

MuseumEdu 1

Museums and Education - Theory and Practice
Music, Dance, Mathematics

INTRODUCTION

MuseumEdu 1, *Museums and Education - Theory and Practice: Music, Dance, Mathematics*, is the first, experimental volume of the online, open access, peer-reviewed international journal **MuseumEdu** published by the University of Thessaly Museum Education and Research Laboratory (MERLab) in Spring 2015. Hence, it mainly includes papers written by MERLab members. These papers began their life as part of a Continuing Education Programme (with lectures and workshops on Museum Education) organised by the Laboratory, in the cities of Volos, Thessaloniki and Athens, Greece, during September 2013. The Programme was addressed to in-service teachers and other graduates in the fields of education, museums and culture, and aimed at initiating a discussion of the polymorphous ways in which we can approach, read and interpret the polysemy of museums and museum objects.

Emphasising alternative theoretical perspectives as well as the use of music, dance and mathematics, rarely employed in museum education contexts, at least in the Greek context, has been a central aim of this Programme. Thus, **MuseumEdu 1** includes papers that discuss theoretical and practical issues reflecting on the richness of such approaches that cast museums not only as places of knowing and learning, but also, as places of inspiration, expression, creativity and enjoyment. Addressing both Greek and English speaking audiences, **MuseumEdu 1** includes papers written in Greek and papers written in English, accompanied by abstracts in English and Greek, respectively.

MuseumEdu 1 includes the following articles:

The volume begins with the paper, *Museums as places for learning, enjoyment and inspiration: Realisation and evaluation of a continuing education programme*, written by **Niki Nikonanou** and **Irene Nakou** (in Greek). In this paper, the authors discuss basic theoretical and practical issues that emerge through analysis of the results of the September 2013 MERLab Programme evaluation. The evaluation results presented in the paper emphasise the importance of inspiring creative educational activities that enable participants to gain knowledge and understanding by investigating “new” ideas, and to develop social, communicative, intellectual, bodily and/or emotional skills.

The second paper, *Music beyond monuments: Re-imagining creative music engagement in the light of museum-inspired education projects*, written by **Panagiotis Kanellopoulos** and **Danae Stefanou** (in English), initiates a critical dialogue between

music education and museum education. The paper discusses the ways in which music education might be liberated from monolithic ‘*museum music*’ stereotypes by actually ‘taking a ride to the museum’, adopting contemporary museum education modes of practice and bringing critical, open-ended learning approaches into museum spaces. The paper offers two short critical accounts of recent practice-based projects in that direction. Kanellopoulos and Stefanou reflect on the potential of a museum-based music education that would lead to creative musical experiences and contribute to a broader creative recontextualisation of the relationships between sound, context and memory.

The third paper, *Dancing in the museum*, is written by **Maria Tsouvala** (in Greek). The author discusses the growing interest in the integration of contemporary art performances and especially dance, in museums and contemporary art galleries. It offers a brief historical overview of the relationship of dance with the visual arts, along with the description of certain contemporary dance-works that have been presented in museum spaces since the ’60s.

The fourth paper, *Mathematics with/in museums: London, Paris, New York*, is written in English by **Anna Chronaki**. It consists an attempt, by means of focusing on three diverse cases of museums that embrace mathematical ideas and are located at the metropolis of London, Paris and New York, to discuss the multiple ways through which the idea of ‘mathematics with/in museums’ unfolds and becomes expressed, presented and shared out in the public. At the same time, it provides an opportunity to explore how a visit to the museum produces affect that lead, virtually and potentially, into a revisiting and, possibly, reforming of the socio-material images of mathematics, mathematical objects, mathematising processes, and mathematical subjectivities.

The next paper, *Educational visits in museums: The case of the “Athanassakeion” Archaeological Museum of Volos*, is written in Greek by **Aimilia Kalogianni**. The author describes workshops and seminars for schoolteachers and educational programmes for primary and secondary school groups that the Museum organises aiming at developing interdisciplinary and experiential approaches to learning and enabling young visitors unfold their own ways of expression.

In the sixth paper (in English), *Experimenting with sound, playing with culture: Collaborative composing as a means for creative engagement with the museum world*, **Panagiotis Kanellopoulos** and **Irene Nakou**, describe and reflect on a museum-based music project that accompanied an exhibition (Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece, 2007) dedicated to the life and work of Greek composer Yorgos Sisilianos (1920-2005). In this project, through discussion, metaphorical language, experimentation and improvisation, the children composed their collectively created music, which was then listened to and discussed side by side with Sisilianos’ works. The authors argue for an holistic involvement in “open” educational processes that challenges visitors’ creative powers, potentially offering them new ways of seeing, understanding and dealing with “otherness”.

On the basis of her PhD thesis (2014), **Despina Kalessopoulou** in her paper (in Greek) titled *Museum environments for children: The contribution of ecological psychology to the analysis of their organisation and use*, discusses the ways in which ecological psychology can serve us a useful theoretical context for critical analyses of child-centred museum environments, such as children museums or special galleries for children within museums mainly addressing adult audiences.

This inaugural volume of *MuseumEdu* concludes with **Evi Papabergou** and **Katerina Paraskeva's** paper (in Greek) titled *An educational art programme for teachers: Approaching the Russian Avant Garde*. The authors describe the educational activities designed and implemented in the *Greek State Museum of Contemporary Art* in Thessaloniki (2013), in the context of the MERLab Programme described earlier. This set of activities aimed at enabling participants to approach the Russian Avant Garde collection of the Museum, providing ways of joyful, creative and inspirational understanding of the collection.

The *MuseumEdu 1* editors

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