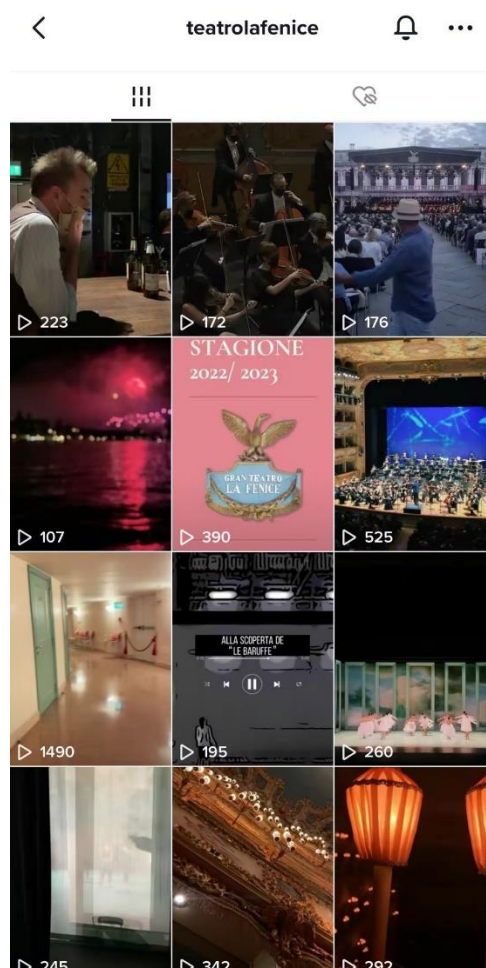
TikTok is the latest social networking site from La Fenice and I would like to have the pleasure of saying that the account was opened thanks to an initiative of mine.

As we have said in previous chapters, TikTok is the new platform made by the very young, but where more and more cultural organisations are entering to reach a new type of target audience.

At the end of September 2021, inspired by what the Chateaux de Versailles had done on the platform, I decided that it might be interesting to push an opera house, an institution many

times seen as 'old' by the new generations, into this world dotted with creators who become famous thanks to simple choreographies.

So, talking it over with my company tutor, Dr. Pietro Tessarin, we decided to start this new adventure and to publish videos with a certain cadence that would be short extracts of concerts or mini tours that would enhance the beauty of the theatre.



*Fig. 42: La Fenice's homepage and latest TikTok videos*

Although we were the first to open such a profile on TikTok among all the opera foundations in Italy (even before La Scala), it must be said that during the period of my internship the results were present but small.

Unfortunately, TikTok is a platform that seeks the different and the new, and although I had a lot of ideas about this, one always has to come up against the reality that one cannot always do what one wants or desires.

So I had to scale back my ideas and try to figure out what I could do that didn't pass into the banal or the already seen a million times.

It was definitely not an easy undertaking, but it was an attempt that had not yet been made in Italy and I am happy that it all started with me, there in the theatre as an intern.

To date, TikTok's profile has been left a bit to one side. Unfortunately, it is not easy to manage, and especially to create content, for all these platforms on your own and at the moment only my former company tutor, whom I was working alongside, is in charge of the digital part.

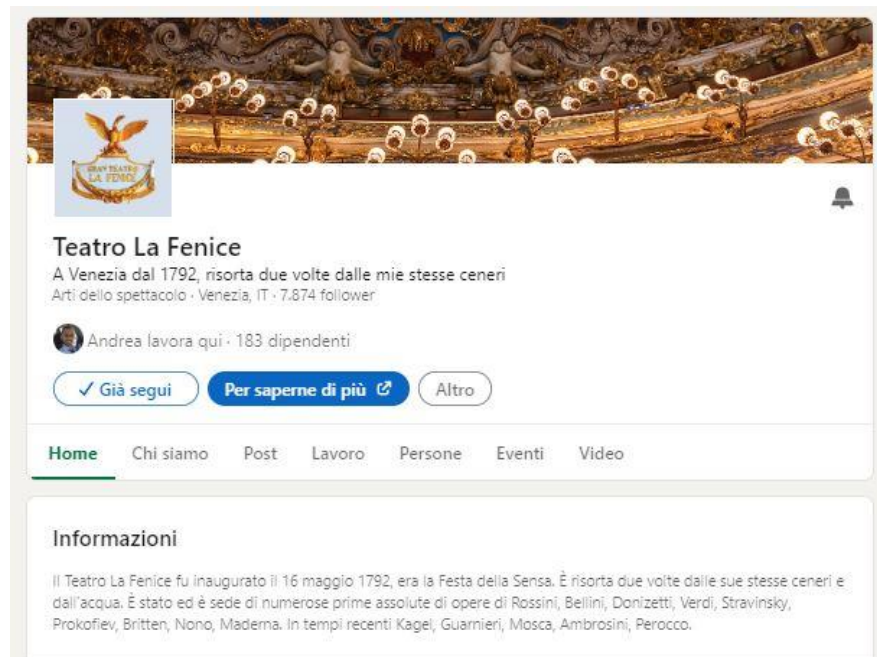
I hope that the profile will not be closed altogether because I am convinced that it still has a lot of potential and could bring a new type of audience to the opera house, which suffers from a lack of young people in its theatres... of course, if we consider the normal evenings and not those with discounts for the under-35s!

#### 4.1.5 LinkedIn

LinkedIn, as said at the beginning of my paper, was one of the first socials to enter the scene in the history of social media.

Halfway between a social and a job search platform, the types of news reported here are not, as with Instagram, of an aesthetic and purely photographic/entertaining nature, but are intended to report important news about events and the progress, in this case, of La Fenice Opera House.

With more than 7,800 followers on its page, La Fenice Opera House is one of the most followed opera foundation pages on the platform and has 183 of its 300 employees (a good number, considering that many will not have this kind of social).



*Fig 43: the homepage of the LinkedIn page of La Fenice Opera House (Source - personal screenshot)*

Talking about the posts that are shared on the platform, it is at least a post every day or two days concerning the events happening in the theatre, the events on the programme such as operas and symphony concerts, the institutional trips of members of the foundation, up to the meetings in preparation for performances outside the theatre walls.

In practice, everything is shown that might be of interest to a public interested in another vision of the Opera House, less frivolous and more focused on the world of work and valuable contribution to what the institution is.

Below is an example of what La Fenice posts on this platform:



*Fig. 44: example of a post showing La Fenice's institutional activities, in this case, at the Italian Embassy in Berlin (Source - personal screenshot)*

## 4.1.6 YouTube

Last but not least, La Fenice's YouTube channel, which is the true admiral of the entire social crew.

With 121,000 subscribers, it is the first channel in Italy among opera-symphonic foundations and is a real boast of the Opera House.

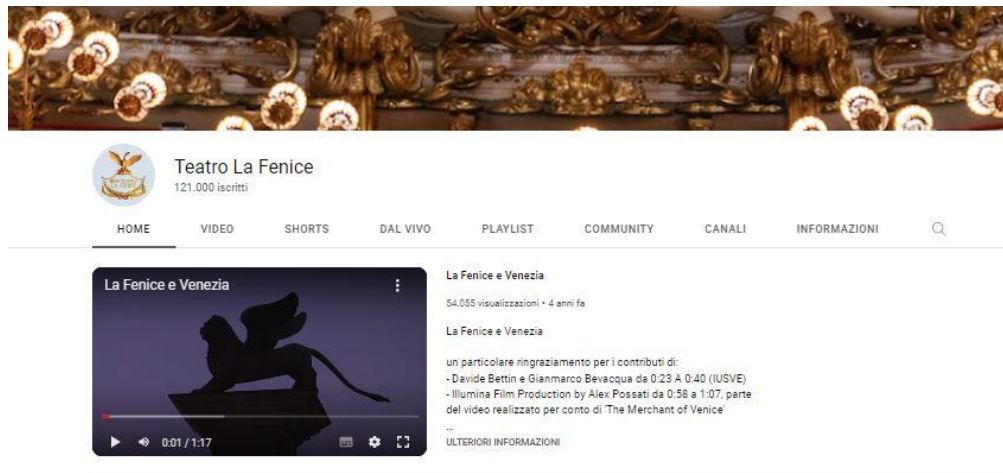


Fig. 45: the homepage of La Fenice's YouTube channel, with the number of subscribers and a video presentation (Source - personal screenshot)

As with all YouTube channels, inside there are various videos divided into sections, ranging from excerpts of symphonic music concerts and operas to the education section dedicated to children and their approach to the world of music.

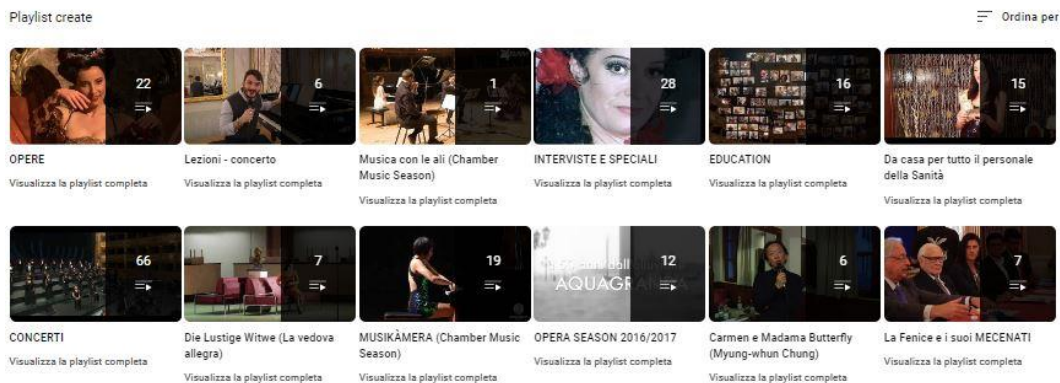


Fig. 46: Some of the video playlists in the channel (Source - personal screenshot)

The channel is updated monthly with videos from the latest performances or even repertoire audios of great historical importance such as Puccini's 1907 salute to the United States of America.

Not to be forgotten, among the videos offered on the platform, are the various interviews with the personalities who visit the Opera House such as the various conductors who take part in the various performances offered during the season, the singers of the various operas,

and all the hype surrounding the New Year's Concert, the other very important stage that sees Venice as the Italian standard-bearer of this tradition that has Vienna's New Year's Concert as its competitor.

Certainly, the platform had a great revival during the pandemic, when people could no longer go to see the live shows, but those planned were brought to the screens of thousands of people through streaming, so they could not miss the opportunity to see some beauty in such a dark time as the lockdown.



## 5 Data analysis of the three most used social platforms by La Fenice: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter

This last chapter will be useful as it will analyse in a concrete way, through graphs and data, what are the numbers of La Fenice Opera House.

If in the previous chapter I had illustrated the "literary" and social essence that is used in the various platforms, how the posts are made, the type of language that is used and the people you want to reach, here I will show in a real way who the followers are, where they come from, the gender most present on the various profiles and all those data that most people ignore the existence but that are of vital importance for a social media manager and for the work he will do in the future.

We can say that analysing the data, even if most of the times in an almost hasty way because working time doesn't always allow it, can help the Social Media Manager to correct the shot and give that particular audience what they want.

To give a small example: if the purely aesthetic photos of the Opera House are more popular on Instagram than the shots of the company of a certain show, the Social Media Manager knows that in the downtime when he doesn't have to advertise new events and thus bring a certain amount of water to his mill, he will have to post many more aesthetic photos rather than historical facts or the so-called "It happens today", which instead are very popular on other types of platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Finally, I will show the change in numbers achieved on a certain platform that is Instagram during my six-month internship in the digital department of the Press Office and how they tried to maintain these numbers after the end of it, because once the stakes are raised, due to an extra hand, there is no turning back... or rather, you can but it is highly inadvisable and counterproductive.

## 5.1 The data from La Fenice: the current situation

In this chapter, as previously mentioned, the data of La Fenice Opera House will be analysed with reference to the three most used and most important social networks of the opera house, namely Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

In order to better understand the performance of the major social platforms of the La Fenice opera house, I was allowed to get the data directly from the source, i.e. through the extrapolation of CSV tables from Meta (Business Suite) and Twitter (Twitter Desk) Insights reports.

This data is more qualitative than quantitative, so figuring out which posts did better at the expense of others, quantitative.

Therefore, we wanted to show over a two-year period, from January 2021 to the end of November/beginning of December 2022, how the various platforms responded in terms of coverage, visits to the page/profile, and follower increase to the arrival from September 2021 of a new person within the staff of the La Fenice Press Office and, specifically, in the digital sector.

To sum up what has been said so far, in simple words, quantitative data provide the figures that demonstrate the overall general points of your research, while qualitative data provide the details and insights needed to fully understand its implications.

The first ones will be analysed here.

So, the aim of this chapter is not to compare the use of social networks with respect to other museums or cultural organisations in the city, but to show how the presence of a good communication team is necessary nowadays for every cultural organisation in Italy.

As can be seen from the previous chapters, the figure of the social media manager is not yet fully present in many Italian institutions (see the example and history of the National Museum of Villa Pisani in comparison with Palazzo Grimani) and with these data represented in the form of graphs, I would like to point out how things have changed in the period from January 2021 to December 2022, when the opera house went from having one

person managing six different platforms to having two people sharing the work from September 2021 until February 2022 and from September 2022 onwards.

Summarising what has been said so far, digital innovation is penetrating museums mainly with communication tools such as the website, social networks and newsletters. The analysis of the sample of museums carried out by the Osservatorio Innovazione Digitale nei Beni e Attività Culturali (Digital Innovation in Cultural Heritage and Activities Observatory) in 2016 shows that 52% of museums have at least one account on social networks; only 13% are present in the three most popular ones. Facebook has the highest presence (51%), followed by Twitter (31%) and Instagram (15%). Even the 10% of museums that do not have a website are active on Facebook.

“Cultural institutions today face a double challenge: it is not enough to attract visitors, but they need to find a way to communicate their heritage in a new way, which brings it closer to the knowledge and experience needs of citizens and tourists. Many institutions have taken up the challenge to transform themselves to become more efficient and speak to new and old audiences. Digital innovation, which has brought about a radical change in market paradigms in recent years, could now represent a fundamental factor of transformation for the cultural sector”

(Michela Arnaboldi, Scientific Director of the Osservatorio Innovazione Digitale nei Beni e Attività Culturali)

It is therefore evident to show in a tangible way, i.e. through concert data, how it is not only necessary to have this figure in 2022 within one's own organic team, but how - for realities such as La Fenice that do not always have the classic 9-18 office hours - more than one person is needed to be available not only to do all the programming and management work, but also to stay for events and shows that go outside the usual hours and that may, in some way, affect a person's private life.

As Dr. Tessarin said in the interview in Chapter 3, having another person to count on is necessary in order to bring 'home' the best possible result and, above all, to share such an amount of work that other smaller or different cultural realities hardly have.

It will therefore be shown below the trend of certain aspects linked to social analysis such as coverage, page and profile visits, new likes and followers and in general the type of audience that follows the pages from the date of their creation to today (December 2022).

Data analysis is a process of telling, processing and representing data in order to support a range of strategic decisions. This definition, while simplistic, encompasses a vast world composed of processes and people. Processes are all the routines and operations that must be carried out to collect data, process it in a more or less structured manner, and represent it. People, on the other hand, are all the individuals who take part in the processes just described, as well as other individuals indirectly involved: often those who do the data analysis are not the ones who actually make the decisions. Data analysis consists of several steps, although no hierarchical scale of importance can be identified: all have equal weight and follow a precise sequence.<sup>149</sup>

There is, however, one stage that, in the opinion of the writer, is surely the most important of all: goal setting. Often, this is treated superficially, resulting in the emergence of problems in the course of the analysis. For the moment, it is sufficient to point out that the objectives of the analysis must be real and attainable, clear and understandable to those performing the entire process.

The first part of the data analysis process is collection. Specifically, this phase includes all those operations aimed at obtaining as much information as possible. The second phase of the data analysis process is processing, that is, all those operations through which the data are aggregated and analyzed in order to be able to give an accurate answer to the research objectives. Often, when working online, the processing phase is very small: the user is unlikely to be working with raw data (Facebook's CSV reports are an example) and increasingly has information already presented graphically (e.g., Facebook's Insights).

The end point of the analysis process is the presentation of the data. This stage includes all those operations that aim to graphically present the results of the analysis and to provide a set of qualitative insights in order to initiate a moment of reflection and discussion about the possible causes and consequences of a certain value of a certain variable, or set of variables, and the definition of a strategic line and course of action. Representing the data may seem simple, but one must always keep in mind who is the ultimate recipient of the work.

Integrated web channel management begins with an analytical part, namely the analysis of data; a strategic part, with the definition of high-level strategies; and an operational part, which consists of the practical implementation of strategies. The analytical phase is the first

---

<sup>149</sup> De Gottardo F., D'Amore A., Gasparotti A., Raimondi Cominesi A. con la collaborazione di Giannini F., Colella P. e D'Eredità A., *Comunicare la cultura online: una guida pratica per i musei - Progettazione di siti web, content management, social media e analisi dei risultati*, 2014, p. 131

and has as its output a set of data and information that define, more or less in depth, the scenario in which you operate. Usually, one is able to figure out if someone is talking online about a museum if there are other channels open by fans and enthusiasts beyond those already activated. Often, you can identify a specific target audience that is talking about a museum and infer what the demographic, social, and behavioral characteristics are online and offline. At a deeper level, a qualitative analysis can be conducted, assessing, for example, the content of discussions and the meanings developed. This stage assumes a certain level of knowledge about one's target audience and the characteristics of the museum in question. However, the journey is not finished, as it is necessary to develop a moment of verification on the achievement of the qualitative and quantitative objectives that were set. In this last, again analytical phase, it makes sense to analyze the data again in order to make all the appropriate evaluations.

Data analysis is characterized by two approaches: one qualitative and one quantitative, where Qualitative analysis means an unstructured process guided by a person's free intuition. The goal of this type of approach is to carry out a macro analysis of the available data and, based on experience and expertise, develop a series of hypotheses and conjectures. These will be confirmed or disproved by quantitative analyses, which are performed precisely to be able to represent with numbers and data a precise aspect of a previously developed scenario or hypothesis. On the network, these two approaches are carried out in parallel and sometimes intertwine.

### 5.1.1 How Facebook's data has changed in a year

Let us now look at some of the Facebook and Instagram Insights metrics of La Fenice Opera House from January 2021 to early December 2022.

Before, however, commenting on the results of the changes in these two years, that is, when the social office of the theatre saw the expansion of its workforce, we need to understand what the metrics we are going to analyse consist of, which are more or less similar for both Facebook and Instagram, as they are both from the same Meta family.

Here is a small summary of what will be explained in the course of this paragraph.

Facebook and Instagram Insights are the set of data and information that can be extrapolated from the traffic that is generated on a Page, the posts, videos, events and advertisements that have been placed<sup>150</sup>.

This is data about the people who follow profiles and the type of interaction they have with them. Some of it is statistical data from Facebook, others are real data. Before going into the details and analysing the individual data, it is worth explaining a few basic concepts regarding Facebook Analytics.

First of all, Facebook Insights can be viewed in the section of the Facebook page of the same name on the left-hand side under 'Manage Page'. They are free of charge and, in addition, with Facebook Insights management you can: export the data and information to your PC by clicking on 'Export data' in the top right-hand corner. This creates automatic Facebook and Instagram insights reports, which are much more detailed and punctual and can immediately reveal the performance and engagement of the various posts by varying the time frame in which the data is displayed (Today, Yesterday, Last 7 days, Last 28 days, Last 90 days and Custom).

The Facebook Insights data and statistics offered by these tabs must always be compared with each other in order to obtain actions from the audience, in line with the objectives, and to implement effective and strategic communication.

These are the metrics we are going to look at in the Facebook results section and in those of Instagram<sup>151</sup>:

- Facebook Page Coverage: this is the number of people who have viewed any of the content on the Page or related to the Page, including posts, stories, listings, social information from people interacting with the Page, and more. Coverage is different from impressions, which may include multiple views of posts by the same people. This metric is an estimate.
- Instagram coverage: the number of unique accounts that have viewed one of the posts or one of the stories at least once. Coverage is different from impressions, which could include multiple views of your posts by the same account. This metric is an estimate.
- Facebook Page Visits: i.e. the number of times your Facebook Page has been visited.

---

<sup>150</sup> <https://www.digital-coach.com/it/facebook-insights/> (06/12/2022)

<sup>151</sup> [https://m.facebook.com/help/274400362581037/?locale=it\\_IT&\\_rdr](https://m.facebook.com/help/274400362581037/?locale=it_IT&_rdr) (06/12/2022)

- Visits to your Instagram profile: this is the number of times your Instagram profile has been visited.
- New Likes on Facebook Page: the number of new likes on your Facebook Page.

### Facebook page visits 2021

We begin this commentary on La Fenice data with the trend of visits to the Facebook page during 2021.

As can be seen, the year starts with a lot of visits due to the strong influx of visitors brought by the posts concerning the New Year's Concert (the most important event for the Theatre together with the November Première).

From 1 January, the figures began to fall, with a second peak in April, when La Fenice began showing scheduled performances live on YouTube streaming due to the closures for the containment of the Covid-19 virus, which did not allow spectators to return to the theatre until after the summer.

From April onwards, there is a decline in viewings until September 2021, when La Fenice was given the opportunity to have an extra person on staff dealing with social media.

The possibility of dividing the work between several people and, therefore, being able to have one person fully available for a limited number of platforms and another for the others certainly helped as visits continued to grow until the end of the year, surpassing the visits obtained at the beginning of the year with the New Year's Concert publications.

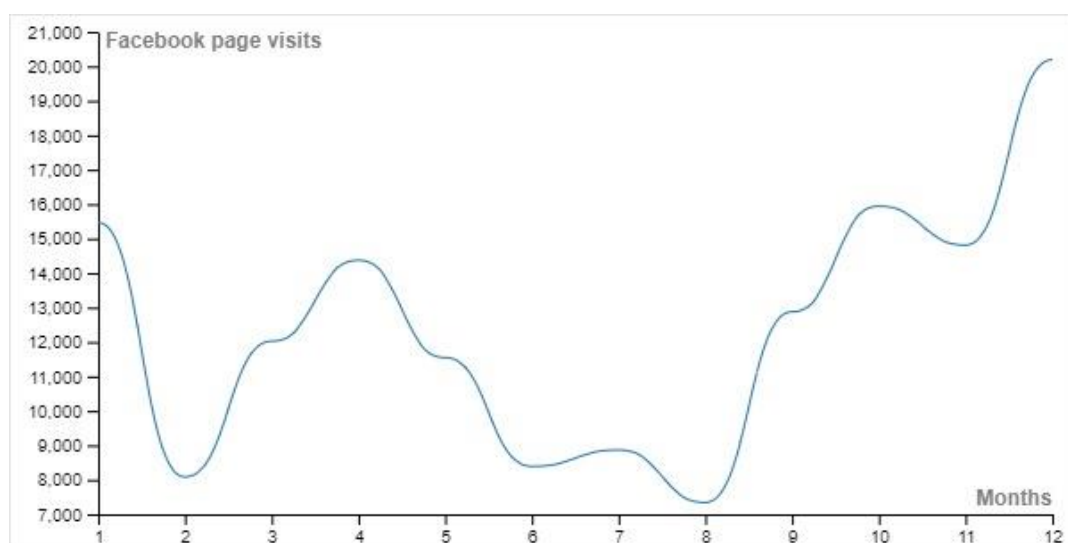


Fig. 47: The visits of the La Fenice Facebook page in 2021

## Facebook page visits 2022

The year 2022 saw even more ups and downs.

If the year had started 'great' with a peak in visits, again due to the New Year's Concert, from February onwards we saw a continuous and steady phase that began with a sharp drop, predictable because the other events on the calendar hardly achieve the numbers of New Year's Eve, which then continued until June.

In fact, from the end of February 2022 until September 2022, the Office saw the removal of one of the two people managing social media, thus having a new period in which one person had to manage all 6 of La Fenice's social platforms.

With the arrival of summer and September in which a new figure returned to manage the socials, there was a new upturn in visits that continued until December.

In fact, the descent in December 2022 is not to be taken into account as the available data only goes up to the first week of the month, thus not giving a complete view of the month.

As one can understand, an extra person in one's staff is not only necessary for organisational matters, but also for results.

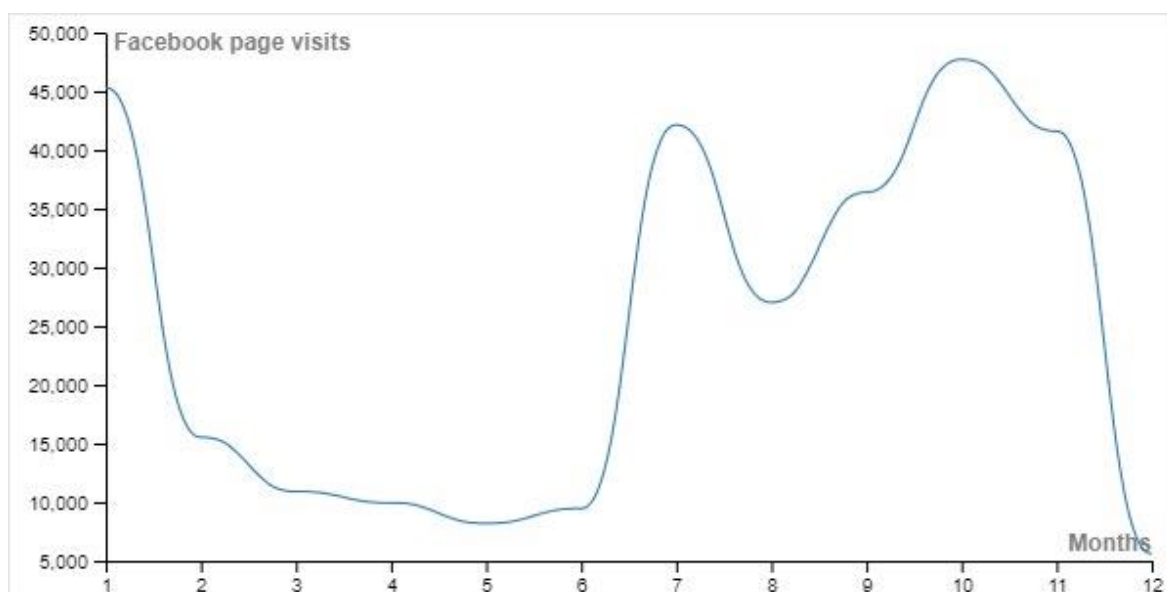


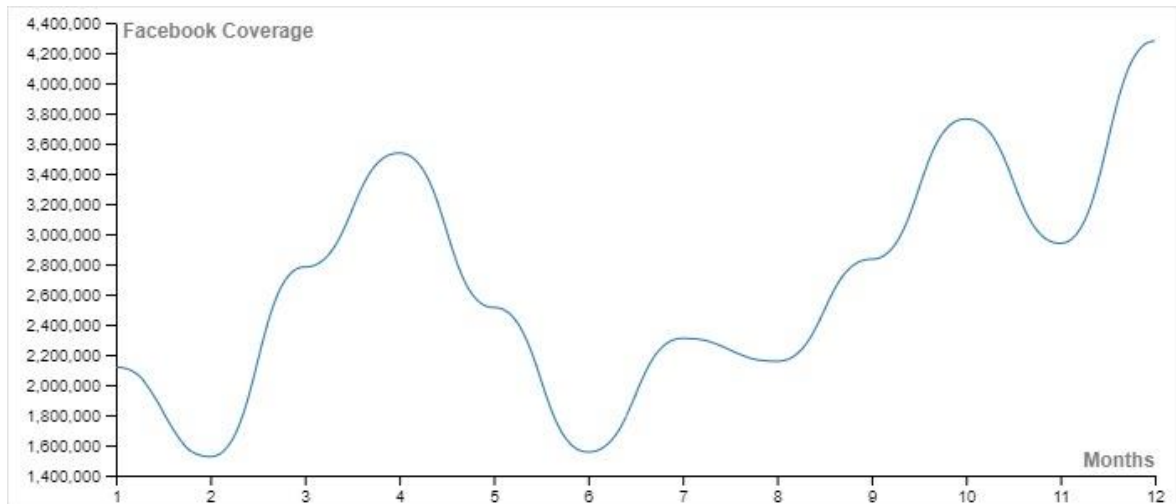
Fig. 48: The visits of the La Fenice Facebook page in 2022



## Facebook page coverage 2021

Looking at the Facebook 2021 coverage, the trend and results can only be similar to those of the visits just seen.

Although here the peak, before the second person in the office, occurs in April and not in January with the posts of the New Year's Concert, the growth in results from September 2021 onwards to the peak of the year in December 2021 is always clearly visible.



*Fig. 49: The coverage of the La Fenice Facebook page in 2021*

## Facebook page coverage 2022

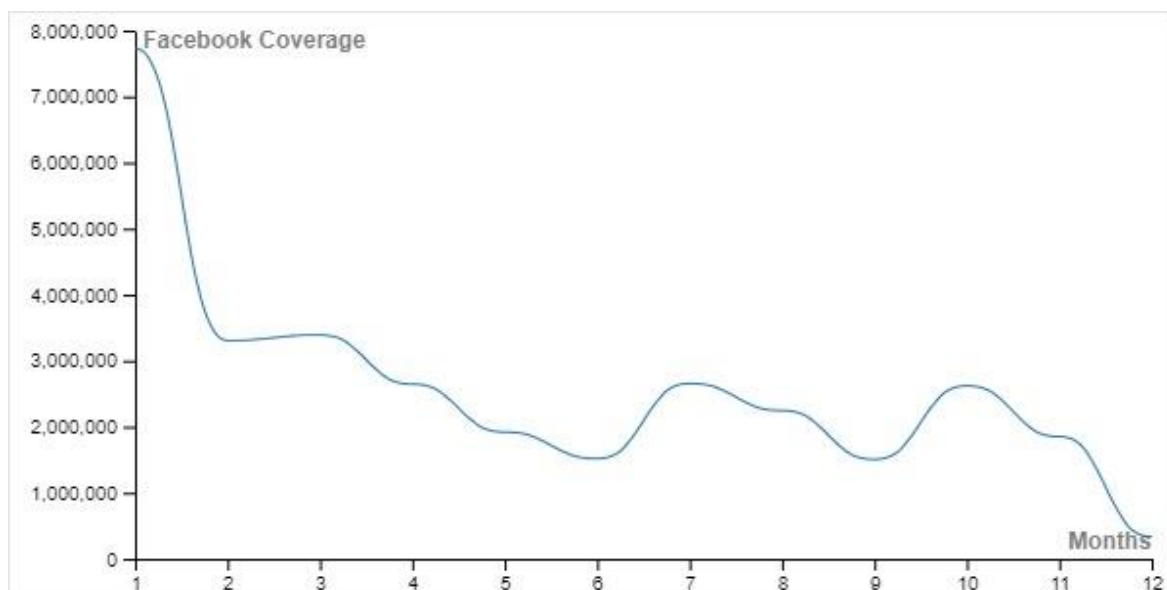
By contrast, the trend for the year 2022 was different.

Despite the boom in January 2022, which was considerably higher than in January 2021, the year saw a decline in coverage, although, as with the 2022 visits, the figures for December 2022 should not be taken too closely as they refer only to the first week of the month.

In fact, there was no upward trend or maintenance of coverage throughout the year, but despite the data being higher than in 2021 throughout the period, there were no other peaks.

It should always be kept in mind that during the period 2021-2022, Page has grown in the number of people following it, and consequently the coverage and visitation figures also vary. In spite of this, it seems that 2021 brought a greater dynamism in the results despite the lower numbers, compared to 2022, which started with a coverage of almost 8 million users until settling during the whole year between 1.5 million and 3.5 million, showing how

even the communication of the November Premiere did not manage to bring in more audience than the traditional posts.



*Fig. 50: The coverage of the La Fenice Facebook page in 2022*

## 5.1.2 The growth of Instagram: how more posts change the game

### Instagram page visits 2021

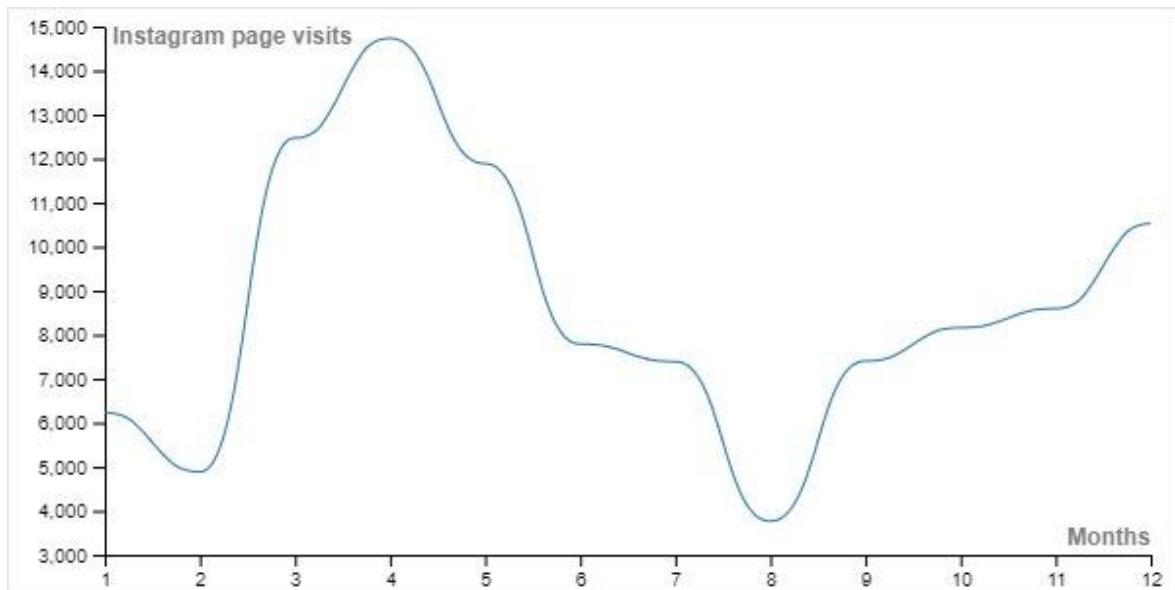
As with the Facebook page of La Fenice Opera House, the visits of the Instagram page are also more or less similar to those of the other Meta platform.

Here, too, it starts with the usual post of the New Year's Concerts until the peak in April, when the theatre showed its concerts live on YouTube due to the closures imposed by the Covid-19 virus containment measures.

The live broadcasts were a success, but with the arrival of summer (as normal), the events offered by La Fenice decreased, leading to a drop in visits to the page.

Then, as we have already seen on Facebook, there has been a growth since September 2021, when there was a new addition to the office that exceeded the visits obtained for the New Year 2021 posts.

One thing must be made clear: since September 2021, the posts published every day have increased from a couple of publications per week to two per day, also making use of new formats such as reels. This has led to increased visibility.



*Fig. 51: The Instagram profile visits of the La Fenice in 2021*

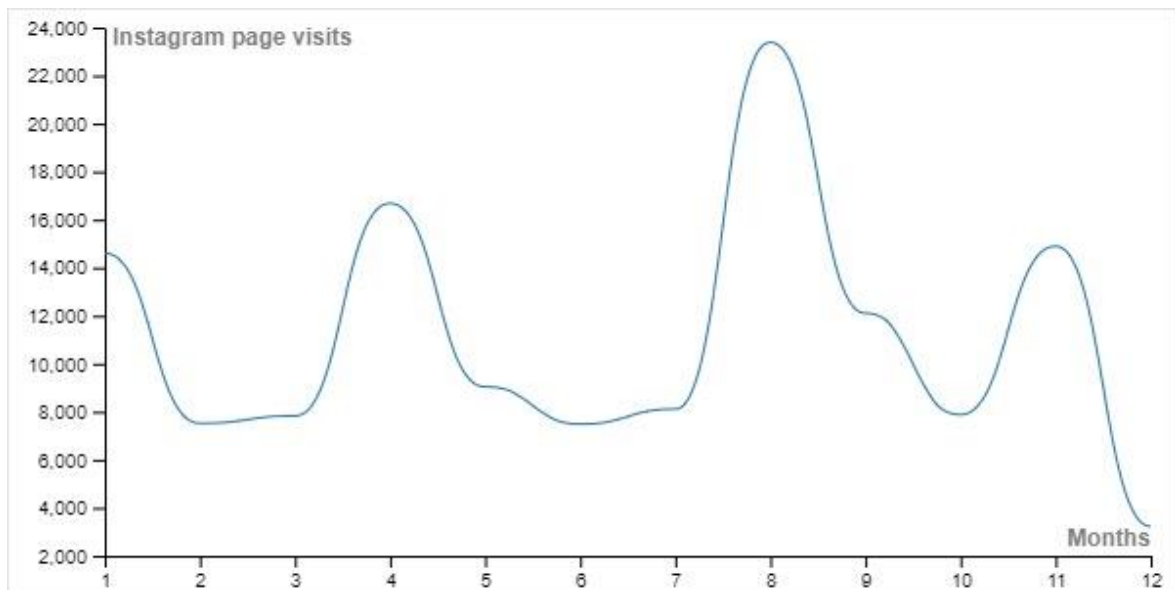
#### Instagram page views 2022

The year 2022 saw certainly higher numbers than 2021, thanks to the use of the aforementioned reels, which having a viewing home of their own allow them to be viewed by more people, followers and otherwise.

The year, although with higher numbers, saw a semi-constant trend, with peaks in April and August.

Although the office was without a resource until September 2022, the new management of the page with more daily posts, more stories and more reels resulted in many more visits and a final peak of the year in November 2022 to coincide with the First.

Again, the figures for December are not to be taken into account because they only include the first week of the month.



*Fig. 52: The Instagram profile visits of the La Fenice in 2022*

### Instagram page coverage 2021

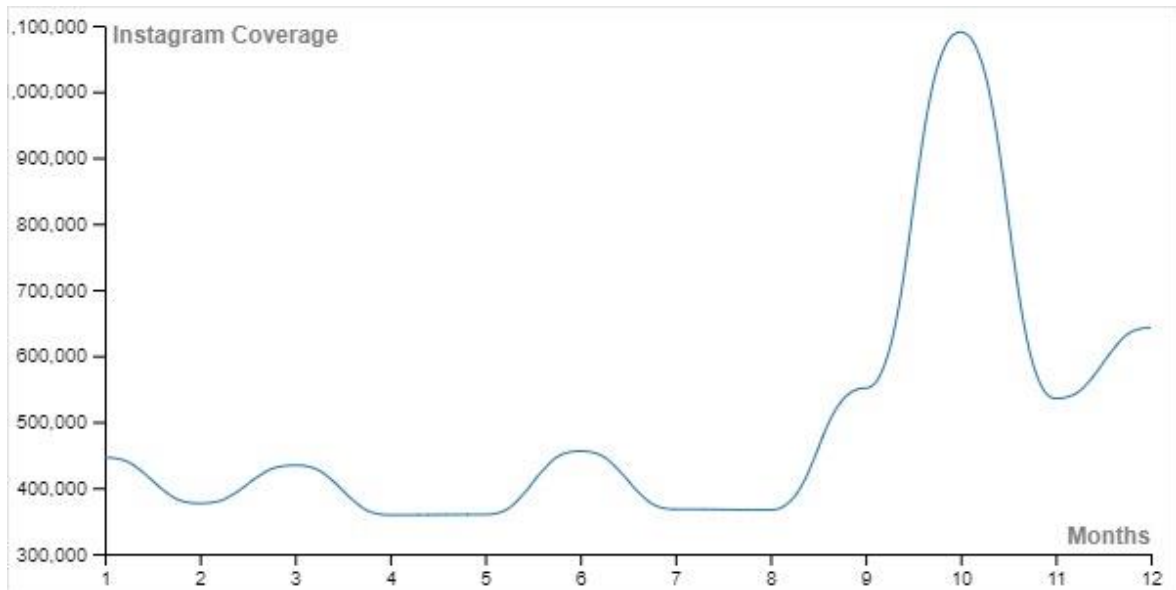
The coverage, unlike the visits, shows a very different kind of results.

Starting from a more or less homogeneous coverage throughout the beginning of 2021, we see that in October 2021 we reach an audience of more than one million people.

This is because one of the reels published by the theatre, a tool that had been in use for just over a month, reached more than 111,000 views, the highest result for a reel so far, December 2022.

This also shows how the arrival of a new person to manage the page independently, relieving the other colleague of work, helped in the creativity and creation of new content.

The coverage subsequently had lower results, although considerably higher than the average for the rest of the year before September 2022.



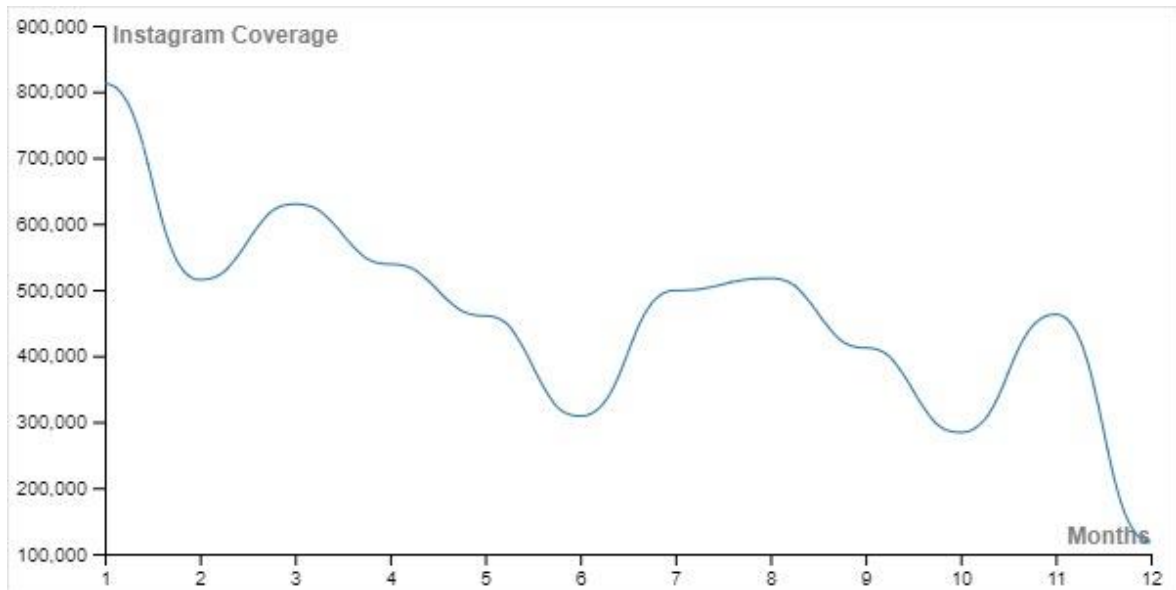
*Fig. 53: The Instagram profile coverage of the La Fenice in 2021*

### Instagram page coverage 2022

The trend of 2022 Instagram Page coverage saw an increase in numbers, although it was no longer able to touch or exceed the October 2021 result.

The coverage throughout the year went down from a result of more than 800,000 in January 2022, again for the New Year's Concert posts, to a more or less constant trend between 300,000 and 600,000.

Even the premiere of November 2022 did not manage to bring the results back to the January 2022 numbers and was slightly lower than in November 2021.



*Fig. 54: The Instagram profile coverage of the La Fenice in 2022*

From these results, it is easy to see how an extra person in the workforce and a change in scheduling/content has helped the results in terms of both views and coverage to grow quickly and semi-continuously.

As with all social, every post you publish has its own story and its own power of attraction. When you post something, whether it is a video or a photo or whether it has as its theme a concert, an opera or the theatre itself, you can never predict the outcome 100 per cent. There are posts that can go viral despite their simplicity (such as Maestro Mario Venzago's reel, which to date has the most views) or others that are more elaborate and do not give the desired result.

Sometimes it is also a matter of luck.



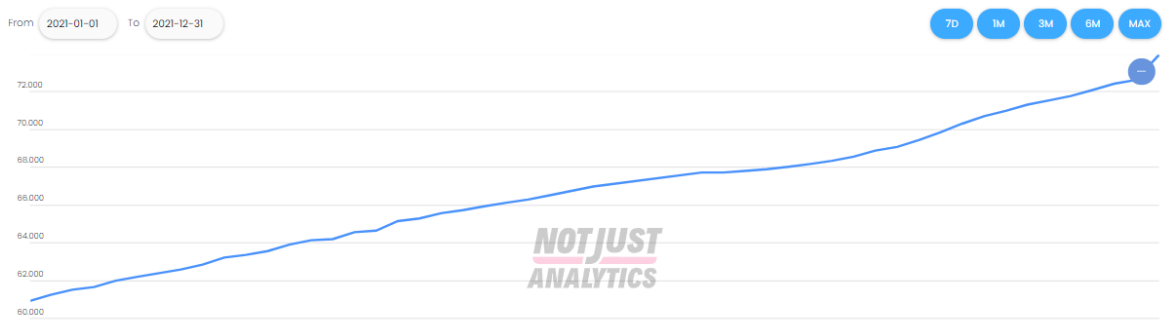
*Fig. 55: Maestro Mario Venzago's reel, which in its simplicity won over the audience (Source - personal screenshot) (Source - personal screenshot)*

Through the Not Just Analytics tool, it is possible to see the trend of any Instagram profile for free by entering only the user name.

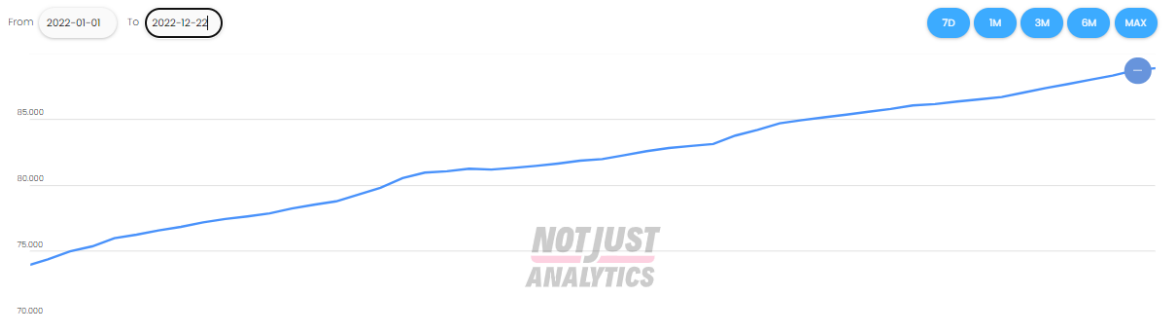
With this platform, I wanted to see the trend of the social during the year 2021 and 2022 and to understand through a WordCloud the most used hashtags.

As can be seen from the two graphs below, during both 2021 and 2022, the growth in the number of followers was almost the same, with a gain of just over 10,000 followers per year.

A constant growth, therefore, in both, which does not differ in terms of results and shows that from the point of view of followers, the data has hardly changed, contrary to the coverage and visits to the Page.



*Fig. 56: The growth of followers of La Fenice opera house's Instagram profile in the period 01 January 2021 - 31 December 2021 (Source – Not Just Analytics)*



*Fig. 57: The growth of followers of La Fenice opera house's Instagram profile in the period 01 January 2022 - 31 December 2022 (Source – Not Just Analytics)*

Among the most used hashtags, however, we find on the podium the hashtag #teatrolafenice, followed by #venezia and #italia. The use of these three keywords is very predictable, one being the opera theatre hashtag and the others the geolocation hashtag.

As can be seen, since these searches were made during the Christmas period 2022, the other hashtags most used by La Fenice are in theme with the period, declining the search key Christmas with the most varied declinations.

There is no shortage of music-related hashtags such as #orchestrasinfonica and #orchestralife.

As can be seen from the size of the hashtags in the WordCloud, the largest ones are the most used, scaling down in size to the smallest and least used.





into consideration (November 2021, January 2022 and November 2022) there was an extra person in the office.

This is to show how, yes, in social media there is always effective growth if a profile is followed properly, but how the presence of more people in the same area can increase productivity and improve both qualitative and quantitative results.

It is quite easy to see what changes we are going to see through these screens, namely:

- The number of tweets made during the given month;
- The total views of tweets;
- Profile visits;
- Profile mentions;
- New followers acquired.

It is also possible to observe which was the most popular tweet, the most popular mention, the most popular follower and finally the most popular tweet with multimedia content (considering that tweets can contain only text or also videos and photos).

As was done for the two Meta platforms, it is interesting to understand what specifically are the insights that Twitter Analytics shows.

First of all, Twitter Analytics is the set of data and metrics that manage to track the performance of any Twitter account. These metrics include those already mentioned above, which will be explained more specifically here.<sup>152</sup>

- Mentions: tweets that include a mention of the account, i.e. all those mentions of other profiles that have mentioned the name in their posts;
- Impressions: corresponds to the number of times a tweet has been viewed by other users;
- Best tweets: each month the best content is reported in order to analyse the characteristics of the most successful tweets in order to continue to improve and avoid publishing those that have received less interaction;
- Follower growth: in this metric, you can track followers, new followers, those you have gained or lost.

---

<sup>152</sup> <https://www.digital-coach.com/it/blog/case-histories/twitter-analytics/> (10/01/2023)

Starting with January 2021, the data we are given is more sparse than for the following months, but you can see (in any case) some great numbers among the tweet views, which exceed 2.1 million, and a good number of new followers.

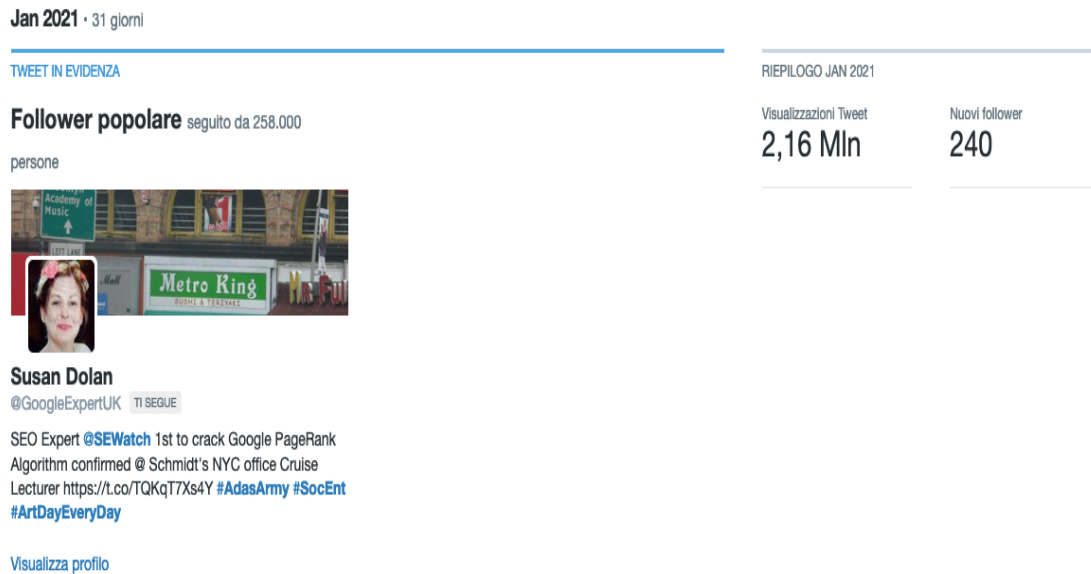


Fig. 59: La Fenice opera house's Twitter profile dashboard with data for January 2021.

Looking at January 2022, although in this case we have more data available, it is immediately visible that although the views of the tweets have remained more or less the same, the number of followers has quadrupled compared to the previous year, and it is possible to note that among the most popular posts, even if it is a post-mention, it is possible to see something related to the famous New Year's Eve Concert, which is broadcast every year on Rai 1, at 12.20 p.m., in Eurovision.

Among the most popular tweets we note 'Good morning' and 'Good night', types of content already proposed on other platforms, as seen in Chapter 4, and which always show great appreciation by the public.

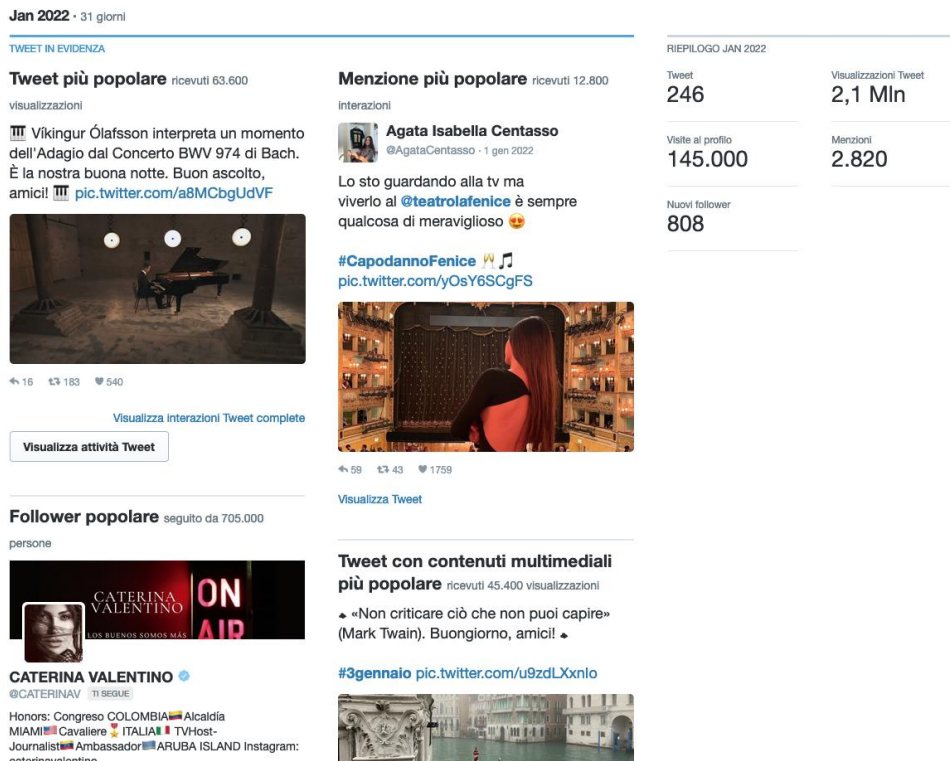


Fig. 60: La Fenice opera house's Twitter profile dashboard with data for January 2022.

Significant changes can also be observed in November 2021 and November 2022.

Starting with the basic metrics, the number of tweets increased by one hundred, showing a greater activity of post-production and considering that in both periods under consideration the Theatre was open with normal activity, after the previous closures and restrictions until the early autumn of 2021.

Post views themselves increased from 1.51 million to 1.85 million, showing how La Fenice manages to keep this parameter high. Profile visits increased by just under 40 thousand, from 64 thousand in November 2021 to 100 thousand in November 2022.

The last figure to see a positive change was new followers, which doubled in the same period of the two different years. The only figure, among these, that is slightly down in the ratio of the two months of November 2021 and 2022 are profile mentions, which see a difference of just over 200 fewer mentions in 2022.

Among the most popular tweets, it is possible to see how in 2021 the classic 'Goodnight' appears, along with quotes from famous musical performers, in this case a phrase by Beethoven.

In 2022, the two most popular tweets have the same musical performer: Ennio Morricone and his unforgettable music, also used for the daily 'Goodnight' from La Fenice.

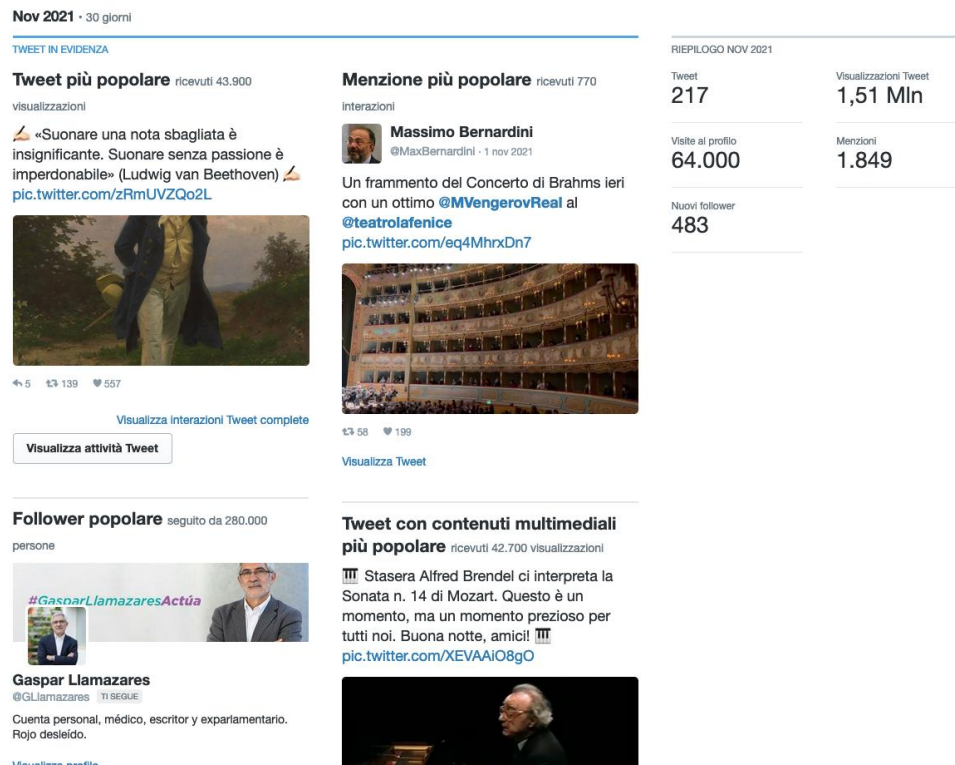


Fig. 61: La Fenice opera house's Twitter profile dashboard with data for November 2021.

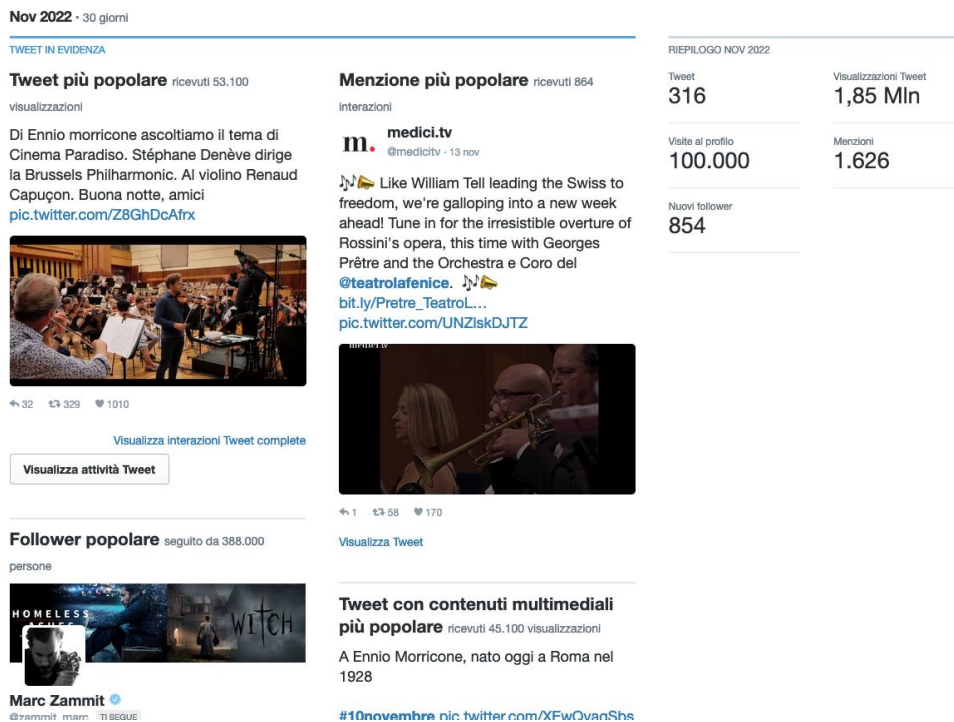


Fig. 62: La Fenice opera house's Twitter profile dashboard with data for November 2022.

As already mentioned in the previous chapters, La Fenice is not the first opera house in Italy in terms of number of followers on this platform, but it is for the engagement it creates and the type of tweets it publishes throughout the day, accompanying users from the "Good morning", to posts updating activities, to narrative posts, to the "Good night" that closes the circle created during the day, in this journey that the theatre's social media managers know how to create between Venice, the concert/opera activity and the music itself.

Wanting to summarise, for a moment, the data that has been shown here of the three most used platforms at a cultural level, it is evident how there has been a growth since January 2021, which continues to this day, and how the increase in publication in the case of Instagram has led to strong benefits.

What we wanted to show through the exposition of this data is how the figure of the social media manager, hence the importance of having more than one in such an organisation, is not only very important but almost vital for the survival of the organisation itself and for making itself known to the rest of the world.

It was possible to observe how the arrival of an extra person in the organisation, first through a university internship in the period from September 2021 to February 2022 and then with recruitment through a competition from September 2022, has benefited what has been and is the organisation's communication and narrative towards the outside world.

As Dr. Tessarin recounted in the interview in Chapter 3, having an extra colleague to work alongside the one already present in this type of activity is of vital importance, especially considering that, unlike a museum, the activities of a theatre do not follow the classic 9-18 office hours.

Thus, the importance of good communication, effective storytelling and the presence of at least one social media manager in every cultural organisation that wants to communicate its presence outside its walls in a digital way, adapted to the needs of the 2020s, is demonstrated.

## Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to show how the figure of a social media manager is not only necessary, but I dare say almost vital for the life and existence of a cultural organisation in the 2020s.

By showing how, in the end, social media have always existed and have evolved over the course of history to become a more integral part of our everyday life, I wanted to give voice to the cultural excellences that use them to a remarkable extent and to the Italian situation that, many times, still leaves them in the background of the very existence of a cultural institution.

An analysis was made not only of the situation and the use of social platforms by vanguard cultural entities such as some of the great American or British museums (take for example MoMA or the Tate), but also of Italian cases such as the Uffizi Galleries or the MART in Rovereto.

The research shows that museums abroad, starting with the Anglo-Saxon area, are leading the way on the various social platforms. Examples are the previously mentioned Metropolitan Museum and MoMA in New York and the Tate in London. Together, these three alone boast a total of more than 33 million followers on all their platforms; practically the population of an average state. Their presence on the platforms is now dated and the Met, for example, is present on almost all existing social networks.

As we have seen and analysed, there are the consumers that we can define as accidental, who take advantage of that consumption to view works in a virtual environment that requires low cultural capital and information processing skills. However, the attention threshold for each work in museums, if the visitor looks at it, is usually well under 40 seconds and hardly includes reading the text. Thinking about it, there are many future lines to work on, as the online environment offers new forms of cultural consumption. The Met is a perfect example of a well-known museum with a solid consumer base on site and online, which has decided to explore new markets.<sup>153</sup>

---

<sup>153</sup> Navarrete T., Villaespesa E., *Digital Heritage Consumption: The Case of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, «magazén»*, Fusions 2, 2020, p. 243

It was then shown how even in Italy, despite the delays and problems still present (especially for state structures that have funding problems), there are virtuous cases such as the Uffizi Galleries, which 'rocked' on TikTok and made use of creators and influencers (such as Martina Socrates and Chiara Ferragni) to bring Generation Z to their halls, but also the museums of the city of Bologna, which called upon the YouTuber Luis Sal, the Egyptian Museum, which landed on rapper Mahmood's video clip, and all the others already mentioned.

Attention was then focused on the city of Venice, on the various cultural entities, specifically museums, that are present on the island and how they use the various social platforms, also considering the possible criticalities due to their management and the funds they have available (the usual gap between public and private).

They were mentioned for their skill in posting in non-traditional languages the National Archaeological Museum of Venice and Palazzo Grimani, both accustomed to the use of memes to narrate their museum activities, and the Gallerie dell'Accademia and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, which instead prefer a more traditional narrative, were mentioned for their prowess in posting with non-traditional languages. The museums mentioned here have a strong following, as has been shown, both on Instagram and Facebook with tens of thousands of followers (just think of how Palazzo Grimani, whose museum size is quite small, exceeds 20,000 followers on Instagram and manages to attract a good portion of the public).

The shortcomings of some smaller museums have also been mentioned, due to a lack of funds, not obviously of will, such as the National Museum of Villa Pisani in Stra; a beautiful villa on the Brenta Riviera, under the same management as the Archaeological Museum and Palazzo Grimani but without a social media manager on its staff. Here we return to the discourse on the need for cultural entities to have a social media manager on their staff, and thus to the gist of this thesis, which sought to show how an entity with an already well-established profile, such as the Fondazione Teatro La Fenice, needed another figure in addition to the one already present to share an increasingly heavy workload.

It was shown how social narrative for a cultural organisation has various possibilities that go beyond purely scientific languages, preferring narration and storytelling, to means that almost mock the sacredness that has always been given to culture: memes. In addition to the aforementioned Venetian museums that make use of it, mention should be made of the



communication of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo and its unconventional mascot: the Jedi Master Yoda, not to mention all the irreverent memes.

There are many different ways in which a cultural organisation can show and tell its story to the general public, as well as the possibilities of conveying its message in different ways with different formats such as texts, photos, videos, podcasts and many others.

In the thesis, I wanted to take as a case study the Fondazione Teatro La Fenice, an opera foundation, at times different from a museum (although it has a museum part and is visited every day by hundreds of tourists for its gold-finished halls) but with the same aim: to publicise the activities, history and beauty that this place has to offer.

Its social profiles are among the excellent ones among the various Italian opera foundations, where the various publications are taken care of every day down to the smallest detail by the social media managers in the Press Office area, who, as explained, have a large amount of work and for whom teamwork is essential for the survival and success of the content.

The intent of this thesis was, therefore, to show how the world of social media is not just 'glitter and sequins', made up of quick and fleeting posts, but there is study, preparation, storytelling and creativity behind it.

Through the interview directly with La Fenice's Social Media Manager, Dr Pietro Tessarin, it was possible to understand all this: the strategy behind each post, the desire to show an unseen opera house, its activities and everything behind the stage. The day-to-day life in the office of a Social Media Manager was also explained, as well as the importance of information (and the truthfulness of it) and having a good team to rely on and share tasks.

All these aspects, which are fundamental in the work of a social media manager, become in turn fundamental in today's cultural communication, in which the cultural organisation leaves its halls and meets, virtually, new people and increasingly younger generations that migrate from the old platforms where the age bar is raised, to have a space of their own and to voice their thoughts.

The social issue, in all its aspects, becomes a field of generational encounters and clashes, where the old communication has to give space to the new one, but always remembering that it speaks to a plurality of audiences and not only to a well-targeted target (at least as far as age is concerned).

See, then, the examples of a few cultural institutions (museums first and foremost) that have pounced on new platforms to reach that younger audience that hardly ever reaches the halls: Generation Z. Leading the way, masterfully, are the Uffizi Galleries and their profile on TikTok. More and more cultural organisations have a profile on the platform to approach an increasingly young audience. Among opera houses, La Scala's TikTok account stands out.

To conclude, it was necessary to show the importance that these tools, whether adored or hated, have nowadays for everyone, not only for the cultural organisations discussed in more detail. It was necessary to show not only the beautiful things and the opportunities they generate, but also the problems, especially related to the psychological aspects of people, many of whom are fragile and easily manoeuvred.

Among the positive aspects, the fact of resetting distances and being able to build a community, even if online, were mentioned. Negatives, on the other hand, included the fear of missing out on something and having to show fake happiness at all costs, thus having repercussions on mental health.

If past eras have been remembered as those of the telegraph, the telephone and computers, ours will go down in history for the ever faster smartphones and social networking, which, for better or worse, will probably accompany us for a long time to come, evolving together with our society.

To say that social networks are necessary for the survival of mankind is certainly wrong, but it is also wrong to say that they are not necessary for the survival of cultural institutions scattered across our territory and, speaking more generally, on this planet.

And one must also ask the question about the future of social media: will they last? And if so, how long? Will we return to a world where we no longer use them? One only has to think of all those platforms that were created and then disappeared, or of the big giants such as Twitter sailing off into a (very possible) sunset. It can be said that ever since billionaire Elon Musk bought the platform, a debate has started between the Tesla founder's fanatical supporters and those who see absolute evil in him and are looking for a way out and a new social landing place. Obviously, alternatives exist, but Twitter's real strength is precisely its singularity.<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>154</sup> Cosimi S., *Fuga da Twitter? Le alternative al social dell'uccellino finito nelle mani di Musk*, La Repubblica, 26.04.2022, [https://www.repubblica.it/tecnologia/2022/04/26/news/fuga\\_da\\_twitter\\_le\\_alternative\\_al\\_social-346972505/](https://www.repubblica.it/tecnologia/2022/04/26/news/fuga_da_twitter_le_alternative_al_social-346972505/) (04/02/2023)

Going back to a purely cultural topic, the period in which people were informed by word of mouth in person or through printed tourist guides can be defined as over, and with my thesis work I wanted to emphasise, which many in the sector have already pointed out, how in Italy we are still lagging behind with respect to the digital communication of these entities. Although everyone now has a web presence with a site, many lack the most common and widely used social platforms.

We need to start with a real revolution, hiring experts in the sector, who know how to manage these platforms but also have the sensitivity to be able to create the right content by merging the right technicalities with the right creativity in a single job.

It was necessary for me, given also my internship experiences during these university years, to draw attention to what I experienced first hand and which is still neglected, in many cases, in our cultural sector left to gather dust and watch time pass by.

Something has been done, but many steps still need to be taken to be able to reach the levels that other countries, with which we often compare ourselves on other issues such as industry, economics and others, have long since reached.

After what I have been able to see and 'touch with my own hands', I too want to believe that cultural institutions in Italy, given the aforementioned excellences that are present in our territory, will be able to reach excellent levels of digitisation, digital communication and presence on social platforms.

# Bibliography

Alberti C., *Il Teatro Carlo Goldoni di Venezia 1979-2009: immagini e memorie sceniche di trent'anni d'attività*, Marsilio Editori, 2009

Agostino D., Arnaboldi M., Diaz Lema M., *New development: COVID-19 as an accelerator of digital transformation in public service delivery. Public Money & Management*, Public Money & Management, 2020

Agostino D., Arnaboldi M., Lorenzini E., *Verso un new normal dei musei post-Covid 19: quale ruolo per il digitale?*, Roma, «Economia della Cultura», n.1, Il Mulino, 2020, pp. 79-83.

Assessorato al Turismo, *Annuario del Turismo 2017*, Città di Venezia, 2017

Assessorato al Turismo, *Annuario del Turismo 2019*, Città di Venezia, 2019

Assessorato al Turismo, *Annuario del Turismo 2020*, Città di Venezia, 2020

Asproni, Patrizia, *Musei social o musei digitali?*, Venezia, Il Giornale delle Fondazioni, Fondazione di Venezia, 15/11/2017, <http://www.ilgiornaledellefondazioni.com/content/musei-social-o-musei-digital>

Bartezzaghi S., *'Gli uffici da ridere così i capolavori con Martina Socrate'*, La Repubblica, Firenze, 12/06/2020 [https://firenze.repubblica.it/cronaca/2020/06/12/news/gli\\_uffici\\_da\\_ridere\\_cosi\\_i\\_capolavori\\_con\\_martina\\_socrate-259053110](https://firenze.repubblica.it/cronaca/2020/06/12/news/gli_uffici_da_ridere_cosi_i_capolavori_con_martina_socrate-259053110)

Biały B., *Social Media - From Social Exchange to Battlefield*, The Cyber Defense Review, vol. 2, no. 2, 2017

Bollo A., *I musei e la sfida della nuova cultura digitale*, Associazione per l'Economia della Cultura, web article, 2012

Bonacini E., *I musei e le nuove frontiere dei social networks: da Facebook a Foursquare e Gowalla*, Fizz - Oltre il marketing culturale, 2010, pp. 1-13

Bonacini E., *Il museo partecipativo sul web: forme di partecipazione dell'utente alla produzione culturale e alla creazione di valore culturale*, IL CAPITALE CULTURALE Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage, 5, pp. 93-125

Branchesi L., Curzi V., Mandarano N. (ed.), *Comunicare il museo oggi. Dalle scelte museologiche al digitale*, Skira, 2016

Campbell T., *Eye Candy: the Best Museum Accounts to Follow on Instagram*, <https://magazine.artland.com/best-museum-instagram-accounts/>

Carlile L., *Development Online: Making the Most of Social Media*, International Institute for Environment and Development, IIED Briefing, 2011

Casarola F., *Musei e social media: esempi virtuosi, buone e cattive pratiche*, Università degli studi di Torino, Tesi Di Laurea Magistrale, 2019.

Çöteli S., *The Impact of New Media on The Forms of Culture: Digital Identity and Digital Culture*, «Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies», 9. 2019, pp. 1-12

Dawson A., *Which museums have the biggest social media followings*, The Art Newspaper, 31/03/2020, <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2020/03/31/which-museums-have-the-biggest-social-media-followings>

De Gottardo F., D'Amore A., Gasparotti A., Raimondi Cominesi A., Giannini F., Colella P. e D'Eredità A., *Comunicare la cultura online: una guida pratica per i musei - Progettazione di siti web, content management, social media e analisi dei risultati*, Tropic del Libro, 2014

De Luca M., *I giovani e i musei*, Roma, «Economia della Cultura», n.1, Il Mulino, 2008

Di Bari C., *Emergenza Covid-19 tra comunicazione e formazione*, Firenze, «Studi sulla Formazione», v.23, n.1, Firenze University Press, 2020

Di Feo F., *Com'è cambiata la cultura con i social: 7 pro e 5 contro della rivoluzione digitale*, 25/06/2022, <https://www.trend-online.com/marketing-digitale/rivoluzione-digitale-e-social-media/>

Di Salvo C., *Cos'è un sistema museale italiano*, TerPress, 2008 <https://terpress.blogspot.com/>

Dilon C., *TikTok Influences on Teenagers and Young Adults Students: The Common Usages of The Application TikTok*, «American Academic Scientific Research Journal for Engineering, Technology, and Sciences», 68(1), 2020, pp. 132–142

Direzione Generale Musei, *E ora...? Primi risultati dell'indagine condotta sui pubblici dei musei italiani durante il lockdown*, 12/2020 <http://musei.beniculturali.it/wp->

[content/uploads/2020/12/Primi-risultati-dellindagine-condottasui-pubblici-dei-musei-italiani-durante-il-lockdown.pdf](https://www.musei.it/content/uploads/2020/12/Primi-risultati-dellindagine-condottasui-pubblici-dei-musei-italiani-durante-il-lockdown.pdf)

Drotner, K., & Schrøder, K.C, *Museum Communication and Social Media: The Connected Museum*, Routledge, 2013

Falcone M., *La comunicazione dei musei è cambiata*, Il Corriere della Sera, 04/05/2022, <https://living.corriere.it/arte/musei-social-digital/>

Finocchi V., Mazzocco M., *Re-Inventing the Museum and Its Narratives The Experience of Palazzo Grimani During Lockdowns*, «magazen», vol. 2 [Re]Constructions, 2022, pp. 261-290

Fondazione Teatro La Fenice di Venezia, *Bilancio di esercizio*, 2021

Giannini T., Bowen J. P., *Museums at the crossroads: between digitality, reality, and Covid-19*, Heritage, 2022

Girardo F., *Polo museale veneto cancellato, è rivolta*, Il Corriere del Veneto, 19/08/2017, [https://corrieredelveneto.corriere.it/veneto/politica/19\\_agosto\\_17/polo-museale-veneto-cancellato-rivolta](https://corrieredelveneto.corriere.it/veneto/politica/19_agosto_17/polo-museale-veneto-cancellato-rivolta)

Giraud C., *Uffici mattatori dei social: tra Instagram e TikTok è il museo più seguito al mondo per follower*, s.l., «Artribune», 17/06/2021, <https://www.artribune.com/progettazione/new-media/2020/06/uffici-mattatori-dei-social-tra-instagram-e-tik-tok-e-il-museo-piu-seguito-al-mondo-per-follower/>

Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, *Musei aperti ma visitatori in forte calo nell'anno della pandemia*, Blog post, 02/2022, [https://www.istat.it/it/files/2022/02/REPORT\\_MUSEI-E-ISTITUZIONI-SIMILARI-IN-ITALIA.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files/2022/02/REPORT_MUSEI-E-ISTITUZIONI-SIMILARI-IN-ITALIA.pdf)

Kist C., *Museums, Challenging Heritage and Social Media During COVID-19*, Museum and Society [Online], Volume 18 Number 3 (14 October 2020)

Koszary, A., *Has the digital museum finally come of age*, Apollo. The International Art Magazine, 04/05/2020, <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/digital-museums-today/>

Lampis A., *La riforma dei musei statali spinge a una nuova governance delle istituzioni culturali*, Roma, «Economia della Cultura», n.2, Il Mulino, 2020, pp. 173-190

Lisanti V., *How COVID-19 Changed the Digital Presence of Italian Museums: Comparing Influencer Marketing Attempts at the Uffizi Galleries and the Museums of Bologna*, Art, Museums and Digital Cultures, Rethinking Change, Lisbon, MAAT Museum/online, 2021, pp. 209-221

Maddalena R., *Chi è la social media manager degli Uffizi che ha avvicinato gli under 25 all'arte, grazie a TikTok*, Milano, «Forbes», BFC Media, 28/04/2021, <https://forbes.it/2021/04/28/ilde-forgione-la-social-manager-che-ha-rilanciato-gli-uffizi-grazie-a-tiktok/>

Manfredi E., *Il marketing nei musei: tra innovazione tecnologica e promozione del patrimonio artistico. Il caso di Jewish Museum di New York*, Università Luiss Guido Carli, 2015/2016

Maulini, A., *Comunicare la cultura, oggi*, Editrice Bibliografica, 2019

Mazza S., *I musei e la sfida della digitalizzazione*, Torino, «Il giornale dell'Architettura, Allemandi Editore, 25/01/2021, <https://ilgiornaledellarchitettura.com/2021/01/25/i-musei-e-la-sfida-della-digitalizzazione/>

Miller D. "Does Social Media make people happier?" *How the world changed social media*, Vol.1 UCL Press, 2016

Miller D., Costa E., Haynes N., McDonald T., Nicolescu R., Sinanan J., Spyer J., Venkatraman S., Wang X., *Academic studies of social media*, vol. 1, UCL Press, 2016

Miller D., Costa E., Haynes N., McDonald T., Nicolescu R., Sinanan J., Spyer J., Venkatraman S., Wang X., *How the World Changed Social Media*, UCL Press, University College London, 2016

Natale M.T., Ruggieri N., *Contenuti generati dagli utenti sul web. Le istituzioni culturali sono pronte?*, Paper slides presentation al convegno OPD 2.0, Salone dell'Arte e del Restauro di Firenze, 2020

Navarrete T., Villaespesa E., *Digital Heritage Consumption: The Case of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, «magazen», Fusions 2, 2020, pp. 222-248

Nielsen J. K., *Museum communication and storytelling: articulating understandings within the museum structure*, Museum Management and Curatorship, 2017

Palladino A., *L'utilizzo dei meme come strategia comunicativa: il museo archeologico di Venezia*, 2021, <https://martebenicult.wordpress.com/2021/05/21/lutilizzo-dei-meme-come-strategia-comunicativa-il-museo-archeologico-di-veneziah/>

Pencarelli T., Splendiani S., *Le reti museali come strumenti capaci di generare valore: verso un approccio manageriale e di marketing*, «Il Capitale culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage», n. 2, 2011, pp. 228-252

Pirrelli M., *Nel lockdown musei più social, ma solo uno su quattro ha un piano digitale*, Milano, «Il Sole 24 ore», 24 ORE Cultura, 27/05/2020, [https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/nel-lockdown-musei-piu-social-ma-solo-su-quattro-ha-piano-digitale-ADYWzPT?refresh\\_ce=1](https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/nel-lockdown-musei-piu-social-ma-solo-su-quattro-ha-piano-digitale-ADYWzPT?refresh_ce=1)

Russo A., Watkins J., Kelly L., Chan S., *How will social media affect museum communication?*, Proceedings Nordic Digital Excellence in Museums (NODEM 06), Oslo, 2006, pp. 1-7

Roese, V., *You Won't Believe How Co-Dependent They Are: Or: Media Hype and the Interaction of News Media, Social Media, and the User*, From Media Hype to Twitter Storm, edited by Peter Vasterman, Amsterdam University Press, 2018, pp. 313-332

Russo A., Watkins J., *New literacy new audiences: social media and cultural institutions*, EVA 2008 London Conference, 2008

Schick L., Damkjær K., *Can you be friends with an art museum? Rethinking the art museum through Facebook*, Transforming culture in the digital age, International conference in Tartu, Tartu, 2010, pp. 105-118

Spiliopoulou A.Y., Mahony S., Routsis V., Kamposiori C., *Cultural institutions in the digital age: British Museum's use of Facebook Insights*, UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, 2014

Solima L., *Il pubblico dei musei. Indagine sulla comunicazione nei musei statali italiani*, Gangemi Editore, Roma, 2020

Stinco E., I Musei Civici di Venezia

Taormina A., *Lo spettacolo dal vivo: scenari e prospettive a un anno dalla pandemia*, Antropologia E Teatro – Rivista Di Studi, N. 13, 2021

Taormina F., Bonini Baraldi S., *Museums and digital technology: a literature review on organizational issues*, European Planning Studies, 2022



Vanni M., *La museologia e le nuove funzioni del museo*, Massa Carrara, «Finestra sull'Arte», Danae Project, 14/01/2021, <https://www.finestresullarte.info/focus/la-museologia-e-le-nuove-funzioni-del-museo>

Williams Z., Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now by Jaron Lanier – review, The Guardian, 30/05/2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/may/30/ten-arguments-deleting-your-social-media-accounts-right-now-jaron-lanier>

# Sitography

<https://www.cadoro.org/>

<http://carlogoldoni.visitmuve.it/>

<https://correr.visitmuve.it/>

<https://www.digital-coach.com/it/blog/case-histories/twitter-analytics/>

<https://www.digital-coach.com/it/facebook-insights/>

[https://m.facebook.com/help/274400362581037/?locale=it\\_IT&\\_rdr](https://m.facebook.com/help/274400362581037/?locale=it_IT&_rdr)

<http://fortuny.visitmuve.it/>

<https://www.gallerieaccademia.it/il-museo>

<http://www.gallerieaccademia.it/sites/default/files/inlineimages/Decreto%20di%20approvazione%20dello%20StatutoGallerie%20dell%27Accademia%20di%20Venezia.pdf>

<https://www.gallerieaccademia.it/storia-della-collezione>

<https://www.guggenheim-venice.it/it/>

[https://www.istat.it/it/files/2022/02/REPORT\\_MUSEI-E-ISTITUZIONI-SIMILARI-IN-ITALIA.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files/2022/02/REPORT_MUSEI-E-ISTITUZIONI-SIMILARI-IN-ITALIA.pdf)

<https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-it/>

<http://mocenigo.visitmuve.it/>

<https://www.museivenezia.it/>

<http://musei.beniculturali.it/progetti/sistema-museale-nazionale>

<https://www.museumnext.com/article/museums-can-use-social-media/>

<https://palazzoducale.visitmuve.it/>

<https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-d%E2%80%99arte-orientale>

<https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-nazionale-atestino>

<https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-archeologico-nazionale-della-laguna-di-venezia>

<https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-archeologico-nazionale-di-fratta-polesine>

<https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-archeologico-nazionale-di-venezia>

<https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-archeologico-nazionale-concordiense>

<https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-nazionale-e-area-archeologica-di-altino>

<https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-nazionale-di-archeologia-del-mare>

<https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/museo-nazionale-di-villa-pisani>

<https://polomusealeveneto.beniculturali.it/musei/villa-del-bene>

<https://www.sgaialand.it/il-teatro-goldoni-di-venezia-il-piu-antico-ancora-esistente-della-citta/>

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1314343/museums-highest-social-media-followers-worldwide/>

<https://www.teatrolafenice.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/storiaFeniceBreve.pdf>

<https://www.teatrostabileveneto.it/sedi/goldoni/>

<https://www.teatrostabileveneto.it/sedi/goldoni/storia-goldoni/>

<https://www.teatrostabileveneto.it/organizzazione/>

<https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/cultura-digitale-pubblica>

<http://torreorologio.visitmuve.it/>

<https://www.veneziaunica.it/it/content/chiese-di-chorus>

<https://www.veneziaunica.it/it/content/fondazioni-ed-altri-musei>

<https://www.visitmuve.it/>

<https://www.visitmuve.it/>

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultura\\_digitale](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultura_digitale)

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teatro\\_stabile\\_del\\_Veneto\\_Carlo\\_Goldoni](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teatro_stabile_del_Veneto_Carlo_Goldoni)