

across  
generations

learning from  
art, culture and  
one another

intergenerational  
education  
in museums

**REPORT  
& PRACTICAL GUIDE**  
on a training project  
initiated by Goethe-Institut  
in Southeast Europe Region  
and Haus Bastian –  
Centre for Cultural  
Education,  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
in cooperation with seven  
partner museums



**ACROSS GENERATIONS**  
Learning from Art,  
Culture and One Another

A training project initiated by Goethe-Institut  
in Southeast Europe Region and  
Haus Bastian – Centre for Cultural Education,  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, in cooperation  
with seven partner museums

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## FOREWORD

# INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE: Communicating Around Art and Culture to Foster Opportunities in the Future

In societies characterised by demographic change and migration movements, there is a growing demand in the field of cultural education for educational programmes that focus on intergenerational memory and on the transmission of cultural knowledge between generations.

The understanding of generations is viewed differently in different societies. Art reflects social developments and thus offers a variety of starting points for generational work. Museums may reflect national characteristics in their collections and offer a rich reservoir for intergenerational projects.

Innovation, flexibility, participation, sustainability – museum work and the role of museums as social actors are an increasing focus of interest. The Goethe-Institut is imple-

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menting new perspectives on cultural education and international collaboration in this field.

The public is increasingly aware of the potential of museums as places for democratic education, exchange, and social discourse involving the participation of diverse actors. Based on its successful networking with local actors in the museum and cultural landscape, the Goethe-Institut is initiating projects itself while at the same time assuming the important role of mediator, liaising between German and international partners and civil society stakeholders. In this way, the Goethe-Institut is taking on a task that the individual institutions are often unable to perform themselves.

In its many years of practice in cooperative and partnership-based working approaches, the Goethe-Institut has followed the ideal of an international exchange in which learning from one another plays a central role. Capacity building is not a one-sided transfer of knowledge or the export of existing models of museum practice but a process of knowledge exchange between all participants and the expression of a self-conception based on learning and un-learning. An equal, dialogical encounter that also reflects power relations underpins the development of new museum practices and projects.

Dr. Stefanie Peter  
Goethe-Institut Athen  
Head of Cultural Programmes  
Southeast Europe Region

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# Learning from Art, Culture and One Another

**How do museums and cultural institutions respond to social change and shifting notions of what family is? What possibilities does intergenerational exchange offer for cultural education? What formats and methods can be used to promote dialogue between people of different ages?**

Working in conjunction with the Goethe-Institut in Athens, which covers the Southeast Europe region, and with seven partner museums, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin conducted research over a period of two years to examine the potential of “intergenerational education in museums”. By focusing on a subject that is highly topical and has considerable sociopolitical relevance, the project has enhanced the cooperation between the Goethe-Institut and the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz – which has been in place since 2008.

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“ACROSS GENERATIONS – Learning from Art, Culture and One Another” generated new concepts of education and learning. It is well worth emphasising the high quality and productive output of the international cooperation, which spans different institutions and disciplines and involves the heads of education at the participating museums and Goethe-Institutes. The international network that now exists will continue to have an impact after the project has come to an end.

The staff of Haus Bastian – Centre for Cultural Education of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin have also derived considerable benefit from ACROSS GENERATIONS. Not only have they been able to share their expertise in advanced training seminars and conferences and contribute to this publication, they have also gained valuable experience in international cooperation, which will now feed into the educational work undertaken by the Staatliche Museen.

We would like to take this opportunity to formally thank the partner museums and Goethe-Institutes involved in the project for their commitment and dedication.

Heike Kropff  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin  
Head of Department,  
Education/Communication

## INTERVIEW

# Why should Museum Education be Concerned with Intergenerational Work?

Interview with Patrick Presch, Haus Bastian, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin  
and Deniz Bayrakçı, Odunpazarı Modern Museum, Eskişehir

Excerpt from an interview in the dossier  
“Impulse für die Programmarbeit zum Thema  
Kunstvermittlung” by Daniela Bystron and Julia Schäfer,  
Goethe-Institut, 2021

**Why did you choose to focus on art mediation across generations, and what is the specific potential of this approach?**

Patrick Presch: In educational work, the confrontation with art and cultural historical objects and projects is always enriching when different perspectives come together and people strive for mutual exchange. When we came up with the idea for the project, we asked ourselves which constellations of people tend not to appear in museums and why?

The exchange between generations is taking place all around us every day, be it in our private or professional lives. Interaction is often

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shaped by rules, structures, and traditions. In the ACROSS GENERATIONS project, we are exploring the question of whether the museum as an educational institution can be a suitable place for intergenerational exchange, how this should be designed, and whether familiar conditions can be broken up in the process. For example, the focus is not primarily on families but on other constellations, such as people in their twenties and forties. It is precisely these potentials of the different constellations that are to be explored in the pilot project.

Deniz Bayrakçı: It's an obvious fact – and one that is justified by several market research studies – that visiting museums and taking part in museum events are not top priorities on the lists of spare-time activities among certain age groups. In Turkey, teenagers and seniors are two groups we see in museums only very occasionally. Another rarely seen segment, young children, are dependent on their parents, who are the decision-makers behind their museum visits. In addition, the negative impact of the global pandemic on our social habits means that we have really missed seeing these groups in our museums.

Besides wanting to attract these visitor groups by offering them various rea-

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sons for taking part in a museum education programme, we have always had the goal of bringing different age groups together and enhancing their chances of learning from one another, enjoying each other's expertise, and experiencing groups with a different profile. And this is why we wanted to be part of this.

**Your project is not only intergenerational but also transnational and transdisciplinary – you work, for example, with museums of history, contemporary art, and photography. How can we imagine your work across various national museum contexts and different types of museums?**

Patrick Presch: Social change requires us as museum professionals to react to its effects and changes. These are different in the countries involved. Within the framework of the project, we try to work out the specific conditions and prerequisites for cultural education in the individual countries. In the first module of the project, the training programme, we get an overview, which also comes from trying to establish a common idea of the term "intergenerational".

In the second module we create concepts for intergenerational events in the museum in dialogue with each other – individually adapted to the possibilities of the respective museum. The

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focus is on developing suitable methods that promote intergenerational exchange.

The heterogeneity of our group is a stroke of luck for our cause: not only do we want people of different ages to exchange ideas in the museum and learn from art, culture, and each other but, as professionals, we also want to learn from the experience and knowledge of all participants. This leads to an “internationalisation of the view” on cultural education. Similarities and differences become visible, and these insights can be very valuable and enriching for the ongoing process.

Deniz Bayrakçı: Besides the project-specific goals, the project also has some common targets with all types of museums, supporting the habit of visiting museums, creating various reasons to want to be in a museum (seeing an exhibition, joining a museum event, just taking photographs, having some quiet time with oneself, drawing, and/or teaching kids/students...), encouraging people to revisit a museum, creating opportunities for co-operations, networking, and raising awareness about the necessity and value of supporting art and budding artists. So, I think this project and other similar projects can have many beneficial outcomes, beyond what is laid out within its framework.

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**A critical interrogation of art education has been high on the agenda during the last decades, and not only at art academies; more recently many museums have invested in developing new approaches and a visitor-oriented practice. How would you describe your contribution to this development?**

Patrick Presch: With ACROSS GENERATIONS, we are at the heart of this discourse, and this is associated with different challenges for those involved. The visibility of arts education is not the same in all institutions. Turning to the audience or doing focused, nuanced work with specific user groups is not always possible. However, active participation in the project is a big step towards encouraging more participation and interaction with the audience and taking the interests and needs of museum users seriously.

The newly developed methods and the experiences gained will be documented and, as part of the third project module, compiled in a method box. The box will be made available to other institutions, including the Goethe-Institutes, in order to be able to develop intergenerational formats independently. This knowledge transfer is one of our contributions to this development.

Deniz Bayrakçı: Within the broad framework of art education, I think museums have a key role in the primary chains of the whole process, which we may also define as that of “stimulator”. A museum may be the place where you hear

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about a term or concept for the first time and then become curious to understand it. A museum can bring you together with your favourite artist and or guide you to experience a brand-new technique that you can subsequently use to improve your own style. A small moment in an exhibition can give you an unforgettable feeling; it may bring back hidden memories or remove predictions, and change the way you look at something, the way you feel about it. An impressive museum experience may show a young person that there are other ways. Museums may serve up appropriate language for teaching young children and show the elderly that there are other relevant ways of listening to and learning from each other. Museums may help question and reshape traditional frameworks within the life of a society and make it easier for the society to accept change and adapt to it. With all this in mind, we believe that each brick we put in place will count.

## INTRODUCTION

# About ACROSS GENERATIONS

What potential do museums offer for intergenerational learning? How can museums respond to transnational social change and become meeting places for new visitor constellations? What skills do the education officers of cultural institutions need in order to develop contemporary offerings for children, young people, and adults? How can formats and methods for intergenerational learning and experience be anchored in the museum? These and other questions guided the joint project ACROSS GENERATIONS developed by the Goethe-Institutes in Southeast Europe Region and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

The project focused on the nuances of family concepts that are currently in flux. It investigated how joint action and knowledge transfer between different generations – children, young people, and adults – can be fostered through



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engagement with art and cultural-historical objects in the museum. One focus was on exploring the potential the museum has as a new leisure venue and meeting place for intergenerational associations. In addition, the benefits that cultural institutions can derive from engaging with this new user group were investigated.

*ACROSS GENERATIONS – Learning from Art, Culture, and One Other*, which ran from the beginning of 2021 to the end of 2022, consisted of three modules: a training programme, projects implemented by the participating museums, and a final publication. Five Goethe-Institutes, seven museums from Southeast Europe, and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin participated in the project.

The training programme was aimed at the pedagogical staff of the partner museums as well as colleagues from the participating Goethe-Institutes. It consisted of six webinars lasting several hours and two three-day training courses that took place in Berlin and Athens. In a process- and action-oriented way, the participants dealt with current educational theories and concepts and expanded their methodological-didactic competences. In creative exchange, they developed formats and methods for implementing intergenerational educational projects in their museums. The training programme was designed by experts in cultural education from Germany and adapted by contributors from the participating countries in a peer-to-peer learning process moderated by a facilitator from Greece.

During the project, many partner museums were able to offer new options for intergenerational alliances, e.g. workshops or didactic materials for families. The formats and

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methods that were tested encouraged creative reflection on the project. During the project, the formats and methods were processed and systematised. This publication bundles these results and provides other cultural institutions with building blocks for the development and implementation of intergenerational education projects beyond the duration of the project. The methods and case studies are supplemented by notes on using the material, an interview with participating education officers, and reflections by the moderator of the training series.

Patrick Presch

Curator of Education, Haus Bastian – Centre for Cultural Education  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin  
Facilitator, ACROSS GENERATIONS

HANDLING THE EXISTING MATERIAL

## PRACTICAL EXAMPLES: Methods and Exemplary Workshop Concepts

### General tips and advice for the implementation of intergenerational formats

When inviting participants, make sure that different age groups are addressed. Besides the constellation “children and parents” or “grandparents and grandchildren”, there are many other combinations that can be considered to facilitate an intergenerational exchange: the more diverse the composition of the group, the more diverse the experiences.

An appropriate and hospitable setting creates the basis for the participants’ willingness to be actively involved and try out new forms of learning. The events should offer the opportunity to try out new approaches to art and culture and enable shared experiences.

HANDLING THE EXISTING MATERIAL

It is advisable to include everyday themes and situations in the formats. Certain motifs or themes that interest different generations equally can be found in most museums, e.g. plants, animals, mythological stories, or food.

The different tempos of the participants should be taken into account. Specific processes and variations should be taken into account. The simpler the topic, the less intervention is needed. The results of a workshop can be shown publicly with approval and serve as inspiration for other participants.

There should be discussion of how to deal with uncertainties in the group. Possible techniques include role reversal, sharing stereotypes between generations, and collecting and clarifying questions.

### On the methods at hand

As part of the training programme, the project participants reviewed and adapted established methods for their intergenerational potential and formulated new ideas. The methods are divided into the following categories:

1. Ice-Breaking Methods: Ice-breaking methods are universally applicable, independent of setting or theme. Often the aim is to get to know the participants, to approach the institution of the museum together, and to have an initial intergenerational exchange. No special materials are needed for these methods, which can all be implemented in a short time. They can usually be carried out with any number of participants.

## HANDLING THE EXISTING MATERIAL

2. Specific Methods: These methods are more specific to an intergenerational exchange. They are used to create an intensive dialogue. They often build on the ice-breaking methods. The aim is to activate the participants and get them to work together. The methods usually follow a topic-oriented approach. This means that participants are encouraged to bring in their own perspectives. Thematically, these methods can be adapted and varied very easily. As a rule, some preparations need to be made in advance, and sufficient time should be planned for the implementation.

3. Feedback Methods: These methods are especially useful at the end of a workshop. With their help, participants can reflect on their experiences together. In addition, the facilitators receive concrete feedback on the implementation of the event.

4. Workshop Concepts: The cases described in detail are to be understood as typical examples of the different events and formats that have been designed and implemented within the project. Different methods are combined, and these are carried out in the context of a specific workshop with different age constellations.

Please understand the material as an invitation and friendly encouragement to develop your own approaches and concepts. The methods can be combined and supplemented with more concrete observation assignments, worksheets to fill in, puzzles, questionnaires, and other creative techniques and materials.

**Method Category  
Ice-Breaking**

## Describing Words

### Method Goal

The aim is to activate the participants and enable them to get to know each other. The willingness to exchange is fostered in a playful way. The activity serves as a stimulus to promote group dynamics, brainstorming, and collaborative work in a museum.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

Any / Pairs

### Duration

10–15 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Provide clipboards, pens, and paper.

### Procedure

- Split the group into pairs. Ideally, they should consist of participants of different generations or backgrounds.
- Hand out a sheet of paper and a pen for each pair.
- Ask them to write down five words that describe “contemporary art” or “things that people do in a museum” or any other simple question related to the project’s topic.
- Give them a few minutes to think and write down the words.
- Each pair shares their words aloud.

## Emotional Tour

### Method Goal

Using this method, the participants get to know each other and have a chance to express their feelings and thoughts in a museum. It highlights different (or similar) views/reactions and stimulates a dialogue about the different emotions that can be triggered by the artworks.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

Any / Individual, then as pairs or small groups

### Duration

20–25 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Prepare multiple sets of cards, each with the same four emotions (e.g. curiosity, appreciation, surprise, boredom). Define a section of the exhibition that lends itself to the task.

### Procedure

- Hand out sets of cards to all participants.
- Explain which area the cards can be placed in.
- Everyone places one card in front of an exhibit.
- Anyone meeting at the same spot should discuss why they chose the emotion they did for this particular exhibit.

### Note

Try to support the conversations by laying down cards yourself as well.

## Hidden Treasure

### Method Goal

This method creates connections between the museums' exhibits and the personal objects of the participants. They exchange ideas and get to know each other. In addition, they talk about the value of objects and the role of museums in collecting, preserving, and displaying them.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

Any / Pairs

### Duration

10–15 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Write the supportive questions on large sheets of paper.

### Procedure

- Split the group into pairs.
- Each participant should now imagine an object from their home that is very valuable to them. Depending on the focus of the museum, this can be a photo, a piece of ceramics, etc.
- In pairs, the participants have a conversation about the objects by choosing from the following questions:

- *What is your object?*
- *What characteristics does it have?*  
(size, colour, age, texture)
- *What feelings do you associate with the object?*
- *Where is it located in your home?*
- *Did it belong to a previous generation?*  
If so, specify.
- *What title would you give to the object if it was displayed in a museum?*

#### **Note**

If more participants are to interact, add a second round with new pairs.  
Encourage questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no.

## **In Different Languages?**

#### **Method Goal**

This method works with the age-specific linguistic differences of the participants. It enables them to identify points of contact between their individual vocabularies and to perceive similarities as well as differences.

#### **Group Size / Form of Collaboration**

Any / Individual, then in group

#### **Duration**

10–15 minutes

#### **Preparation / Materials**

Define a specific object in the exhibition.  
Provide pens and index cards.

#### **Procedure**

- The starting point of the method is a depicted object.
- Each participant collects words (descriptive/metaphoric) for the object and writes them down on the index cards provided – for example, an attribute that can be seen on a work.
- All the words should then be spread out in front of the chosen work.
- Ask the participants to group the words into possible themes.
- Afterwards, they reflect together on what new insights the descriptions could give about the work.

**Note**  
If the participants come from different countries, the terms can also be collected in different languages.

## Minute Drawing

### Method Goal

This method aims to encourage participants to closely observe an exhibit by identifying its characteristic features and recording them in drawings. The time limit restricts the drawer's ambitions, forcing them to focus only on the most important aspects. At the end, comparing drawings provides a reference point for the concept of multi-perceptivity.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

Any / Small groups

### Duration

10–15 minutes

### Preparation/Materials

Provide paper, clipboards, pencils, and a timer (e.g. on a mobile phone) for each group.

### Procedure

- Form small groups and hand out paper and pencils.
- Let each group gather around an object in the museum space that particularly interests them.
- The participants have 60 seconds to draw the object. Make sure that someone in each group is responsible for keeping the time.

- Afterwards, the groups spread out the drawings and discuss:
  - *How are they similar or different?*
  - *What is reflected in the drawings?*
  - *What is the relationship between the characteristics of the exhibits, the subjective view of them, and the way they are depicted in the drawings?*

## The Helium Stick

### Method Goal

The participants need to work very well together to complete the task. Equal participation within the group strengthens communication and cooperation, while the task promotes solidarity among participants of different abilities.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

6–10 participants / Group

### Duration

20–25 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Provide a long, thin, lightweight pole (e.g. a tent pole). As a variant, a hula-hoop works as well.

### Procedure

- Line the group up in two rows facing each other.
- Ask the participants to point their index fingers and hold their arms out.
- Lay the Helium Stick on top of their fingers. Before you let go, the group should make adjustments until the stick is horizontal and everyone's index fingers are touching it.
- Explain the task: the group should lower the stick to the ground, without losing contact with it. Pinching or grabbing the pole is not allowed.
- When they make a mistake, the game starts again.



**Notes**

The clue to this task is that the Helium Stick will initially move upwards as the participants try to maintain contact with the stick. You should keep this a secret. It is not important, that the group actually reaches the ground as long as they manage to lower it. If a group has a hard time managing, take the stick down and give them the chance to discuss a strategy.

**Method Category  
Specific**

## Creative Expression – Hands on Activity

### Method Goal

This method aims to promote cooperation between people from different generations and backgrounds by eliciting emotional and intellectual responses based on the participants' creative expression. This is crucial for making their emotions and concepts more concrete, resulting in a dynamic and engaging dialogue between both individuals. The exchange may revolve around expressing political/societal notions, beliefs, and ideas or could reveal more personal thoughts, dreams, and aspirations. Based on the different objects or topics chosen by the participants, the method gets them to deal with and negotiate their potentially contrasting opinions.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

Any / Pairs

### Duration

60+ minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Prepare the basic object in advance, e.g. a suitcase made out of cardboard.  
Provide a variety of art workshop materials.

### Procedure

- Ask participants to sit in pairs around the table(s), equipped with as many art supplies as possible.
- Hand out the prepared cardboard object for each pair and ask them to put in anything they have to personally carry with them through the course of their life.
- Encourage them to employ the symbolic language of art as creatively as they can and use any expressive means they prefer: painting, drawing, collage, etc.
- Invite them to decorate the outer part of the object with phrases or symbols which express their beliefs as social and political individuals.
- After they complete their object, allow some extra time for them to present the works; each pair will explain in plenary what ideas they express through it.

## Social Media Profile

### Method Goal

This method combines classic means of researching and summarising that are familiar to the older participants with contemporary formats in which this information is adapted so as to be more familiar to the younger generation. It recognises different knowledge fields, strengthens collaboration, and trains ways of profiling information.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

Any / Pairs, then group

### Duration

45–60 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Provide mobile devices, computers, and a beamer. Set up a template for the social media profile in advance on each device.

### Procedure

- Form pairs.
- Ask them to look for artworks/artefacts showing portraits of people or sculptures – for example, of goddesses and gods.
- They take photographs of these artworks/artefacts and their special attributes and create a social media profile for them, e.g. on LinkedIn or, if appropriate, on Tinder. Possible categories could be: name, age, height, (super-)power, siblings, education.
- Encourage them to use the information from the exhibition and from additional sources.

- Every pair presents their profile.
- Get them to have the different profiles react to each other.

#### Note

Alternatively, provide cameras and a printer and hand out scissors, glue, and pens as well as the template for an analogue version.

## A (Family) Discussion on Perception

#### Method Goal

This method enables the participants to familiarise themselves with similarities and differences between their personal objects and their view of them. Further, they learn about curational practices and experience teamwork beyond daily family routines.

#### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

5–10 participants / Group

#### Duration

60+ minutes

#### Preparation / Materials

Inform the participants/families about the task beforehand and encourage them to each bring an object. The selection of the object can be done according to the following criteria: childhood, games, technique, technology, etc. Prepare a certain museum space, where the objects can be arranged.

#### Procedure

- Since it is a very personal topic and every family has its own dynamics, talk about or write down the discussion rules first: no interrupting; every opinion counts; equal speaking time; you can agree to disagree.
- Gather the participants around the objects and let everyone explain what the object means to them and their connection to the chosen topic.

- Together the family curates how their objects should be arranged in the given museum space.
- If necessary, guide them with the following questions:
  - *Which object is a good introduction?*
  - *What do the objects have in common?*
  - *What do the different senses of meaning have in common?*
  - *What story can you tell using different aspects of your objects?*

**Note**

Prepare a few backup objects in case someone forgot to bring one.

## Personal Highlight Collection

**Method Goal**

This method stimulates the exchange of different perspectives. As they engage with the artworks, the participants potentially become aware that members of other generations may find different aspects of art interesting, thereby perceiving themselves as members of a generation that shares certain preferences.

**Group Size / Form of Collaboration**

Any / Individual, then in small groups

**Duration**

20–30 minutes

**Preparation / Materials**

None

**Procedure**

- During the exhibition tour, the participants are tasked with finding five personal highlights.
- Afterwards they try to define what their highlights might have in common and explain why they have chosen these particular artworks/objects.
- In small groups they try to explain to others what they find attractive about the objects by identifying the criteria – be they subjective or objective.
- Discuss: Do you think your decisions depend on your generational imprint?

## Who Is This Person?

### Method Goal

This method enables a deeper understanding of generations by analysing depictions of characters from different age groups in multiple time periods. Redesigning the labels creates a link to today's expectations on generations and allows the participants to utilise their learnings immediately.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

Any / Individual

### Duration

20–30 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Provide research resources, e.g. computers, smartphones, and brochures as well as pens and paper.

### Procedure

- Participants look at a sculpture or a painting of a character in the exhibition without reading the label.
- Encourage them to think about the following questions:
  - *What kind of impression of the person do you get?*
  - *Who might the person be?*
  - *What might their characteristics, age, and profession/occupation be?*
  - *Which features provide information about the age and generation of the character, and what are the differences from today?*
- Afterwards they can check on the label for any clue, hint, or information about the person.
- If possible, they do additional research about the person or their living circumstances and compare the information with their assumption. Does the portrait tally with the facts?
- Using their own assumptions and new information, the participants design their own labels.

## Staged Interview

### Method Goal

The participants use this method to reflect on generational roles. By bringing together their different perspectives, they create a vivid image of a historical or mythological figure in a staged interview.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

Any / Pairs, then in group

### Duration

45–60 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Prepare two sets of character cards about suitable personalities from the exhibition as well as pens and paper. Select a museum space where the interviews can be presented.

### Procedure

- Hand out one set of character cards to each generational group.
- Form pairs consisting of participants with the same character card.
  - Explain that the aim is to stage an interview with a historical or mythological figure from the exhibition, e.g. a goddess, a king, etc.
  - Based on their own knowledge and other researched information from the exhibition, they create a profile of the person.
  - Afterwards they set up an interview situation with one person as the interviewer and the other as the person portrayed.
  - Motivate them to ask personal questions and bring the person alive.
    - The pairs present the short interview to the group.

## Socratic Method

### Method Goal

This method stimulates observation and encourages the participants to think independently and produce their own answers/ideas/thoughts. It develops analytical and critical thinking skills and teaches respect for different points of view.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

Any / Pairs, then in group

### Duration

20–30 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Prepare several questions in relation to the artwork. Provide clipboards, pens, paper, and cushions (optional).

### Procedure

- Split the group into pairs.
- Hand out a clipboard with some sheets of paper and a pen for each pair.
- Lead the group to the artwork/museum object you are going to analyse.
- Ask the participants to sit comfortably in pairs in front of or around the artwork/object.
- Ask questions that help to observe, analyse, and understand the artwork/object. Make sure that the questions are in a logical sequence, e.g. from the simplest to the most complex.
- Ask participants to work in pairs and give them a few minutes to take quick notes to record their answers/thoughts.
- Encourage them to share their thoughts in plenary.

## The Relation of the Young and the Old

### Method Goal

The aim of this method is to reflect on the social relations between people from different age groups in history and today. By arranging the findings in an overview, the participants can utilise their learnings immediately.

**Group Size / Form of Collaboration**  
Any / Small groups

**Duration**  
30–45 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Provide pens, large sheets of paper, and glue. Prepare five comparable photos showing an ensemble of different generations, ideally from the museum's collection. The pictures should present various decades and different groups of people.

### Procedure

- In small groups, the participants sort the pictures in a timeline.
  - Briefly check their results in plenary and give some background information on the photographs.
  - Afterwards, each small group discusses the relationship and status of the portrayed generations in historical societies and from today's perspective. They should visualise their findings in synoptic form, e.g. in a timeline.
  - Discuss how the relationships have developed.

## Let's See and Share!

### Method Goal

With the help of role play and observation, the participants get an idea of how people of different generations and abilities experience the building and exhibition. The method also stimulates participants to transfer an understanding of their challenges into their own works of art.

**Group Size / Form of Collaboration**  
15–20 participants / Groups, then individual

**Duration**  
45–60 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Determine a suitable exhibition route. Provide wheelchairs, crutches, and painting materials.

### Procedure

- Guide the participants on an interactive exhibition tour along the previously selected route by discussing the following questions:
    - *What type of artwork are you seeing?*
    - *What is the material of the work?*
    - *Why might this material be used?*
    - *Can the material itself constitute the content of the work?*
    - *What could the work be about?*
    - *How did the work make you feel?*
    - *Could this also be a digital work?*
- How?



- For the role play, divide the participants into three groups:
  - 1) Children younger than 7; 2) Adults older than 65; and
  - 3) People with walking disabilities. Provide each with different support materials.
- Then facilitate a second tour as a role play with all three groups.
  - After the tour ask them to produce a painting inspired by the works they liked on the role-play tour.

## History in the Circle

### Method Goal

This method enables subjective access to the museum and its exhibits by incentivising the participants to give personal meaning to the objects at display. These objects are brought into a new context by combining them with the participants' own narratives, which are inspired by each other's individual impressions.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

5–20 participants / Individual, then in group

### Duration

20–30 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Select an exhibit the participants can easily create a story with. Prepare questions to stimulate creativity and provide clipboards, pens, and paper.

### Procedure

- Gather the group around an exhibit without saying anything about it.
- Ask the participants to sit comfortably in front of or around the artwork/object.
- Hand out a clipboard with some sheets of paper and a pen.
- Have them observe the exhibit for a minute.
- Ask them to write down one or two sentences like the beginning of a short story.
- Then have them fold the paper so that the sentences are not visible and pass the sheet clockwise to the next participant. This person continues writing the story with their sentences.

- This process is continued until the sheet of paper has gone around once.
- The following questions help get the process started:
  - *What are the people doing/thinking/feeling before/ during/after the moment portrayed?*
  - *Who does the exhibit belong to?*
  - *What is it used for?*
  - *What if you owned this object?*
- Encourage them to read out their stories.

**Note**

Instead of writing sentences, small sketches can be made, which then form a collective picture.

## Method Category Feedback

## Five Finger Feedback

### Method Goal

This method helps participants reflect on their learning experience. Facilitators get feedback on which aspect worked well in the workshop and possible areas of improvement.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

Any / Group

### Duration

10–15 minutes

### Preparation/Materials

None

### Procedure

- Explain the meaning of every finger:
- Thumb: What was great?
- Index finger: What do we need to watch out for?
- Middle finger: What went wrong?
- Ring finger: What will I take with me from the workshop?
- Little finger: What do I wish I'd had more of?
- Everybody gives their feedback based on the meanings of the different fingers.

### Note

In a bigger group, e.g. more than 10, the feedback can be put in a drawing of a hand and afterwards presented by a selection of participants.

The gestures may need to be adapted for different cultural contexts.

## Post-It Note Feedback

### Method Goal

Post-it notes provide a quick but effective tool for instant feedback. Their small size requires a precise use of language and helps participants put their thoughts in order. They are a useful tool for wrapping up, reflecting on, and evaluating the workshop.

### Group Size / Form of Collaboration

Any / Pairs, then in group

### Duration

15–25 minutes

### Preparation / Materials

Provide pens, stacks of Post-it notes in different colours, and a wall or board for presentation purposes.

### Procedure

- Hand out a couple of Post-its and a pen for each pair or each participant.
- Ask each pair/participant to write down a short note on the categories that have been determined (reflecting on what they have learnt or achieved / have enjoyed the most / have enjoyed the least / their main takeaway, etc.)
  - Allow participants a few minutes to think and write down their notes.
  - Participants leave their Post-it notes on the board/wall and share their thoughts aloud.

## Case Studies

I.  
**Exemplary workshop  
concept from the  
EMΣT | National Museum  
of Contemporary Art,  
Athens**

**Project Title**

Co-Wayfarers at EMΣT

**Topic/Sub-topic**

My personal life and choices, my attitudes, and my beliefs as a social and political being

**Idea and Concept**

Marina Tsekou, Education Curator, EMΣT

**Facilitator**

Theodoros Rousopoulos, Artist

**Dates and Duration**

Seven workshops, February–May 2022, 2 hours each. At the end of the project ACROSS GENERATIONS, Co-wayfarers at EMΣT was absorbed into the regular educational programme and will continue to be carried out with various groups.

### Group Type

Different group pairings per workshop:

- Students & teachers
- Refugees & social workers
- Museum educators from different countries
- Adult students & teachers from second-chance schools
- People with mental health issues & social workers

### Group Size

8–18 participants per workshop

### Description and Goals of the Workshop

The workshops focus on two artworks in the EMΣT Collection: Graffiti Cuts: Who Owns the Street by Carlos Motta, 2007–2009, and Wayfarer by Costas Tsoclis, 1989. The first work deals with socio-political issues and the right to free speech, protest, and interventions in public space. The second deals with human existence, the struggle for life and freedom, the search for knowledge, our past experiences, and our aspirations. In this workshop the ideas, formal languages, and artistic techniques of both artworks will be combined.

In a first step, participants get acquainted with the artworks and their techniques and meaning through dialogue and a guided exchange of ideas. Working in pairs, they analyse the artworks and present their ideas in plenary. Keeping notes helps them to concentrate, remember, and revisit their thoughts and ideas.

After that, working in pairs again, they create a small suitcase using cardboard, similar to the one that Tsoclis's Wayfarer holds. They discuss and decide what they would put into their own suitcase if they were wayfarers. They are encouraged to discuss their dreams and inspirations, memories from their personal and family life, their loved ones, the purpose of life, etc. Then, they are asked to make drawings or write short phrases on small pieces of paper to fill their suitcase with and carry with them through the course of their life.

Finally, they choose a graffiti phrase that represents them and decide if they want to make it public. This phrase is written on the suitcase,

on its outside surface. Alternatively, they can express what they stand for using colours and shapes.

Having created their suitcase, each pair shares in plenary what they have created. They explain the symbolism, what they have put inside the suitcase what each part stands for, and what ideas are expressed on the outer part of the suitcase.

### Procedure and Methods

- Welcoming, splitting up the group into pairs
- Ice-breaking task: "Describing Words"
- Specific task: "Socratic Method"
- Specific task: "Creative Expression" (art workshop)
- Feedback task: "Post-It Note"

## II. Exemplary workshop concept from the National Museum of History, Sofia

### Project Title

One Family – Many Stories

### Topic/Sub-topic

The understanding different generations have of the same topic and their visual representation of it through personal objects.

### Idea and Concept

Petar Stefanov, Visitor Programmes and Communication, NHM

### Facilitator

Petar Stefanov

### Dates and Duration

A series of workshops to be repeated regularly with changing participants, 3 hours each

### Group Type

One family, ideally consisting of three generations and their friends

### Group Size

10–15 participants

### Description and Goals of the Workshop

A family meets in a museum to develop an exhibition of their personal objects. The main focus is on answering the following questions:

- *Can different generations work as equals, despite knowing and living with each other?*
- *Can they achieve a common goal without one of them being the leader and the others just following?*
- *How can they create a common narrative (in the form of an exhibition) out of their different stories?*

The workshop is based on a modern cultural-historical approach, focusing on everyday life in past times rather than the history of “great men”. It sets out to build a bridge between the topic of the exhibition and the family’s perspective on it.

The family chooses a topic, e.g. childhood, games, technology, etc., and each participant brings a personal object to the workshop that is related to the theme. After everybody has had a chance to present their object and explain why they brought it, the different generations will arrange them to present their combined vision of the chosen topic. As a final product, there will be a joint display in a prepared multifunctional museum space, telling a story through the eyes of their family.

In this process, the families will have the opportunity to learn not only about the specific topic but also about the practice of curating and about teamwork beyond daily routines. They also have a chance to create new memories within the family and build up a personal connection to the museum.

### Procedure and Methods:

- Ice-breaking task: “The Helium Stick”
- Short guided tour in the related museum section highlighting curatorial decisions

- Brainstorming for the participants to discuss the theme and the objects
- Specific task: “Change of Perspective”
- Group work to discuss why they chose to display the objects in the way they did
- Feedback task: “Five Finger Feedback”

**Idea for a Didactic Setting**

A display or specially designed construction in a museum space – made, for example, from wooden panels – which will serve as a platform for the presentation

## Reflections



## Reflecting on the Project

Although I am one of the facilitators, ACROSS GENERATIONS has been a training for me as well. Going through the material that had already been prepared and adapting it for museum professionals from Southeast Europe to accompany them in developing intergenerational programmes was an eye-opening process.

For most of the participants the concepts were new, but somehow familiar at the same time. For some of them, the programme was a real opportunity to have further resources to test things. Others were more restrained on account of institutional dynamics and time constraints. Besides the participants' different profiles, their different levels of experience, different positions, and the different needs of their organisations, there were a number of common learnings from this transnational training programme. I will summarise some of them here and raise various questions for further thought:

- Trying something new can be risky. Most participants adapted existing formats or targeted existing audiences. It felt safer. I sense that they are now more prepared to experiment with other audiences and establish partnerships with other organisations – especially those working on a solid basis with the target groups – to do things together. Would you take the risk?
- Intergenerational dialogue can take various forms (and some of them you will find in the publication). But how we communicate the activities is also important: Is the intergenerational aspect explicitly articulated or implicit? Is our primary objective to cultivate this intergenerational dialogue, or is the activity part of another strategy? One museum representative said that they consciously did not communicate the activity as intergenerational, which is an interesting aspect to consider. In all cases this is a matter of priorities, and there should also be consultation with the communication teams. What do you think is more important to be communicated for your museum, activity, and target audience?

- We can choose to do one-off activities that stimulate intergenerational dialogue – and that’s a great start. But can we also think in the long term? What resources, skills, and vision do we need to make this a practice within our organisations?
- All museum collections are valuable, tell stories, and can provide a great ground for conceptualising activities. Some participants used the museum collections to give life to their project, but others asked participants to bring their own objects or to create a collection together. Some projects also contributed to the institutional memory of the museum. How can different objects bring people together? What narratives can be co-created?
- You always need debriefing. If the underlying principle of the activity is intergenerational dialogue, you – or someone from your team – needs to have the skills to stimulate the participants to reflect on their experience. How did they feel? What did they learn? What did you learn from their learning?
- Support from the institution’s management is pivotal. Engaging other colleagues and departments as well. Such activities reflect the organisational culture of the museum and need to be the result of shared ambitions and objectives.
- Finally, in such activities it is very valuable to have orchestrated formats, but how can we also leave space for unexpected encounters or thoughts?

ACROSS GENERATIONS was an experiment for me in rethinking our audiences beyond the age divide and trying to conceptualise activities that could nurture dialogue and understanding. I still feel that we need to think outside the box to achieve this. But a start has been made, as illustrated in this publication. Let’s lean *across* these experiences in our effort to propose activities *across* generations in museums!

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