Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου

Σχολή Ανθρωπιστικών και Κοινωνικών Σπουδών

Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών
«Πολιτιστική Πολιτική και Ανάπτυξη»

Πτυχιακή Εργασία

"Performance as a Tool for Adult Audience Engagement –

A practice-based research at the Fairy Tale Museum in Cyprus"

Ναταλία Κουχαρτσιούκ

Επιβλέπουσα Καθηγήτρια
Δρ. Ζωή Δέτση

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Η παρούσα πτυχιακή εργασία υποβλήθηκε προς μερική εκπλήρωση των απαιτήσεων για απόκτηση πτυχιακού τίτλου σπουδών
«Πολιτιστική Πολιτική και Ανάπτυξη»
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ΛΕΥΚΗ ΣΕΛΙΔΑ

Περίληψη

Η παρούσα εργασία μελετά τη χρήση των παραστατικών τεχνών και, πιο συγκεκριμένα, του θεάτρου, ως εργαλείο για την ενίσχυση της ενεργούς συμμετοχής του ενήλικου κοινό στο Μουσείο Παραμυθιού. Η έρευνα στο πλαίσιο της εργασίας αυτής επικεντρώνεται στο ενήλικο κοινό συγκεκριμένα γιατί αποτελεί το κομμάτι του κοινού που επισκέπτεται το συγκεκριμένο μουσείο λιγότερο και το μέρος του κοινού που έχει χαμηλότερο ενδιαφέρον συμμετοχής σε έντονα διαδραστικές, θεατρικές και παιγνιώδεις δραστηριότητες. Η εργασία τοποθετείται γύρω από τρεις παραμέτρους: α) η ερμηνεία και η ανάπτυξη της σχέσης κοινού-μουσείου από τη δεκαετία του '80 μέχρι σήμερα, β) οι παραστατικές τέχνες και το σημείο «συνάντησής τους» με τα μουσεία και γ) η παραστατικές τέχνες σε μουσεία της Κύπρου. Για το σκοπό της εργασίας μου μελέτησα την ήδη υπάρχουσα βιβλιογραφία, πραγματοποίησα έρευνα με βάση την πρακτική μου εργασία στο Μουσείο Παραμυθού (με ερωτηματολόγια συμμετεχόντων σε διάφορες δραστηριότητες), ανέλυσα τις παρατηρήσεις μου και κατέγραψα τις προσωπικές μου σκέψεις ως επαγγελματίας σε μουσείο. Τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνάς μου και των παρατηρήσεών μου με οδήγησαν στο συμπέρασμα ότι η χρήση των παραστατικών τεχνών σε μουσεία μπορεί να ενισχύσει την εκτίμηση και θετική επαφή των επισκεπτών με τους μουσειακούς χώρους και το περιεχόμενο. Οι παρατηρήσεις επίσης τόνισαν τη σημασία της καινοτομίας ως προς τη διατήρηση της σχετικότητας των μουσείων σήμερα και επισήμαναν πως η ποιότητα της επαφής του ενήλικου κοινού και η έκταση της μάθησης εξαρτώνται από την πρωτοτυπία της εμπειρίας και το βαθμό στον οποίο δίνεται στους ενήλικες η δυνατότητα να αναστείλουν την πραγματικότητα και την καθημερινότητα.

Summary

This dissertation explores the use of performance and, more particularly theatre, as a tool for engaging adult audiences at the Fairy Tale Museum in Cyprus. My research focuses on adults as a particular audience group, because they are the age group that visit the specific museum the least and it is hard to get them involved when it comes to highly interactive, performative and playful activities. Within this context, this dissertation underpins three parametres: a) interpretation and audience-museum relationship development since the 80s b) performance art and how they «meet» museums c) performance art in museums in Cyprus. I revisit existing literature, conduct a practice-based research based on various activities designed for the Fairy Tale Museum (through post-participation questionaires), discuss my observations and record my personal thoughts as a museum pracitioner. The results of my practice-based research and my observations led me to conclude that performance can enhance visitors' appreciation and positive engagement with museum spaces and the content. The research findings underline the importance of innovation in maintaining museum relevance for adult visitors and has given me glimpses into the connection between how the quality of engagement and the extent of the learning will depend on the novelty of the experience as well as the degree to which adults are given license to suspend reality and the everyday.

Preface

This dissertation echoes my desire to find connections between my career in program development in museums, my background in Applied Theatre and creative facilitation. I have always been fascinated by the ability of the arts, and especially theatre, to facilitate and mediate social interactions. Working in museums, I have strived to push the boundaries of the ability of performance and theatre to enhance experiences for visitors, not only children but also adults. This dissertation reflects my interest in contributing to the ways we can make museums in Cyprus more relevant and engaging using the art of theatre as a tool.

I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Zoe Detsi-Diamanti, for the constructive meetings, discussions and guidance provided throughout the research and writing of this dissertation. I am very thankful to my family, friends and museum colleagues for their support through the entire period of my studies and particularly during the writing of this dissertation.

Contents

Introduction

In 2005, the New York Times reported a story about a professor and his students in a college in Manhattan, who had taken their digital recorders in New York's Museum of Modern Art and created a set of alternative audio perspectives on some of the major works of art in the permanent collection. These recordings were available to download for free. This was the first time that someone had publicly appropriated the museum voice from a respected, authoritative institution and replaced it with opinionated, perceptive alternatives. This generated a wave of change, with museums starting to invite the public in a dialogue about their perception of the exhibits and their personal understanding of the meanings conveyed and constructed within them (Samis in Anderson, 2012: 307).

Traditionally, museums have been considered as places of authority and truth (Vergo, 1989: 165) and performance as a place of insubordination and fantasy. Viewed in this light, the connection between the two seems like a juxtaposition. However, contemporary museum practices are shifting this relationship into one that is collaborative and complimentary. The change came with the realisation that engaging visitors in an interactive experience is much more likely to have a positive result in both educational and recreational perspectives and to increase the chances of visitors returning to the museum (Antón & Camarero & Garrido, 2018; Samis & Michaelson, 2017). Museums worldwide are shifting the direction of their practices "from display to experience, from tableaux to performance, and from quiet contemplation of authoritative interpretation to active participation and collaborative production of meaning(s)" (Bennett, 2012: 60). Hence, with museums broadening their audiences and trying to make collections more accessible to the public as well as more multifaceted, tools such as computer interactives, multi-layered text labels, specially trained mediators as well as performance, are helping to make the museums experience more worthwhile for visitors, by linking the visitor

experience with the collection displayed and supporting interpretation.

The new museum practices, focused on interpretation, engagement and the generation of memorable experiences, have put the relationship between museums and performance on a collaborative road. Museums around the world are increasingly using performance in order to "provide platforms for social engagement, transitioning from providing controlled experiences to comfortable venues for people and discourse" (Simon, 2008 [online]).

The extent and purpose of the use of performance in museums have created a debate. Some scholars and practitioners view the use of performance in museums as a temporary novelty or an activity with little educational or social value (Hall in Bennett, 2012: 77; Clothier, 2014). Others, suggest that these more creative strategies devised to include the visitor in the creation of experience do so with pedagogical intent and as a primary means of producing interpretation over authority, hence moving museum practices forward into a more democratic and inclusive future (Bennett, 2013: 77; Black, 2005; Papp, 2013; Jackson & Kidd, 2013; Hughes, 1998). Museums are employing various ways to respond to one of the greatest challenges they face today: to respond effectively to the "need to know" of a public whose tastes and recreational preferences are shaped by mass media and the entertainment industry. One response has taken the form of introducing performance into museums' repertoire of interpretive techniques.

With years of experience in working in museums and as Head of Audience and Educational Programs at the Fairy Tale Museum in Cyprus, I have developed a keen interest in the way mediators, like myself, can develop new tools for keeping the audience engaged with the museum content. Personally, I am a firm believer that the emblematic museum experience of our time is a personalized, highly interactive and stimulating one (Antón et al., 2018: 1420; Rodney, 2016 [online]). I also believe performance holds great potential towards offering such experience not only to children but to adults too, as an interpretation tool in the process of engaging the visitor and developing a broader audience base. In view of the international discourse over the use and purpose of performance in museums and the very limited evidence in practice that engages audiences

in interactive ways in museums in Cyprus, this dissertation presents the development of the relationship between performance and museum and attempts to initiate a discourse around the use of performance for adult audience engagement in Cypriot museums. The following chapters outline the theoretical framework and practical workings of research done at the Fairy Tale Museum in Cyprus that looks into the use of performance and, more specifically role playing, in activities designed for adult visitors.

Chapter 1

In this chapter, I state my research objective and relevance (1.1). Afterward, I provide a brief review of the literature that supports my research (1.2). I also record the methodology (1.3) and limitations (1.4) of my research, and finally, I present my dissertation structure (1.5).

1.1 Research Question and Relevance

In Cypriot museums today, audience interpretation strategies follow, predominantly, conventional patterns along the lines of guided tours, temporary exhibitions and educational programs for families with children and school visits. The limitation in practice is reflected in the lack of relevant research concerning practices that engage audiences in interactive ways – which is the recent direction taken by most museums worldwide. On a professional level, I have been involved in designing audience programs for museums in Cyprus for the last seven years. My experience has made me realise that policy-makers, decision-making bodies and museum administrations in Cyprus are predominantly concerned with offering interactive (and mostly educational) fun, experiences for children and young audiences, more than adults. It is somewhat presumed that adults, visiting a museum either to accompany a child or as a free-choice learner and explorer, do not need activities that are more interactive and fun, keeping them engaged. Since the tendency is to design creative educational museum programs for children and youth in Cyprus, I have been using my skills and background in applied theatre to do exactly so in the museum I worked.

Interested in pushing the boundaries of the ability of performance and theatre to enhance experiences for visitors, not only children but also adults, I wondered: Could performance make adults feel engaged and interested as well as willing to return to the museum, just like it does for children? Working the last two years in one of the few - if not

the only - museum in Cyprus that is clearly characterised as a children's museum, made me contemplate even further: Would adults visit this particular museum, without being required to accompany any children, to take part in performance activities designed for them? What would this research be able to demonstrate regarding the needs of adult museum audiences in Cyprus today?

Hence, the main research question explored in this dissertation is: What kind of impact can performance have on adult visitor engagement at the Fairy Tale Museum? Some subquestions that helped guide my research and practice were: Can a performative activity function as a tool for enhancing the relationship between the adult audience and the museum? What led to the use of performance in museums? In what ways does performance connect to museums? What is the current use of theatre in museums in Cyprus and how can we develop it further? How do adult visitors in a museum in Cyprus evaluate their active participation through performance in a museum? What impact can theatre have on interpretation for adult audiences?

This dissertation is a research project that brings together two major public cultural artifacts, performance and museum exhibitions, and aims at contributing to the contemporary Cypriot museum practices and discourse concerning adult museum visitor engagement. At the same time, the focus on adult audiences renders the dissertation relevant to a wider range of museum professionals as museum adult programs and practices are less researched (van Leeuwen & Westwood, 2008; Proyer, 2017: 241-243).

1.2 Brief Literature Review

The research in this dissertation attempts to initiate a discourse around the use of performance for adult audience engagement in Cypriot museums. For the purpose of this dissertation, the first part of my research looked at the contemporary discourse around museum audience development and visitor engagement. Subsequently, I looked into preceding academic research around the association between performance and museums, where they met in practical examples, and how their shared interpretive

potential can become the common ground on which we can create new tools for adult museum visitor engagement.

My reading list for the first part of my researched centered around the selection of essays in a volume edited by Gail Anderson *Reinventing the Museum – An evolving conversation on the Paradigm Shift* which gave me a well rounded understanding of contemporary and on-going debates about the reinvention of museums, their role and relevance in today's changing times. Particularly useful to my research was Lisa Robert's contribution to the changing practices of interpretation in museums. The book led me to look into some chapters from *The New Museology* (edited by Peter Vergo), which solidified concepts I used in this dissertation as one of the earliest works that address a change in the role of museums and the field of museum studies as a whole. It allowed me to see the progress in academic discourse by comparing the developing positions from the late 80's to later academic publications.

The essays *New Ways of Experiencing Culture: The Role of Museums and Marketing Implications* by Neil Kotler, *The Experience Economy* by Joseph Pine and James Gilmore and the essay from John Falk on the changes in the museum visitor experience, led me to look further into the discussion about museum experiences as interpretation tools. Particularly the four realm model proposed by Pine and Gilmore, that manifests across participation and connection, resonated with me and I used it as a guide into assessing a museum visit as an experience.

The book *The Museum Experience Revisited*, by co-directors of the Institute for Learning Innovation, John Falk and Lynn Dierking gave me the tools I needed to understand museum visitor motivation and expectation in the middle of contemporary museum contexts. Also, the book *The Engaging Museum*, by Graham Black (and particularly Section 4: *Planned to Engage – Using Interpretation to develop museum displays and associated services)* proved highly useful in helping me have a clear picture of the most recent museum practices regarding interpretation enhancement and actual step-by-step designs in museum engaging programming. Throughout my literary research, *A Companion to Museum Studies (*MacDonald, 2006) was the overarching reference point.

For the second part of my reading, I looked into preceding academic research around the points where performance and museums met, first on a global scale and then in Cyprus. Here, I was very interested in collecting as many practical examples as possible from the available sources. I used the book *Performing Heritage*, edited by Anthony Jackson and Jenny Kidd, as my initial starting point. In particular the first part of the book, concerned with visitors, audiences, and events, I found a lot of useful material regarding the contemporary performance practices in museums. Between all the articles in the book, but generally the research done by Jackson in the specific research area, and the work and publications of museum theatre practitioner Catherine Hughes (*Theatre and Controversy in Museums, Museum Theatre: Communicating with Visitors through Drama being some examples)*, I found ample material to help me look at all the various ways performance has been employed in museum settings. For a variety of practical examples, I found the brief but very compact book by Susan Bennett, *Theatre & Museums* helpful. It acted as an impressive catalog of collected practices, from performance art to museum theatre, that I could then research further on the web.

It became evident to me, as I researched material related to museum interpretation and audience engagement as well as performance in museums, that the ever-increasing use of performance in heritage contexts is the subject of controversy in academic discussions. Moreover, there is little sustained research to accompany the debates (Jackson and Kidd, 2013: 1-9). Until today, although there is more research being done in the field of museum studies, there is an ongoing debate concerning the use of more creative and entertaining tools, like performance, in museums. On one hand, some researchers and practitioners maintain that there is a productive and beneficial foundation in the use of performance in heritage sites (Hughes,1998; Bennett, 2013; Jackson and Kidd, 2013; Black, 2005). On the other hand, the practice is being rendered subject to criticisms with words like "Disneyfication" and "edutainment" echoing negatively. Because of their turn to highly interactive tools, museums are sometimes regarded as cultural multiplexes or "funhouses": "At what point does the aesthetic mediation, be it in the structuring of the museum space or the exhibitions, rob the contents of their communicative power and

potential?" (MacDonald, 2006: 390; Prior in MacDonald, 2006: 521). Even though my research is not an attempt to take a side on this debate, it was particularly helpful to me in holding a critical position towards my practice.

1.3 Research Methodology

I used two methods for my research: desk-based and practice-based research through participant questionnaires. My desk-based research was limited to reading books and articles connected to my topic. Reading other master dissertations also helped me to find my path and more literature connected to my own dissertation. During my survey of the literature, I sought books and articles about museum interpretation, audience development and engagement and museum theatre. I was fully aware that the topic I chose is more practical than theoretical so I complimented my research with live observation and participation of performances in museums in Cyprus during the period of the research. I also deducted that for the purposes of my research and, as a museum professional working on museum programming, conducting qualitative research would be essential. I decided to follow research centered on the designing and implementation of activities at the Fairy Tale Museum in Cyprus, as Head of Audience and Educational Programs there. These activities were designed predominantly for adult visitors and had theatre at the core of their process. They were implemented in the period of February – May 2019. To facilitate the observation of the way these activities impacted participants in engaging with the museum and its content, I used post-participation questionnaires, in which I included qualitative and quantitative research questions.

1.4 Research Limitations

The use of theatre in museums contains many different aspects and methods. During the practical part of my research, I only used two museum theatre forms: story-telling and first-person interpretation. Hence, conclusions have been shaped based on only these techniques. Additionally, as a professional based in Cyprus, my practice-based

research was limited to the activities designed within the Fairy Tale Museum in Nicosia. I recognize the very limited perspective that the research provides and I do not propose that the findings would be applicable to other museums, with different missions and content, in Cyprus or abroad. The purpose of the research is to examine how far adult audiences in a specific museum in Cyprus felt engaged while taking part in performative practices.

Also, the research is limited to three activities designed over a brief period of time in one museum in Cyprus. I recognize that the results cannot be representative. Nevertheless, I propose them as a preliminary indication in a barely researched area.

1.5 Dissertation Structure

The dissertation contains an introduction, which states the aims, relevance and literary and methodological underpinnings of my research, three chapters and then a Conclusion. Chapter 1 states my research objective and relevance, provides a brief review of the literature that supports my research, the methodology of my research and the dissertation structure. Chapter 2 discusses the effects of «new museology» in the relationship between a museum and its audience and how audience development has been shaped into an issue of experience value. The second part of Chapter 2 outlines the relationship between theatre and museum and maps out the use of theatre museum internationally and then in Cyprus, specifically. Chapter 3 presents the practice-based conducted at the Fairy Tale Museum and analyses the findings and observations deducted from it. The last chapter draws the conclusions resulting from the research as well as the professional and academic lessons learned from the process.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I present the theoretical foundation on which I based my practical research. With my main research objective being to investigate the ways in which performance can make adult visitors of the Fairy Tale museum more engaged, I looked at available research in two areas a) Museums, Visitors and Engagement and b) Performance in Museums. At the end of the chapter, I review the use of performance in contemporary museums in Cyprus, hence, mapping out the practice landscape in which my research is conducted.

2.2 Museums, Visitors and Engagement

2.2.1 The "New Museology" Shift

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, social sciences witnessed the emergence of a theory that proposed a shift in the way people make meaning of their environments and learn from them (Silverman, 1995: 161; Schorch, 2013) This shift meant, in theory and practice, that the ways in which we choose to convey information would have to be reconsidered. It emphasized the idea that meaning occurs in the interaction between individuals' behaviour in social contexts and the mediators that exist in that context and that "individuals shape and are concurrently shaped by these mediators" (Rodari, 2005). Mediators vary, from seminars and talks, to road signs and museum labels.

This paradigm shift, concerned with the nature of information communication, inevitably affected the museum field (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994: 9; Anderson, 2012; Black, 2012: 143; Black, 2005: 5; Da Silva; Alexander & Alexander, 2008: 264; MacDonald, 2006: 3; Roberts, 1997; Saumarez Smith in MacDonald, 2006: 543). The new way of looking at knowledge transmittance and meaning-making in museum studies

has been described as "new museology" (Desvallées – Mairesse, 2009: 101; Vergo, 1989, MacDonald, 2006: 2). The change from "old" to "new museology" has been described as the transfer from being concerned with methods to being concerned with purposes (Vergo, 1989: 3). Museum practitioners and researchers shifted their focus from the reason why the museum content exists and more to the nature of the interaction between that museum content and audience and how that can be further enhanced. Humanistic at its core, «new museology» investigated the conceptual foundations of museum methods as it brought about the crucial shift of emphasis from collections and objects to audiences and people. It proposed an institutional recognition of the visitor as an independent maker of meaning who uses the museum in a variety of ways to fulfill particular, individual needs and desires such as social interaction, intellectual challenge, emotional connection, and consumerist indulgence. The focus was this shift onwards would be on how to offer a multi-layered, more holistic approach to visitors' needs (Black, 2005: 266 – 286). Museums could not have been left unaffected by the shift in discourse around knowledge transmittance and meaning-making (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994: 11). The role of museums in the twenty-first century did not change; it has always been to seek ways to engage the audiences with their collections. However, the change occurred in understanding the ways we learn and create meaning (Silverman, 1995: 161).

The fact that not all visitors are in a position to make contextual links with what they see did not seem problematic in the past, since museums and galleries often served more educated social classes and also envisioned their existence more in researching, collecting and preserving rather than having an educational or even social capacity (Vergo, 1989: 160). Subsequently, large parts of the public stayed away from museums. This changes from the '80s onwards when the idea of a museum as a shrine of knowledge is challenged in favour of museum practices open to the participatory meaning creation of its visiting public (Bennett, 2013: 16). Under the "new museology" shift museums are called to justify their role, their relevance, and even their own existence. Underlying museum concepts, assumptions, approaches, and practices are still being discussed, reviewed and changed from the perspective of institutional values, governance,

management strategies and ideology (Anderson, 2012: 3-4). Today, museum existence is associated with a change towards a more democratic function, as spaces of inclusion, knowledge construction and interpretation. In fact, the internationally recognised definition of museums is currently at a process of change, with words like "polyphonic", "interactive" and "dialogue" being considered as elements to be included (Noce, 2019 [online]).

While this shift came about within the museum community, change was also probed from the public itself. For the last couple of decades, a portion of the public that felt excluded from museums started to request representation. For a long time, exclusion of minority groups from the political, economic and social dimensions of society had been reflected in museums, as they failed to tell the story of these groups and denied them access through non-representation in collections, selective advertising targeting and high admission charges (Vergo, 1989: 165; Sandell, 2002: 48; Black, 2005: 46-55; Cameron, 2000). Today, museums are being required to acknowledge their political role, and their responsibility towards social representation, inclusion, and justice. Moreover, since the 80's, a lot of museums worldwide, in a climate of accountability and competition for scarce public resources, face greater pressure to present a convincing case for their role and value to society (Sandell, 2002: 43) and to ensure funding and sustainability (Falk & Dierking, 2013: 297, Waltl, 2006: 2). At the same time, the public today demands high-quality services while it demonstrates an unwillingness to passively consume knowledge. It requires experiences that match the thrill of co-creating rather than just absorbing information; something that the Web provides to millions today, placing museums in a battle of fierce competition with other places for leisure and the rapidly developing world of the Internet (Black, 2005: 2).

The concept of "new museology" generates a stimulating prospect for change in the way visitor experiences in museums are approached. I located three fundamental areas that this theoretical shift has surfaced at the forefront of "new museology": a necessity to recognize museum visitors' capacity to make meaning for themselves; partnering with visitors to discover what they personally want from the

museum; and lastly, mobilizing the museum's resources to meet these needs. Research does suggest that a key factor in determining a museum visit is the way the museum space becomes engaging in a communal and personal way (Waltl, 2006: 2). The word used by museum professionals to describe this new understanding of the way meaning is generated in museums based on visitors' needs for communal and personal connection is interpretation.

2.2.2 Are we "Dumbing Down" Museums? – An Ongoing Debate

The term interpretation has been used to describe the way museum professionals can help people understand museum collections since the beginning of the 20th century (Gilman, 1918 in Black, 2005:121). Museum historian F. Tilden introduced the concept in the 70's as "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience and by illustrative media rather than simply to communicate factual information" (Tilden, 1977: 8 in Black, 2005: 179; Alexander & Alexander, 2008). Historian and museum practitioner E. Alexander spoke of interpretation as the new way of approaching how meaning is communicated between museum exhibits and audiences. He placed the importance on the use of sensory perception to supplement rational understanding and the need to acknowledge that interpretation is informal, voluntary and depends on the interest of the individual (Alexander & Alexander, 2008: 259, Black, 2005: 183). In more recent times, curator and museum researcher, Andrea Witcomb, associated interpretation with interactivity (MacDonald, 2006: 353), while the International Council of Museums (ICOM) equated interpretation to mediation (Desvallées – Mairesse, 2009: 33). The ICOMOS defines interpretation as "[…] the full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding […]" (ICOMOS, 2008).

Interpretation is a form of communication, a "multilayered process of issuing messages to the public" (Alexander & Alexander, 2008: 258) in order to facilitate understanding and increase awareness. Subsequently, it is an educational process. Since the goal of interpretation is to make a museum visit relevant, it needs to constantly catch

up with the modern world and how the public receives and interacts with information. Since the public is becoming more and more familiar with content creation online or transparency and quick access to information, museums are being almost inevitably compelled to provide the public with quick and unobstructed access to information and active involvement in content development (Antón et al., 2018). This leads to a new image and role museums are trying to project into the future, away from an imposing connotation: "[…] interpretation suggests that we tell visitors what artworks mean and what to think of them. […] there's the implication that art is a foreign language to most people and that some sort of interpreter is needed to make sense of it. All this actually goes against what we're really trying to do. […] I'd like to think that all interpretation is generated by visitors – we're just providing some tools that can help"[1].

A.R. Rozan, director of audience engagement at the Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts, explains how today the word "engagement offers many opportunities and encourages necessary experimentation" (Rozan, 2016 [online]) and can be the key concept in understanding the relationship between the museum and visitors in the context of audience development strategies. Museums, competing in an expanding leisure marketplace, need to adapt in order to keep the audience engaged and their exhibitions relevant, to guarantee revisits (Antón et al., 2018: 1406; Herz, 2014 [online]). The discussion around what engagement truly is, in the context of a museum visiting experience, is a complex one as most aspects of meaningful engagement are profoundly subjective. For instance, Daniel Pink, an expert on motivation and engagement, explains that true engagement is motivated by autonomy, mastery, and purpose – all elements of choice and control that each individual develops in various degrees (Herz, 2014 [online]).

Some of the changes made by museum professionals, in the context of what Rozan called "necessary experimentation", are hugely debated. Museums are criticised for "dumbing down", underplaying their exhibitions, offering popular "edutainment" (Watlt, 2006: 4; Falk & Dieking, 2013: 280, Griffiths 2003: 375–7 in MacDonald, 2006: 303; Gamerman, 2014 [online]), that is a temporary novelty or an activity with little educational

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[1] Tate, Behind the Scenes: Interpretation (Minnie Scott) [online].

or social value (Hall in Bennett, 2013: 77; Clothier, 2014). Other museum practitioners support the use of highly interactive and creative strategies in order to create immersive and memorable experiences for visitors (Bennett, 2013:77; Black, 2005; Papp, 2013; Jackson and Kidd, 2013; Hughes, 1998).

Taking the use of performance and theatre in museums, more specifically as an example, it was initially assumed that "actors care only about performance…museum staff care only about the collection" (Jackson & Kidd, 2013: 53). These were two worlds that were not perceived jointly. Over the years, performance is becoming more and more accepted as part of an interpretative canon, linking museum displays into audiences' own life experiences. Even so, as Jackson and Kidd point out, "the debate remains pertinent when considering the risk that the dramatic interpretation may be the most powerful memory taken away from a museum or heritage visit" (Jackson & Kidd, 2013: 54).

In my opinion, adopting a visitor-centered practice requires strong leaders and innovative, sometimes difficult organizational changes (Conforti, 1995: 340 in D. Doering, 1999: 74). Having said that, it all ultimately depends on the goal of getting more people more often through the museum door and convince them that a museum visit can offer educational, fun and entertaining experiences with the highest quality standard for as wide a range of audiences as possible (Watlt, 2006: 4).

2.2.3 The Pursuit of Experience

Experience is a "practical contact with and observation of facts or events, the knowledge or skill acquired by a period of practical experience of something and an event or occurrence which leaves an impression on someone"[2]. An experience rises above the ordinary to become unforgettable and contributes towards the enrichment of the individual. Hence, it holds a certain value. In business terms, there is growing trust in the value of an experience and the benefits, emotions, and impressions directly or indirectly

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[2] Lexico [online].

experienced by customers (Bowsijk et al., 2007; Helkkula et al., 2012). In the tourism context, experience value is defined as the benefits which tourists perceive from a journey and from their stay at a destination, including assets that they and other tourists, as well as the host, bring to the process of co-creating experiences (Prebensen et al., 2013).

The way we perceive the relationship between museums and their visitors might differ from the business or tourism sectors, yet museums, as well as many other cultural institutions, seem to face common challenges with those areas of the economy. An interesting article by Z. Doering, Director of the Institutional Studies at the Smithsonian Institution, showcases this need for visitor acknowledgment by presenting the relationship between museums and public as crossroads with three possibilities: a museum can see visitors as strangers, maintaining its primary responsibility to the collection and not to the public or it can see them as guests, wanting to oblige them through activities or it can treat them as clients, where it will hold as its primary responsibility the accountability towards them (Doering, 1999). Doering argues that the future of museums lies in receiving visitors as clients. This establishes a mode of contact that appears business-like, yet, it offers the possibility for the maintenance of an active dialogue with visitors in order to stay constantly relevant and attractive and being accountable towards the quality of services provided to them. Museums are becoming increasingly oriented towards the way the general economy is heading, and that is, towards acknowledging experiences as the new economic wave, the new way towards progress and growth. (Kotler, 2001). Some scholars have even described contemporary museum practices as "experiential products" (Prentice, 1996: 169 in Doering, 1999: 74).

Researching the notion of experience value, I came across the work of management advisors and experience experts, J. Pine and J.H. Gilmore They argued that the next wave in economic history would be the emergence of an "experience economy". They theorised that the future of the global economy would rely on industries orchestrating memorable events for their customers and that memory itself would become the product, the experience (Pine and Gilmore, 2013). Correlations have been made between the work of Pine and Gilmore and museum audience development, particularly

due to their proposed model (Appendix 2.3) that helps determine the value of an experience (Antón et al., 2018; Radder & Han, 2015; Pine & Gilmore in Anderson (ed.), 2012: 163-169). According to Pine and Gilmore, an experience is a "memorable event, revealed over time, which engages individuals in an inherently personal way" (Pine & Gilmore in Anderson (ed.), 2012: 164 - 165) and their model proposes four realms of an experience that manifest across two dimensions (participation and connection) depending on the degree of engagement of an individual. Below are the four realms, placed in the context of a museum visit:

1. Entertainment - experiences that involve amusement and enjoyment. In the context of a museum visit, entertainment experiences characteristically occur when people passively observe others' activities and/or performances (Manthiou, Lee, Tang & Chiang, 2014 in Radder & Han, 2015: 457). It has been found that museums are often perceived to be interesting, offering opportunities for entertainment and fun (Thyne, 2001; Scott, 2007 in Radder & Han, 2015: 457). At times, there may be an overlap between the informative, fun and social aspects of the museum visit, that is, between education and entertainment, and that has been referred to, mostly adversely, as "edutainment" (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, Radder & Han, 2015: 459).

2. Education - refers to the intellectual results of learning, acquiring information. Most museums provide opportunities for learning through offerings such as historical recreations, art exhibits, guided tours and audio guides (Raajpoot, Koh & Jackson, 2010 in Radder & Han 2015: 457). According to Boswijk et al. (2012), learning leads to meaningful experiences. However, these experiences might differ depending on the visitor's needs and interests (Packer & Ballantyne, 2002 in Radder & Han, 2015: 457).

3. Esthetics - refers to observing and enjoying the environment or physical atmosphere of a place through sensory perceptions. The esthetic museums' elements might include physical space, color, lighting, means of directing movement (Crozier, 2012 in Radder & Han, 2015: 456).

4. Escapism – the breaking away from reality or routine by observing things that can raise awareness and stir the imagination. In the context of contemporary museum practices,

resources are being increasingly used to actively engage the visitor in an escapist experience, directing that experience through physical, mental, emotional and sensory stimuli (Crozier, 2012 in Radder & Han, 2015: 456).

According to the model, these four realms function within the context of engaging the visitor, inviting participation and connection to what is being experienced. The first dimension indicates either active or passive visitor participation. Passive participation implies that the individual does not affect the staged experience. Active participation implies that the customer plays a key role in co-creating the experience. The second dimension is connection and it involves two poles: absorption and immersion. Absorption implies occupying one's attention by bringing the experience into the mind, while immersion implies being physically part of the experience (Radder & Han, 2015: 456, Anton et al, 2018: 1408). Subsequently, the model proposes that the richest experiences are those that contain aspects of all four realms and happen where all the spectra meet.

Principally, a museum visit is fueled by the desire for an experience that contains all four realms and museums are in a race to deliver. Museum professionals are progressively delving into ideas and tools that allow for visitors to have physical or digital experiences, that are astonishing, captivating the senses and the imagination, but also co-created and co-owned, providing visitors with an entrancing and personalised choice to the way they choose to spend free time. There are ample examples of the ways museums in the 21st century are mediating experiences for the public, across the entire world[3]. I believe performance belongs to the memorable events that museums and other institutions seek to offer to customers that manifest across participation and connection as it demonstrates elements of all four realms proposed by Pine and Gilmore: Entertainment, education, esthetics, and escapism. While these two seemingly disconnected worlds, museum and performance art, are correlated in the ways they strive to stay relevant to

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[3] Government of Canada Official Site, 2016 [online]; Brooklyn Museum, 2008 [online]; Van Abbe Museum, 2013; Dublin Science Gallery, Open Calls [online]; Tate, Bloomberg Connects [online]; Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 2014, [online]; Kotler, 2001: 419-420; Falk & Dieking, 2013: 268 – 269; Henry and McLean, 2010.

wider audiences, after being demystified in the public eye (Bennett, 2013: 6). As a museum professional with experience in the use of theatre as a tool for social engagement, I am highly interested in the area where museum audience engagement meets the world of performance. In the next segment of this chapter, I will look at the way performance have been used in various museums, including those in Cyprus.

2.3 Performance And Museums

2.3.1 Performance In and For Museums

In 2016, the Pew Centre of Arts and Heritage in Philadelphia conducted a series of interviews with museum curators and artists, asking the following question: How is performance being integrated into museum spaces? In a lot of these interviews, one element prevailed: a collective conviction of all contributors that museums benefit greatly from admitting the use of performance in museums[4]. How can we define performance and in what ways has it been connected with museums?

Performance is «a type of theatre entertainment in which the artists' personality and the way in which they create and develop their ideas form part of the show»[5]. Performance art, as a relatively new form of contemporary, postmodernist art, is difficult to be defined (Carlson, 2017). However, some main characteristics can be classified based on the way that the performance art is presented, on its structure, and on its content. As an applied theatre professional working in a museum, I chose to focus my research on "Museum Theatre", which is based on the use of theatre as the main tool of performers inside a museum space. I discuss this genre further on.

In terms of performance used in museums, there are two kinds (Bennett, 2013). The first is a performance that highlights museum exhibits and collections. A term that could describe this category is "site-specific" (Wilkie, 2004). The term includes the

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[4] The Pew Centre is a hub for the exchange of ideas around issues critical to artistic practice in the United States of America – The Pew Centre for Arts & Heritage [online].

[5] Cambridge English Dictionary [online].

interaction between the work of art and the places in which its meanings are defined (Kaye, 2013). An example would be the project "From the Silence of the Display Case to Living Theatrical Voices", at the Benaki Museum[6]. Another interesting example is the use of performance as a tool for facilitating visitor interpretation of an exhibition through sensory stimulation in both the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. and the Simon Wiesenthal Centre's Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. Both museums activate protocols of identification through role-playing. The visitor is asked to become an actor, receiving upon arrival an identification card or a passport photo card with details about the life of an individual who died at the Holocaust (Bennett, 2013: 55-56). The public stages a performance as a means of grasping knowledge through sensory stimuli (Bennett, 2013: 57; Davis, 1995: 35-36 in Bennett, 2013: 57)[7]. For the purposes of my research, I focused on this category when designing the activities for the Fairy Tale Museum. The second kind of performance in museums is one that is unrelated to the museum content. This kind of performance could be described as "site-agnostic" or "site-generic" (Bennett, 2013). An example could be the Johannes Paul Raether performance at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 2017[8].

The aim of performance in a museum (site-agnostic) as an event that simply takes place in its space can be advertising and attracting more visitors. The goal of performance art of a museum (site-specific) is not only to advertise but also to bring the audience and performers together in an interactive process that has the exhibits as its centre (Bernier and Viau-Courville, 2016: 238). Both museums and performing arts companies are becoming more and more experimental with their practices on the

[6]Benaki Museum, 2016 [online].

[7] Another example of role play as a tool for interpretation through immersive experiences is the exhibition *Heroes* at the Walters Art Museum in Balitmore, in 2010. Visitors created profiles by picking a character from Greek mythology with whom they self-identified (The Walters Art Museum, 2009 [online]).

[8] The Stedelijk Museum, 2017, Johannes Paul Raether [online].

crossroads of where the two cultural practices meet, pushing the boundaries of how immersed the audience can be in an experience[9].

The presence of performance in museums is not a recent phenomenon. It has a history of more than 60 years, from Meredith Monk's performance that turned the entire Guggenheim Museum[10] into a stage to Marina Abramovic's hours of sitting in silence across visitors at the MoMA Museum[11] in New York. Chief curator of media and performance art at MoMA, Sabine Breitwieser, pointed out that although «performance was always there, [...] it had not been historically not curated»[12]. We find the connection in the theatrical interpretations of exhibits by professional actors of the National Theatre of Greece inside the Benaki Museum[13] in Athens, the choreographies of Benjamin Millepied at the Louvre in Paris[14], the costumed reenactments that give visitors a taste of past activities in heritage sites (Magelssen, 2007) and the narration of the Iliad at the British Museum in London in 2015 [15]. From as early as the late 50's, with the rise of the pop art movement, it strived to involve more than the detached observation of the viewer, with the fundamental belief that art could be brought into the realm of everyday life (An example is Allan Kaprow's "Happenings"[16] that also included performances in galleries and museums in the U.S).

Nowadays, more and more museums welcome performances at their halls or even at the most unexpected places of their buildings[17] and the use of performance is increasingly curated and systematically incorporated in the long-term strategies of these institutions worldwide. One reason for this trend might be that «in the age of the digital

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[9] The Bated Breath Theatre Company in New York, for instance, only works on projects in museums and they promote immersive audience engagement - Bated Breath Theatre Company, Productions [online].
[10] Guggenheim, 2014, The Idea of Compression: Meredith Monk's Juice [online].
[11] Museum of Modern Art, 2010, Marina Abramovic: The artist is present [online],
[12] Pogrebin, R., 2012 [online].
[13] Benaki Museum, 2016 [online].
[14] The Louvre, 2016, The Body in Movement Dance and the Museum [online].
[15] Almeida Theatre, 2015, The Iliad [online].
[16] The Art Story, Happenings [online].
[17] ibid.

and the virtual and the mediated experience, there is something very visceral about watching live performance»[18].

Relevant to the ways performance and museums and/or heritage sites keep finding a shared track are recent developments in audience research that identify an emergent paradigm of spectacle and performance (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998 in Bagnall, 2003: 87). Some sociologists suggest that contemporary society is characteristically performative and that there has been a "spectaclization" of place and person, in the sense that people themselves become the spectacle. They argue that the distance between audiences and performers has shrunk (Bagnall, 2003: 87).

For the purposes of my research, I used one specific genre of performance in museums, called Museum Theatre. Museum Theater has various definitions: "live interpretation" by museum theatre practitioner Catherine Hughes, "living history" by S. Roth, or even "gallery drama" by G. Farmelo are only some of them (Fasoi, 2016). It is quite a complex subject, because of the various forms it may take, the different theories around it as well as definitions.

According to Jackson, Museum Theatre has its roots in the Theatre in Education (TIE) and Drama in Education (DIE) movements (Hughes, Jackson & Kidd in Bresler 2007, 679-695). TIE is a branch of Applied Theatre that began in the 1960s valued for its ability to engage children in a range of subject areas and in ways that complemented more conventional teaching programs (Hughes, Jackson & Kidd in Bresler, 2007: 679-695). It is, therefore, directly connected to education (Jackson & Leahy, 2005: 304). Museum theatre belongs to the site-specific category of performance art and is directly connected to the museum exhibits and collections. In the framework of one of the main challenges contemporary museums face, that of having a social impact while also delivering immersive experiences when dealing with heritage, museum theatre has proved that not only can it enforce a constructivist approach in a museum environment but it can also generate debate and promote critical thinking on controversial issues (Vernieri & Nikonanou, 2015 [online]). Tessa Bridal defines museum theatre as a

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[18] Ibid.

discipline, which includes many categories like living history and re-enactment (Bridal, 2004: 1-3). According to Venieri and Nikonanou, Museum Theatre is "a variety of performative events aimed to interpret fragments of cultural heritage" (Venieri & Nikonanou, 2015: 1). A Greek Museum Theatre company called *Heterotopia*, describes it as "the use of theatre and theatrical techniques as a means of mediating knowledge and understanding in the context of museum learning. […] It may include a performance of a short play or monologue/s (often interactive) related to the museum collection, educational content, or site/location"[19]. The IMTAL defines Museum Theatre as a specific kind of "that employs fictional activity to communicate ideas, facts, and concepts. A museum-theatre performer assumes the role of a character, in order to entertain and educate visitors. They take on the role of a particular character in a particular circumstance in order to help visitors appreciate and understand the story in hand and, through that, some aspect of the host museum or site"[20].

The deployment of Museum Theatre varies across the world and its practice is almost as diverse as the sites in which it takes place. It is an eclectic medium, drawing from the range of performative and role-based styles of interpretation (Hughes, 1998; Goodacre & Baldwin, 2002; Bridal, 2004 in Jackson & Leahy, 2005: 305). In general, the deployment of performance in museums is a subject of debate, a dilemma between museum practitioners across the world.

2.3.2 When Performance and Museums Team-Up: A Dilemma

Audience and museum professionals have often faced dilemmas about the performances that take place in museums (Brooks, 2014 [online]). These dilemmas are about the validity, consistency, viability, externality, and synthesis of the performance. For example, ironic comments about performances are noticed at several blogs, like: "But as this avant-garde, unrestrained type of performance art weaseled its way into pop culture, people with less than a Ph.D. in art history asked: Why is all of this art? And by confusing, we mean the most shocking, abrasive, gory, offensive and downright absurd acts that have

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[19] Heterotopia, Official Site [online].
[20] International Museum Theatre Alliance, What is Interpretation [online].

had novices and experts scratching their heads over the years" (Brooks, 2014 [online]). Even since the '80s, opinions like that of museum curator Thomas Angotti, echoed a reserved attitude towards the use performance in museums: "the resources required to train performers and develop entertainment that is historically valid are normally not available to museums" (Alsford & Parry, 1991: 10). Margaret Benton, Director of the Theatre Museum in London (V&A), finds that the implementation of live interpretation in a museum, which is what performance is in this context, requires care and can be costly in more than one ways (Benton, 1997: 30). Thoughts about the way performance in museums can be costly in a reversed way were expressed by others too, who were skeptical towards it being almost elitist. "Museums in the experience economy [...] are offering, to those who can afford to practice the fantasy of a customized world, the opportunity to be who they want to be" (Martin Hall, 2006 in Bennett, 2013: 77). In other words, Hall's distrust of the use of performance in museums nests in the idea that the use of such creative approaches for audience reception is one more consumable with no social benefit, solely based on the economic ability to participate.

There is indeed skepticism on the increasing use of performance in museums and other heritage institutions nowadays, to the extent that it has been characterized as "risk". A risk that could be perceived as the loss of a "sense of holding onto the really carefully curated concept of an exhibition" and […]" by inviting another artist to respond to what they perceive you might have achieved in an exhibition, you're inviting something that you can't predict" (Museum Next, 2017 [online]). On the other hand, however, many museum professionals, scholars and also audience members support the notion of taking this "risk" in favour of the way the performing arts can respond to the need of placing emotional resonance and social relevance at the centre of visitor engagement in heritage institutions. Museum theatre practitioner, Anthony Jackson, calls for a need to develop criteria for distinguishing between "educationally and theatrically valid work", that deploys differing theatre techniques to make distinct contributions to the ways in which we think about the past, over mere 'heritage industry entertainment' (Jackson, 2000: 199). From a sociological perspective, Anna Reading suggests that "to convey and sustain

memory, we need performance, and so these museums construct participatory experiences to produce their distinct versions of the past and require visitors to give them life» (Reading 2003: 73 in Bennett, 2013: 59).

The benefits of using performance in museums can be specifically highlighted by the fact that in 1990 an International Museum Theatre Alliance (IMTAL) was established, with a mission to inspire and support the use of theatre and theatrical technique to cultivate emotional connections, and add public value to the museum experience[21]. According to Bridal (2004: 19), performance in its various forms and manifestations is "successfully employed in museums". The British Museum, for instance, straightforwardly supports the use of performance in their programs as a way to "develop a sense of ownership over the direction of the project […] Working in the galleries can help participants to place their own cultures, traditions, and life-stories in a wider historical and world context. Using theatre processes while exploring objects also challenges the Museum to think about the way in which it presents the stories behind the objects"[22]. This resonates with the argument that "playfulness and historical accuracy may seem poles apart". But if in the interests of accessibility and the stirring of curiosity, factual accuracy does sometimes get compromised, this should not in itself be a cause for condemnation (Jackson, 2000: 214).

The question of "entertainment versus education" / "enjoyment versus knowledge" is still an issue in the discussion about the ways museums are striving to be more relevant today and it is regrettable, not least because such polarization implies mutual exclusivity (Alsford & Parry, 1991: 14). Surely, it is equally radical to argue that entertainment has no place in museums. On the assumption that the basic service of museums is the transmission of information (Tilden, 1977:18 in Black, 2005: 180), entertainment and education might both be seen as forms of packaging information, of facilitating interpretation, so that the whole relates to the personality or experiences of the recipient, and in this way enriches his or her understanding. Sometimes, the evidence

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[21] International Museum Theatre Alliance, Official Site [online].
[22] British Museum, 2014, Fieldnotes Drama and Performance [pdf].

needed is the way the audiences truly engage with entertaining learning methods. A great example is a project "Against Captain's Orders", designed for the National Maritime Museum[23].

The use of role-playing by visitors is appealing to me and yet it is one of the least used approaches in creating engaging and immersive learning experiences for all ages in museums. If the statement by Plimoth's director, John Kemp, that "museums are there to educate by giving people the chance to have an imaginative interaction with material and objects from the past...."[24] holds legitimacy, then I believe theatre does deliver. Museum theatre practitioner Catherine Hughes argues that "museums need theatre in order to be more accessible as social institutions, more effective as educational institutions, and more honest as cultural institutions" (Hughes, 1998: 17). Theatre can open up the past precisely to those multiple perspectives and to the complexities and minutiae of the social context that most historians stress. Therefore it can mediate that which traditional exhibition cannot. The real achievement of these events is that they can bring history to life with solid support for the museum "where people go to explore themselves and their world" (Jackson, 2000: 198). In the following section, I present, in more detail, the employment of theatre and performance in museums in Cyprus.

2.3.5 Performance in and for Museums in Cyprus

As far as my research allowed me to identify and, at the point in time this dissertation was written, there has not been any assessment on the extent or impact of using performance in museums in Cyprus[25]. I dedicated part of my desk-research in mapping out the use of performance art in museums in Cyprus in order to place my own research within this framework. Subsequently, while I did come across examples of the incorporation of performance and theatre, in particular, in educational programs that

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[23] Punchdrunk UK, 2015, Against Captain's Orders – Punchdrunk Enrichment [video online].
[24] Runyard, S., 1996: 33 in Papp, 2013.
[25] The Cyprus Museum Guide, published by the Visual Sociology and Museum Studies Lab of the Technological University of Cyprus, listed 211 museums on the island - Οδηγός Μουσείων Κύπρου, 2014 [online].

engage children and teenagers, my research focused on events and programs that were not explicitly designed for children.

I have divided this section the way Bennett distinguishes performances in museums: 1) "Site-agnostic" and 2) "Site-specific". The majority of performances in museums in Cyprus, fall in the latter category, even if they do not disregard the museum space and its surroundings, as the creative canvas. Indeed, theatre can be presented as an exhibit in its own right, as opposed to an interpretive vehicle (Alsford & Parry, 1991: 9), which is the case of the first category.

1. "Site-agnostic" Performance Examples

The Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation has been progressively opening up its spaces and exhibitions for performances for some years now. Predominantly, performance in the Cultural Foundation is employed as a mechanism for attracting new audiences and enhancing visitor experiences within the spaces. A very recent example was an event called "Win-Win Situation – An Interdisciplinary Performance"[26] by Thread Ensemble. The performance, a concert in the form of a game, explored the role of games and rules in our lives by inviting the audience to actively interact with various activities and improvisations, within the premises of the foundation. The activities proposed by the Ensemble were not designed to expose visitors to specific elements of the exhibitions but rather to provide them with an immersive, engaging and fun way of interacting with each other and the space. Another example was the event entitled "Reclaiming the Roof" which was organised within a larger framework of events in 2018 that celebrated the opening of the Foundation building's roof to public use. The specific event was described as "an immersive musical theatre performance with a boldly experimental mood and elements of interactivity, promising to be an unforgettable experience"[27]. Interestingly, the language used for the promotion of this event – which is a promenade performance by a group of musicians in various areas of the building and the roof - indicates the tendency to promise

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[26] Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 2019 [online].
[27] Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 2018 [online].

not just an event but a exceptionally memorable experience, something that has been recorded in theory regarding the era of "experience economy" and how it connects today to museums and other cultural institutions.

Another example is a project called "Urban Collage: Sensing Spatiality Inside and Outside the Museum", implemented at the Loukia and Michael Zampelas Art Museum in 2017. "Urban Collage" was a live performance that resulted from an artistic residency. The performance took place inside the museum and in its surrounding, outdoor areas and it focused on the way the area where the museum was located could be experienced through the body of the artist in order to be performed at the museum. According to the promotional material, the performance allowed artists to "work between the concepts of private and public and between the museum and its perimeter in order to familiarise themselves with the different realities surrounding their work, thus creating ideas that are equally accessible to both public spaces and the museum space. […] The performance showed how the body can be used as a tool for formulating a psychophysical experience through live actions so that the area can be experienced beyond the every day" (Gregoriou, M., 2017 [online]). Here too, the museum informed visitors that what they would be part of was "beyond the everyday", a unique, extraordinary experience. The specific performance used the museum spaces and neighbourhood as a backdrop to the exploration of physical movement and presence. In essence, it did not highlight the presence of the works of art in its halls.

This "disregard" towards the actual artifacts present in the museum space can be further assumed in cases where the use of performance is done solely for its sake. One instance is the performance "Neraidismata" by the music group "Aenaos" that took place in the premises of Thalassa Municipal Museum. The group performed a number of songs that had no direct connection to the museum exhibits or themes for an audience that had visited in order to experience a live concert[28]. A similar event was also held at the Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios Mansion in Nicosia in 2018. The music band "Santouto" and musician Christina Polykarpou held a concert in the gardens of the museum as the ending

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[28] Thalassa Agia Napa Municipal Museum, 2019 [online].

to a day of activities inside the museum celebrating the International Museum Day and the European Night of Museums 2018[29]. The Cyprus Wine Museum in Limassol, hosted a jazz band and the violinist Luca Ciarla for a performance within the Aglanjazz International Festival just last summer[30]. In fact, the Cyprus Wine Museum has its own classical orchestra, called the Commandaria Orchestra, which performs regularly both within the museum premises and outside, at the island and abroad[31].

Another, controversial performance[32] that preoccupied the Cypriot media was, the performance of Romeo Castellucci's "Julius Cesar. Spare Parts. A dramatic intervention on W. Shakespeare" for the Kypria International Festival 2019. The play was staged inside the exhibition areas of the Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre (NIMAC)[33]. The subject matter of the play was not associated with any exhibition at NIMAC but with the space itself. Therefore it cannot be considered as a tool that mediates that which a traditional exhibition at NIMAC would fail to do. The strength in events like this performance lies in the way they support a museum's mission to be the place "where people go to explore themselves and their world"(Jackson, 2000: 208), through creative release.

Theatre is one performance genre that is not used much in museums in Cyprus. The Cyprus Theatre Museum, in Limassol, hosts theatrical performances on a regular basis and for understandable reasons. As I worked at this museum for years, I know from personal experience that none of the performances that took place so far inside the museum exhibition areas were connected directly to an exhibit. Of course, the fact that they were theatrical performances paid tribute to the existence and history of the exhibits and supported the museum's mission, almost by default. However, none of these

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[29] Press and Information Office, 2018 [onlne].
[30] Embassy of Italy in Cyprus, 2019, Italian Jazz in Cyprus: Luca Ciarla [online].
[31] Cyprus Wine Museum, Official Site, Commandatia Orchestra [online].
[32] Some of the scheduled performances were ultimately cancelled, after a strong reaction from animal rights activists regarding the presence of a horse on stage (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, Official Site, 2019 [pdf]).
[33] Embassy of Italy in Cyprus, 2019, Romeo Castellucci in Cyprus for the Kypria International Festival [online].

performances could be characterised as "site-specific" in the sense that Bennett intended for them: to enhance the interpretation of museum exhibits[34]. Relevant to the use of theatrical plays in museums is the ongoing partnership between A.G. Leventis Gallery and Alpha Square Productions. For the past couple of years, Alpha Square has been producing theatrical plays in the exhibition halls of the gallery. These plays are predominantly, but not always, unrelated to the exhibition topics. For instance, the performance of the play "Bacon/Freud" by Anthi Zachariadou in 2017, which was the third collaboration between the gallery and the theatrical team, was based on the true friendship between two art legends, Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud[35]. The way the play was promoted to the public allowed for the immediate connection to be made in a mental space where theatre meets contemporary art.

I do believe that examples such as these in museums in Cyprus are not damaging towards the ultimate need to keep the doors open to the public and offer people various means to connect with the exhibitions, making it relevant and, thus, treasured. But what is the situation in museums in Cyprus with performances being used specifically for the purpose of stimulating interpretation of an exhibit?

2. "Site-specific" Performance Examples

In 2015, on the occasion of the renewal of the Caterina Cornaro Gallery, the Leventis Municipal Museum in Nicosia put on two events entitled "Caterina Cornaro goes to the Opera"[36]. The events included a musical performance that included arias from the opera "The Queen of Cyprus". The concept of the performance was directly related to the opening of the new hall but also, significantly, to a piece of a rare music score of the opera, which belongs to the museum collections and permanent exhibition. This example showcases efforts to enhance visitors' experiences by using performance as a tool for

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[34] Υφυπουργείο Τουρισμού Κύπρου, Επίσημη ιστοσελίδα, Παγκόσμια Ημέρα Μουσείων – Θεατρικό Μουσείο Κύπρου [online].
[35] Cyprus Events, 2017, Bacon-Freud [online].
[36] Gregoriou, M., 2015 [online].

emotional stimulation. In this case, it was more directly connected to the exhibition content through the use of actual material from the collection.

I also continued exploring the way A.G. Leventis Gallery in Nicosia collaborates with Alpha Square for theatrical productions in its spaces and found an example of the way a theatrical play, performed inside the gallery, had a dialogical relation with the content of a temporary exhibition. In 2017, the gallery accommodated a theatrical play titled "Venus: Amorous & Savage". The performance was described as "a literary and poetic tribute to the goddess, with the dramatization of a combination of texts from Euripides, Homer, Sappho, Nikos Kazantzakis and more[37]. The performance was presented along a string of events around the temporary exhibition "The Venus Paradox" which was hosted at the Claude Monet Hall[38]. The play was not performed inside the Claude Monet Hall and therefore not anywhere near the actual exhibits, but was instead performed near the entrance of the gallery on the ground floor. The specific example demonstrates a conscious effort to use a theatrical performance as a tool in supporting the interaction of visitors with the exhibit, presenting another dimension (theatrical, textual, musical) of exploring the themes it entails.

Finally, an interesting example of "site-specific" performance in museums in Cyprus is a project called "In situ" by Cypriot dance and performance artist Elena Antoniou.[39] The performance is a long duration project that takes place in various museums around the world and was also hosted in 2018 at the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia (3 days, 19 hours) and the Archeological Museum of Limassol (6 days, 34 hours). The artist herself describes the concept as a "piece of live intangible art, which would become the reason for a visit to the museum. It gives the visitor time to observe, locate and recognise stillness in a general context and accept that human presence can create vibrations in space and awake memories"[40]. For me, "In Situ" is a unique example of the way performance in

[37] Araouzos, A., 2017 [video online].
[38] A.G. Leventis Gallery, Official Site, 2017 [online].
[39] Antoniou, E., Official Site, 2017 [online].
[40] ERT Open, 2019 [online].

a museum in Cyprus invited visitors to simultaneously communicate with the exhibition content and connect with the emotions and motives associated with the act of visiting the museum itself.

Chapter 3 Practice-Based Research

In this chapter, I present the way data collection in practice assisted the research on my dissertation question: What kind of impact can performance have on adult visitor engagement and interpretation at the Fairy Tale Museum? This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the Fairy Tale Museum (3.1), and the reasons why the research was conducted within the framework of the museum's needs and vision. I then offer a description of the activities on which the research was conducted (3.2). Then, I proceed to present the findings from the post-participation questionnaires distributed to adult visitors (3.3).

3.1 The Fairy Tale Museum

3.1.1 Why Performance In the Fairy Tale Museum?

The Fairy Tale Museum[41] was established in 2017. It is a private museum, located in the old city of Nicosia in Cyprus. It is the only museum of its kind in Cyprus. Its primary mission is to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of the Greek-speaking world, which includes folk tales, fairy tales, myths, and legends. It has also been established in order to showcase the universality of fairy tales, to allow the visitor to experience other cultures through their fairy tales and legends, to encourage reading for all ages and, finally, to promote the exploration of the world of stories interactively and through play

Since March 2017, the Fairy Tale Museum has been running educational programs for school visits (groups of pupils aged 4 to 12 years old), as well as a number of

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[41] The Fairy Tale Museum, Official Site [online].

monthly activities for families with children (aged 3 to 12 years old). In September 2019, I was appointed Head of Educational and Audience Programs at the museum. My assigned role and responsibilities demonstrated the management's need to expand the museum audience. It was quickly noticeable, by observing the numbers and demographics of the museum visitors in 2018, that there was one main group of people that the museum was not attracting: adults who either had older children or no children at all. The Fairy Tale Museum had not identified itself as a children's museum neither in its design nor its mission statement. It was understood that it was the tendency to provide activities and programs that were almost exclusively designed for young pupils in school visits and families with younger children that «branded» the museum as such. We needed to re-shape the way it communicated its collections and purpose to a wider audience. The Fairy Tale Museum, situated in the heart of Nicosia's old city, could be the place for all people interested in stories, myths, folk tales, and legends. Seeing it from that perspective, the interested visitor possibilities were much broader. Indeed, broadening the audience that is engaged with the museum, mattered to this cultural establishment, both for social and financial reasons. This was communicated by the director and owner.

Our main focus in broadening the museum audience was first, to design activities that appealed to the overlooked group of adults with no children or older children and secondly, to place an emphasis on the way we promote storytelling through interaction and active participation. Could performance help us enhance adult audience engagement? Could it generate positive experiences that feed into a positive image for the museum? Our new task, for a period of six months, was to research those questions through the design of adult programs that purposely invited interaction through elements of performance and role play in the museum.

The number of examples where performance is present, in any of its forms and manifestations, in museums in Cyprus is limited. This was one of the reasons I chose to explore the use of performance in the Fairy Tale Museum, where I was responsible for program content. The other reason was the challenge to explore the ability of performance to offer stimulating experiences for adults in a museum predominantly perceived as a

space for children. The foundation for the design of the activities in the Fairy Tale Museum was composed of two parts: firstly, our wish to combine adult entertainment with an active engagement with the museum exhibition content. In other words, we wanted adults to have fun but also feel engaged inside the museum, which was usually associated with children's play and learning. Secondly, we laid the ground of the activity design based on Pine and Gilmore's "Experience Model". In essence, we were looking at ways our adult programs are experiences at the intersection where education, entertainment, escapism, and esthetics meet. We relied heavily on the active participation and immersion components of the model as well, suggesting a structure that would facilitate being physically, mentally and socially part of the experience.

3.2 Practice-based Research

In this part of the chapter, I introduce the activities and research methods that I implemented for the research at the Fairy Tale Museum. The research was practice-based, centered on the designing and implementation of activities that would mostly appeal to adult audiences and not families with children. To facilitate the observation of the way these activities impacted participants in engaging with the museum and its content, I used post-participation questionnaires.

From February to May 2019, the Fairy Tale Museum hosted a series of activities that primarily invited the participation of adult visitors. The first of the activities was a role-playing game for adults titled «Adult Mystery Night». Another activity, titled «Telephone Tales», involved the narration of stories over the telephone. The last activity was the enactment of Cypriot folk tales by parents and children, titled «Beginning of a Tale, Good Evening to You All!» For this practical part of my research, I used two Museum Theatre forms in these activities: storytelling and first-person interpretation.

3.2.1 Researched Activities

«Adult Mystery Night» / «Βραδιά Μυστηρίου για Ενήλικες»[42]

The activity developed out of the latest popular concept of inviting audiences to visit a museum in unconventional working hours[43]. Each mystery game night involved only adult players and was an approximately 3-hour long quest to solve a crime scenario. The crime scenario was based on the combination of a number of folk tales, fairy tales, and legends, brought to a contemporary context, and all players were asked to play a character within that scenario. The games were divided into two rounds. In each round, players were directed to more clues, getting closer to solving the mystery. All areas of the museum were being used as socializing spaces for the characters as well as hiding places for clues.

Players were prepared for the game more than a week in advance by receiving a detailed briefing of their character traits and costume details. All players were informed about the ways in which they are involved in the crime but only one of them knew that he/she was going to be playing the guilty character. The objective of the games was for every player to use their knowledge of the fairy tales, folk tales and the different characters contained in them in order to communicate the relevant messages to other players, form the necessary relations and collaborate with others to discover the culpable character. Undeniably, the activity relied greatly on role-playing. Players are asked to impersonate a fairy tale or folk tale character brought to life in the modern world.

The Fairy Tale Museum organised this activity three times, with eighty-seven adult participants in total.

«Telephone Tales» / «Παραμύθια από το Τηλέφωνο»[44]

This activity was inspired by one of the two audiovisual exhibits inside the Fairy Tale Museum, one that is very popular with adults and children alike. The exhibit is an old rotary telephone device that contains audio files of narrations of a series of tales from the

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[42] See Appendix, Figure 2.4
[43] Museums at Night, 2011 [online].
[44] See Appendix, Figures 2.5 & 2.6

book of Italian author Gianni Rodari, «Telephone Tales». Visitors can sit next to the apparatus, pick up the transmitter and listen to the narration of a variety of tales from Rodari's work.

Increasingly interested in engaging as many people as possible with tales from around the world and the museum itself, we initially had planned to prepare a team of volunteers who would narrate these same tales to children being hospitalised in Nicosia, particularly in the oncological ward at the Archbishop Makarios III Hospital. The plan could not be implemented, however, since the hospital had issued a very strict policy for visitors, due to a heavy flu outbreak at the time. Looking into the alternatives, we decided to adapt the concept in order to include those children in the hospitals and others too, who could not easily attend the museum and experience the exhibit itself – children living abroad or in cities other than Nicosia. Amusingly, the exhibit itself and the idea of tales being narrated over the telephone is what finally gave us the opportunity to reach out to more children.

The Telephone Tales event called for adults to volunteer approximately three hours of their time in the museum, where they used phones provided by the staff to call parents' numbers and narrate a fairy tale to the children who signed up for the activity. The narrated fairy tales were chosen by the staff, in collaboration with the volunteers, to match the ages of the children and to help prepare the volunteers for role-playing the characters in the stories. The activity relied heavily on the ability of the adults to convey emotion and character traits solely through their voice, without any visual engagement. Principally, this activity required a basic exploration of the first-person impersonation and storytelling techniques by the adults participating.

The Museum organised this activity in February 2019, offering the experience to forty-two adult volunteers and, subsequently, to seventy-three children aged 3 to 12 years old, living in Cyprus and abroad.

"Beginning of a Tale, Good Evening to You All!" / «Αρχή του Παραμυθιού, Καλησπέρα της Αφεντιάς σας!»[45]

The last of the series of events organised for the purpose of predominantly engaging adult audiences in the museum was an afternoon of Cypriot folk tale performances. The event was planned to give the opportunity to parents with children aged 9 years old and above, to learn more about Cypriot folk tales.

Participants, adults and children alike, had to prepare a theatrical interpretation of a folk tale from Cyprus and present it in front of a live audience. The museum staff supported the preparation of the enactment by providing access to our Cypriot folk tales database and our library, helping with basic costume and prop preparation and generally coordinating all the organizational aspects of the performances.

It was evident from the beginning of the implementation of this activity, that it would require substantial preparation from the families involved. Notably, children and parents had to assign themselves roles and play parts in the narration of the folk tale they chose – a deed that would require confidence in theatrical skills and performing in front of an audience. Subsequently, the museum collaborated with professional actors who supported each performance by being the lead narrators. This facilitated the preparation to a great extent. Ultimately, parents with their children worked closely with the actors to present their interpretations of a Cypriot folk tale, resulting in fifteen folk tales being narrated and performed inside the museum for an evening that celebrated our folklore tradition and the self-assurance of children and adults in narrating those tales.

The Museum organised this activity in April 2019 in which 15 adults and their children (aged 9 years old and above) participated. 50 people (adults and children) attended as audience members.

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[45] See Appendix, Figure 2.7

3.2.2 Questionnaire Findings

The major component of my research was the completion of anonymous questionnaires by participants, after the completion of activities. The post-participation questionnaires were separated in three parts, containing sixteen questions in total. The first part is the demographic information section. The second part contains quantitative and qualitative questions regarding the participants' choices in visiting museums, their general attitude towards museums and the Fairy Tale Museum in particular. The third part contains a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions that specifically touched upon the participants' opinions regarding their experience[46]. For the purposes of the research, I gathered one hundred and forty-four completed questionnaires from participants.

Part 1 – Demographics

At the Fairy Tale Museum activities, one hundred and one participants were women while forty-three were men. The majority of the participants belonged to the 26 - 35 years old group (59%), while the second largest age group was 36-45 years old (29%). Fourteen individuals belonged to the 46-55 years old group (10%) while only three were under 25 years old (2%). There were no participants over the age of 55 years old (Appendix, Figure 3.1).

Part 2 – Attitudes and Tendencies

In the second part of the questionnaire, participants were asked to answer a number of questions that provided qualitative and quantitative evidence regarding their attitude towards museums in general and the Fairy Tale Museum in particular but also their habits regarding museum attendance.

To begin with, participants were asked to describe a museum in a few words. From the collection of words collected, a few occurred repeatedly: "Knowledge" (eighty-

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[46] See Appendix, Figures 1.1, 1.2 & 2.1, 2.2 for Research Dislaimer and Questionnaire in Greek and English.

nine answers), "Exhibits/Exhibition" (seventy-one answers), Antiquity/ Ancient" (sixty-seven answers), "History" (forty-two answers), "Art/ Paintings" (thirty-five answers). The word "Boredom" featured in one answer while the words "Fun/Entertainment" featured seven times. The word "Experience" and the word "Participation" featured only once each, in two separate questionnaires (Appendix, Figure 3.2).

In the second question of this part of the questionnaire, participants were asked to evaluate the importance of museums today. 68% of participants acknowledged the existence of museums as "Very important", 31% as "Quite important" while 1 % (2 participants) stated that museums' existence if "Of little importance". No participant chose to place "No importance" on the existence of museums (Appendix, Figure 3.3).

For the question "How often do you visit museums?", 33% of the participants claimed they visit 1-2 times, 52% claimed a visit 3-4 times a year while 9% said they visit a museum 5-6 times per year. 6% of them said they visit a museum more than 6 times a year (Appendix, Figure 3.4).

When participants were asked about the reasons why they visit a museum, 47% of them answered that the main reason is knowledge acquisition, new information, learning, while 37% visit a museum for entertainment. 9% of participants would visit a museum out of interest for a specific exhibition, while only 4% of them would visit it for its reputation and 2% for its specific theme. Two participants chose the "Other" category in which they stated that they would visit a museum "for professional inspiration" and "for my children's educational needs" respectively (Appendix, Figure 3.5).

For the fifth question in this part, participants were asked to classify, in an order of importance (1=Highest Importance / 6 = Lowest Importance), the elements that are of interest to them when they visit a museum. The elements that were found to have the highest importance for visitors, when visiting a museum, were the exhibits themselves and the activities/events organised at the museum. Other visitors place last in terms of interest to participants when visiting a museum, with staff being second to last in terms of how interested visitors are to their presence and function in the museum. The building and the museum spaces, as well as the labels and textual information provided, were

given average importance by participants (Appendix, Figure 3.6).

Next, participants were asked to identify, according to their perception, the main visitor segment at a museum. In this question, 38% of participants state that families with children are the main visitor group at museums. 33% stated that museums are for everyone while 24% identified students and school groups as the main visitors in museums. 1% of the participants claimed that highly educated people are the main visitor segment in museums while in the option "Other", five people responded with the answer "Tourists" (Appendix, Figure 3.7)

Lastly, participants identified the main visitor segment at the Fairy Tale Museum specifically, according to their perception of the museum audience. 50% of participants stated that the Fairy Tale Museum is mostly visited by families with children while 42% said that it is mostly visited by students in school visits. 8% of participants claimed that the Fairy Tale museum is a museum visited by everyone (Appendix, Figure 3.8)

Part 3 – The Experience

In the third and last part of the post-participation questionnaires, the adult participants answered seven questions more specifically regarding their experience in taking part in the participatory, performative activity at the Fairy Tale Museum. The first question was "Why did you choose to take part in this activity?" in which answers, of course, varied. A large number of participants expressed their need to participate in an experience that was "different", "innovative" and "unfamiliar". Particularly, participants expressed their motivation to participate in a different experience than the usual ones in a museum by offering explanations such as "I like adventures", "I wanted to escape from my routine", "To experience something new" and "I like activities with a unique content". Some participants specified that the main motive for participating was their interest in theatre and theatrical activities while others expressed their interest in taking part because of the opportunity to meet new people (Appendix, Figure 3.9).

The next question in this part of the questionnaire focused on the level of

comfort participants felt in being engaged in interactive, highly participatory performances. For the question "Do you usually prefer to be a participant or an observer in such activities?", 55% of participants stated that they prefer to participate while 45% prefer to be observers. (Appendix, Figure 3.10).

In the third question, "How would you describe your experience?", participants had multiple choices to pick from. 41% of participants found their experience "Entertaining" while 12% found it "Educational". 12% of adult participants labeled their experience as "Demanding" while the majority of participants chose the "Other" category in which the variety of answers ranged from "Awesome" and "Amazing to "Tender", "Sweet" and "Unique", "Exceptional" (Appendix, Figure 3.11).

The fourth question in this section of the questionnaire focused on the social aspect. When participants were given the statement "I think this activity could be characterised as social", 90% of them declared that they agree with it, while 7% (10 individuals) disagreed. 3% of participants stated "I do not know" (5 individuals). (Appendix, Figure 3.12).

Regarding the statement "As a participant in this activity, I learned something about the exhibition", participants' opinions where almost split in half: 51% of the participants agreed while 42% disagreed. 11 individuals (7%) answered "I do not know" (Appendix, Figure 3.13).

Finally, the last two questions explored the willingness of participants to return to the museum as visitors and as participants in similar activities. 96% of participants stated that they would visit the Fairy Tale Museum again, while just 3% said they did not know and 1% that they would not. 89% of participants confirmed that they would be willing to take part in similar activities in the future (whether at the Fairy Tale Museum or another museum) while 10% stated that they did not know yet. Only 1% replied negatively to the statement about taking part again in similar activities (Appendix, Figures 3.14 & 3.15).

3.2.3 Observations

The first observation drawn from the results of the questionnaire research was the fact that there seems to be a disagreement between what image people have of museums and what they expect when visiting them. The majority of individuals taking part in the activities stated that they perceived museums as very important (68%) and foremostly as spaces of learning, knowledge and historical conservation (and only 7 out of 144 perceive them as spaces of fun and entertainment). However, 44% of the individuals state that they visit a museum with the primary motive of being entertained (64 out of 144 individuals). This observation, although it demonstrates an inconsistency, is very telling of the need for people to find alternatives ways of spending their time. I believe that participants' answers demonstrate the turning point in which museum audience engagement is at: we are moving from the traditional image we have of museums as keepers and transmitters of knowledge to the need for a dialogic relationship with the content and how it is communicated and a need for more relevant, engaging interaction with it. Additionally, there are the "culturally conditioned frames the potential audience bring with them" (Jackson & Kidd, 2013: 18)– like how they perceive museums - and then there are the structures established by performance. When participants choose to take part in activities that include highly interactive, social and performative elements they make a statement about the way they wish to shift their experiences inside a museum.

Ultimately, 44% of participants found the experiences "entertaining" while 12% found them "educational" – the museum activities did deliver in terms of serving the needs of the majority of adult participants. In fact, I think the activities seem to also deliver in terms of allowing the experience to be described by participants as educational because they support "free learning – […] the element of choice that makes the difference between learning as a chore and learning as a pleasure" (Packer, 2006: 330). This is further identified by answers provided by participants for the statement "As a participant in this activity, I learned something about the exhibition": more than half of the participants (73) agreed that they learned something about the exhibition even if their initial intent in participating was not communicated as their need to learn about the museum exhibition.

Furthermore, the components that were found to have the highest importance for visitors, when visiting a museum, were the exhibits themselves and the activities or events organised at the museum. Clearly, while museum exhibits and objects matter for the participants of my research, the activities that take place around them have almost identical importance. In fact, none of the 144 participants placed museum activities at the lowest importance rank, while 6 of them did place the exhibits there. One might argue that content here seems to be ranking as less important than the means to communicate content. This would mean that museum labels and textual information would rank higher than average. Yet, they don't. They were given average importance. If labels and textual information in a museum rank much lower than activities and events for participants, this shows that they value interactivity and active engagement significantly more than they value information transmittance done with a more traditional means inside the museum. Which is something that does connect to the theory regarding the global shift around museum interpretation from the '80s onwards and vouches for the importance of the engaging experience factor?

Most participants regarded museums as spaces visited mostly by families and school groups and particularly the Fairy Tale Museum (only 8% of participants claimed that the Fairy Tale museum is a museum visited by everyone). Participants' perceptions do not fall short of reality. The Fairy Tale Museum visitor numbers (2018 - 2019) indeed indicate that families and children/students are its main visitor segment. This made me wonder about the way adults potentially perceive activities designed for them in a space mostly associated with children and family visits. Could the fact that they associate the space with children and families make these activities, explicitly designed for them, even more appealing due to the way they "break normality" or offer "a break from normality"? My observations of the way adults "let loose" and enjoyed themselves in the museum spaces, made me think this might indeed be a strong factor.

The above thoughts are confirmed, in my opinion, by the results of the question: "Why did you choose to take part in this activity?". A substantial number of participants expressed their need to participate in an experience that was "different"

"innovative" and "unfamiliar". Particularly, participants expressed their motivation to participate in a different experience than the usual ones in a museum by offering explanations such as "I like adventures", "I wanted to escape from my routine", "To experience something new" and "I like activities with a unique content". The importance placed on the will to take part in something new and unconventional was significant. Also, the word experience was used extensively in the way participants expressed themselves about their interest in participating. Regarding the level of comfort described by participants in being actively involved, 55% of them stated that they prefer to participate while 45% prefer to be observers. This is an interesting point in the research since all of these adults who answered the questionnaire had, in fact, chosen to participate in a highly interactive experience. In spite of that, almost half of them stated that they would usually have preferred to observe instead of participating. This indicates a tendency to choose to do something out of the ordinary, to once again, "break normality". I admit that I was expecting that people would be interested in taking part in these activities because they were familiar or at least comfortable with performing and role-playing. Very few people indicated that the main motive behind participating was theatre and none of them stated their level of familiarity with it.

Interestingly, 129 individuals found the activities social. When, however, participants were asked to rank other visitors in terms of the importance of their role in the experience of visiting a museum, they placed them last (Figure 3.6). This indicates, to me, that activities that are highly interactive like the ones proposed in this research support adults in engaging with others and make the experience more social rather than just personal. This could be the case even if visitors do not regard their visit as social in the first place.

Ultimately, the research reflected the positive attitude of participants towards the Fairy Tale Museum, as 138 out of 144 individuals were positive in returning as visitors in the future. With 129 out of 144 adults stating that they would be willing to re-enter such an experience in any museum, the research, albeit small in scale, showcased an

encouraging attitude towards highly interactive activities designed for adults and based on performance in museums.

Certainly, my observations from the research do not offer an ultimate indication on how to guarantee the successful design and impact of performance within a museum. My observations, however, led me to conclude that performance is a tool with value and resonance for museums, as it can enhance the visitor's appreciation and positive engagement with the space and the content. The research findings underline the importance of innovation in maintaining museum relevance for adult visitors and has given me glimpses into the connection between how the quality of engagement and the extent of the learning will depend on the novelty of the experience as well as the degree to which adults are given license to suspend reality and the everyday. Even though the purpose of my practice-based exploration had been to explore the way adults become engaged with a specific museum content and not how they learn from it, I understand that «[...] outcomes can be coerced as much as inspired and their pedagogical impacts can be hard to measure» (Bennett, 2013: 60). It is treacherous to place museum programming on the altar of entertainment. The value of experience needs to be able to be measured on multiple layers and to be understood, ultimately, as highly subjective.

Conclusively, I acknowledge that the extent of the research cannot give absolute answers. However, I can answer with relative certainty that highly interactive activities based on performance that were experienced by adults in the Fairy Tale Museum left a positive impression to the extent where they would want to repeat them. Surely, the extent to which performance in museums in Cyprus can result in effective cultural mediation and visitor engagement begs for further research and more examples in practice. After all, the discussion over meaningful engagement is an ongoing one, particularly for museums and we cannot assume that enjoyment in an experience inside a museum inevitably suggests meaningful engagement. According to Valerie Hannon, Director of Global Education Leaders' Program, engagement not synonymous with fun: "True engagement is defined by an individual's choice to take on a difficult (but not too difficult) task that has relevance for him or her, whether it be physical (playing a sport or a

musical instrument) or purely cognitive (making sense of competing ideas)" (Herz, 2014 [online]). The highly subjective nature of making an experience relevant to an individual's life and learning choices makes it hard, in this particular research, to measure with certainly visitor engagement.

Conclusion

When the group of students walked into New York's Museum of Modern Art in 2005 and made their own audio guides on the works of art available to the public for free, they were committing the act of appropriating the museum content, making it their own. The reason why this made the headlines was because people are still not used to the idea of the public being able to interfere in the way we display and communicate our cultures. This has always been the job of various bodies of authority (governments, museum professionals, committees, etc.) (Illeris, 2006). This is changing (Illeris, 2006: 17). I believe that in this ever-changing, fast world that we leave in, where options for creation, learning, and sharing are limitless, museums need to provide more than displays on interesting themes; they should be able to connect these displays and themes to the life experiences of different groups of audiences and stay relevant to the need of the public to be actively involved. I do not think that one could assume that those students felt more engaged in learning from and interpreting museum content through their active involvement in content creation. However, actions like theirs, that involve high levels of participation and interaction within the museum, push the discussion forward on the ways museums can stay socially relevant and inclusive. These actions can be spontaneous, or initiated by the public but they should also be initiated by museums themselves, using various tools.

Performance and theatre gain increasing popularity as tools that museums use in pursuit of captivating experiences that offer something beyond the ordinary and touch those various needs and preferences while inviting active participation and engagement. It is surely important to continue the discussion about how theatre and museums have come together and a lot of stakeholders have started doing so already: cultural policymakers, urban and regional planners, arts and other marketing agencies, and, of course, visitors (Bennett, 2013: 17). We have to pay attention to the way performance appears, engages and disappears within museum practices, in this contemporary moment, even if it is still

quite experimental (Alford and Parry, 1991: 8; Jackson & Kidd, 2013: 1). At the same time, I believe that parallel to being open to discussing the introduction of innovative tools for visitor engagement, the discussion over what an engaging experience truly is, should also continue to develop.

Practice and research for this dissertation have taught me that a lot of activities that are refreshingly new for audience members visiting a museum can be exactly that and only that: refreshingly new. The hype of the experience, which is usually fun and interactive as well as highly social, can develop a positive image towards the museum but it cannot suggest the establishment of an ongoing relevance of the museum in people's lives or a meaningful longlasting connection that will guarantee re-visits. Even so, I argue museums in Cyprus need more innovative activities that push the boundaries of the relationship between visitors and museums in order to understand it better. We can never know the extent of the needs and interests of the public in Cyprus if we do not initiate a dialogue with them through their active involvement and participation.

Appendix

1. Research Material

1.1 Research Disclaimer (Greek)

Αγαπητή/έ συμμετέχοντα,

Με τη συμπλήρωση του παρόντος ερωτηματολογίου, στηρίζετε την έρευνα που διεξάγω στα πλαίσια της εκπόνησης της διατριβής μου για το μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα «Πολιτιστική Πολιτική και Ανάπτυξη» του Ανοιχτού Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου.

Ο κεντρικός σκοπός της έρευνας αυτής είναι η διερεύνηση του τρόπου με τον οποίο ένας ενήλικας επισκέπτης στο μουσείο επιλέγει να λάβει μέρος σε μια παραστατική διαδικασία. Επίσης, διερευνώ τον βαθμό στον οποίο παραστατική διαδικασία μπορεί να λειτουργήσει ως εργαλείο ενίσχυσης της σχέσης κοινού-μουσείου.

Σας έχει ζητηθεί να λάβετε μέρος στην έρευνα, ως συμμετέχοντες σε προγράμματα κοινού στο Μουσείο Παραμυθιού, εντός της περιόδου Φεβρουαρίου - Απριλίου 2019, και καλείστε να συμπληρώσετε ένα ερωτηματολόγιο με 16 ερωτήσεις, χωρισμένες σε 3 μέρη.

Σας διαβεβαιώ για τον ανώνυμο χειρισμό των ερωτηματολογίων καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια της έρευνας και κατά τη δημοσιοποίηση των πορισμάτων. Στοιχεία από τα ερωτηματολόγια θα χρησιμοποιηθούν ΜΟΝΟ για τους σκοπούς της έρευνας και εκπόνησης της διατριβής μου.

Σας ευχαριστώ θερμά για το χρόνο σας και την πολύτιμη βοήθειά σας!

Ναταλία Κουχαρτσιούκ
Διαχειρίστρια Εκπαιδευτικών Προγραμμάτων / Προγραμμάτων Κοινού Μουσείου Παραμυθιού
Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα «Πολιτιστική Πολιτική και Ανάπτυξη» ΑΠΚΥ
Λευκωσία 2019

1.2 Research Disclaimer (English)

Dear research participant,

By participating in the completion of the following questionnaire, you are contributing to my research, conducted for the purposes of the completion of my MA «Cultural Policy and Development» dissertation at the Open University of Cyprus.

The main aim of my research is to examine the ways in which performance and role play can have an impact on adult visitor engagement and interpretation at the Fairy Tale Museum in Cyprus. Also, I am looking into the degree in which each performative activity can function as a tool for enhancing the relationship-between the adult audience and the museum.

You have been invited to partake in the research because you took part in activities within the Fairy Tale Museum, during the period February – May 2019, and you will be required to fill in a questionnaire that contains 16 questions, divided in 3 parts.

I reassure you that the anonymous nature of the questionnairs will be respected throughout the course of the research as well as the publication of the findings. Information included in the questionnaires you complete will be used ONLY for the purposes of the research and the completion of my dissertation.

I thank you kindly for your time and your valuable help!

Natalia Kouhartsiouk
Head of Educational And Audience Programs, Fairy Tale Museum
MA Program «Cultural Policy and Development»
Nicosia 2019

1.3 Questionnaire (Greek)

ΕΡΩΤΗΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΟ ΓΙΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΑ ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗΣ ΜΕΤΑΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟΥ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΟΣ «ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΤΙΚΗ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗ» ΑΠΚΥ

ΜΕΡΟΣ Α'

1) ΦΥΛΟ
☐Άνδρας
☐Γυναίκα
☐Άλλο
2) ΗΛΙΚΙΑ
☐18-25   ☐26-35   ☐36-45
☐46-55   ☐56-65

ΜΕΡΟΣ Β'

1) Ποιες λέξεις χαρακτηρίζουν ένα μουσείο;
_____

2) Πόσο σημαντική θεωρείτε την ύπαρξη των μουσείων;
☐Καθόλου σημαντική   ☐Λίγο σημαντική   ☐Αρκετά σημαντική   ☐Πολύ σημαντική

3) Πόσο συχνά επισκέπτεστε ένα μουσείο;
☐1-2 φορές ετησίως   ☐3-4 φορές ετησίως   ☐5-6 φορές ετησίως   ☐> από 6 φορές ετησίως

4) Επισκέπτομαι ένα μουσείο:
☐για ψυχαγωγία   ☐για τη φήμη του   ☐για απόκτηση γνώσεων   ☐για συγκεκριμένο έκθεμα
☐για το είδος του   ☐ Άλλο: _____

7) Βάλτε σε σειρά προτεραιότητας τα στοιχεία που σας προκαλούν το ενδιαφέρον σε ένα μουσείο, αριθμώντας τα από το 1 μέχρι το 6   (1=υψηλότερη / 6=χαμηλότερη)
_____ τα εκθέματά του
_____ το προσωπικό του
_____ τα κείμενα / οι λεζάντες του
_____ το κτίριο / οι χώροι του
_____ οι δραστηριότητες/ δράσεις του
_____ οι άλλοι επισκέπτες

5) Η κύρια ομάδα επισκεπτών σε ένα μουσείο νομίζω ότι είναι:
☐Άτομα με υψηλή μόρφωση   ☐Μαθητές / σχολικές ομάδες   ☐Οικογένειες με παιδιά
☐Το σύνολο της κοινωνίας   ☐Άλλο:
_____

6) Η κύρια ομάδα επισκεπτών στο Μουσείο Παραμυθιού νομίζω ότι είναι:

☐Άτομα με υψηλή μόρφωση   ☐Μαθητές / σχολικές ομάδες   ☐Οικογένειες με παιδιά
☐Το σύνολο της κοινωνίας   ☐Άλλο: _____

ΜΕΡΟΣ Γ΄

1) Γιατί επιλέξατε να λάβετε μέρος στη δραστηριότητα;

_____
_____
_____

2) Συνήθως, θα προτιμούσατε να είστε θεατής ή συμμετέχοντας τέτοιων δράσεων; Γιατί;
☐Θεατής   ☐Συμμετέχοντας

_____
_____

3) Πως θα χαρακτηρίζατε τη σημερινή σας εμπειρία;
☐Κουραστική   ☐Ωφέλιμη   ☐Βαρετή   ☐Ενδιαφέρουσα   ☐Εκπαιδευτική
☐Ψυχαγωγική   ☐Απαιτητική   ☐Άλλο_____

4) Θα έκρινα τη συμμετοχή μου στη δράση ως κοινωνική. Επιλέξτε:
    ☐Συμφωνώ   ☐Διαφωνώ   ☐Δεν ξέρω

5) Μέσα από τη συμμετοχή μου στη δράση έμαθα κάτι που αφορά στο περιεχόμενο της έκθεσης του μουσείου. Επιλέξτε:
☐Συμφωνώ   ☐Διαφωνώ   ☐Δεν ξέρω

6) Θα επισκεπτόμουν ξανά το Μουσείο Παραμυθιού. Επιλέξτε:
☐Συμφωνώ   ☐Διαφωνώ   ☐Δεν ξέρω

7) Θα λάμβανα ξανά μέρος σε μια τέτοια δράση είτε στο Μουσείο Παραμυθιού, είτε σε κάποιο άλλο μουσείο. Επιλέξτε:
☐Συμφωνώ   ☐Διαφωνώ   ☐Δεν ξέρω

Σας ευχαριστώ πολύ για το χρόνο σας!

1.4 Questionnaire (English)

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESEARCH FOR DISSERTATION COMPLETION
FOR THE MA «CULTURAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT» AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY
OF CYPRUS**

PART A′

1) GENDER
☐Male
 ☐Female
☐Other
2) AGE
☐18-25   ☐26-35   ☐36-45
☐46-55   ☐56-65

PART B′

1) Which words best describe a museum?

_____

2) How important is the existence of museums?
☐No importance ☐Of little importance   ☐Quite important   ☐Very important

3) How often do you visit museums?
☐1-2 times yearly   ☐3-4 times yearly ☐5-6 times yearly ☐> 6 times yearly

4) I visit a museum for the following reason:
☐ entertainment   ☐ its reputation   ☐knowledge acquisition ☐of a specific exhibit
☐of its theme ☐ Other: _____

5) Place in an order of importance the elements that are of interest when visiting a museum (1=highest importance / 6=lowest importance)
_____ the exhibits
_____ the staff
_____ labels and informative text
_____ the building / spaces
_____ the actvities / events
_____ other visitors

6) The main visitors in a museum are:

☐Highly educated people   ☐Students / School groups   ☐Families with children

☐Everyone   ☐Other: _____

7) The main visitors at the Fairy Tale Museum are:

☐Highly educated people   ☐Students / School groups   ☐Families with children

☐Everyone   ☐Other: _____

PART C′

1) Why did you choose to take part in this activity?

_____

_____

_____

2) Do you usually prefer to be a participant in or an observer to such activities? Please explain.

☐Observer   ☐Participant

_____

_____

3) How would you describe your experience?

☐Tiring   ☐Useful ☐Boring ☐Interesting ☐Educational   ☐Entertaining ☐Demanding ☐

Other _____

4) This activity could be characterised as social. Please choose:

☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐I do not know

5) As a participant in this activity, I learned something about the exhibition Please choose:

☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐I do not know

6) I would visit the Fairy Tale Museum again. Please choose:

☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Do not know

7) I would take part in a similar activity again (at the Fairy Tale Museum or another museum). Please choose:

☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Do not know

Thank you very much for your time!
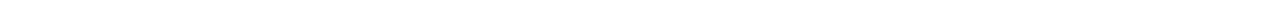
2. Graphs, Illustrations and Pictures

2.1 The Interactive Experience Model
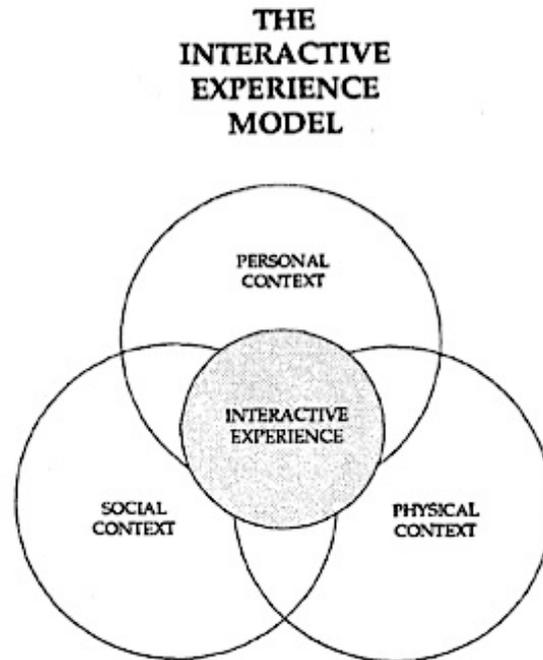
Figure 1 - The «Interactive Experience Model» (Falk & Dierking, 1992: 176).

2.2 Falk & Dierking's "Contextual Learning Model"
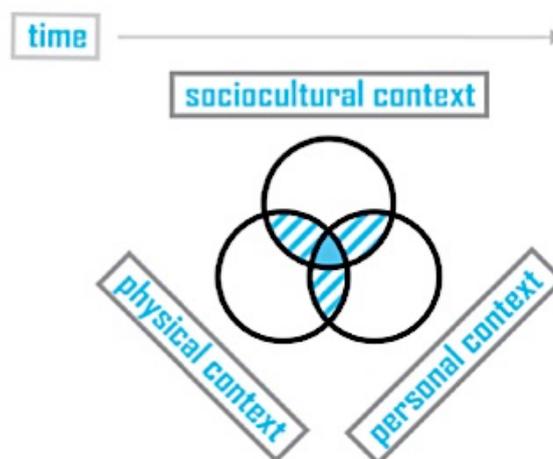
Figure 2: Falk & Dierking's «Contextual Learning Model» (Schroyen et al. 2009: 3)

2.3 The Four Realms of an Experience by Pines and Gilmore
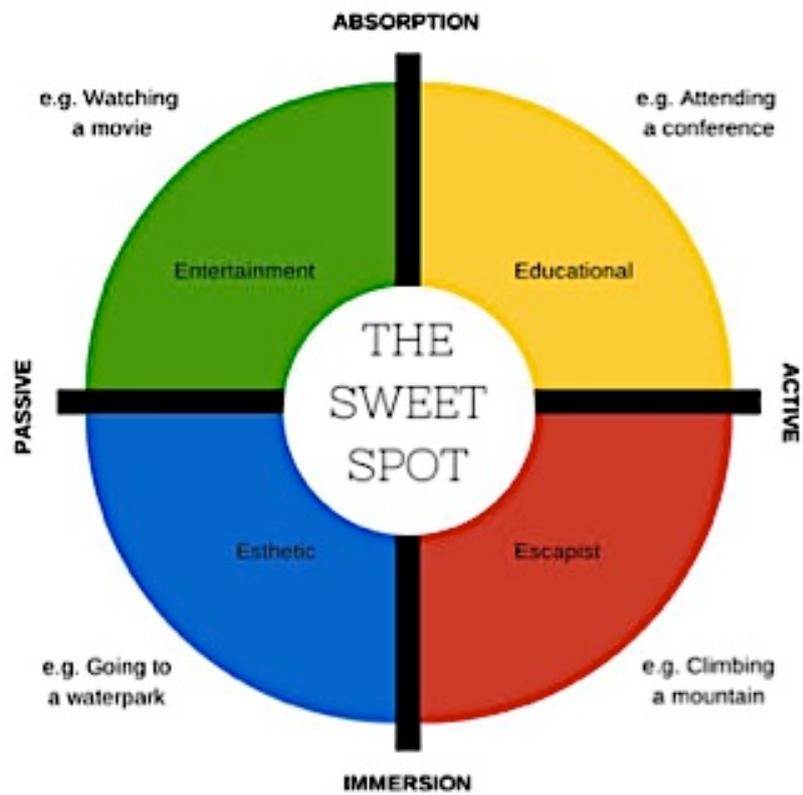
Figure 3: The Four Realms of an Experience (HBR, Gilmore and Pine)

2.4 "Adult Mystery Night" / «Βραδιά Μυστηρίου για Ενήλικες»

Photo byVicky Balomenou

2.5 & 2.6 "Telephone Tales" / «Παραμύθια από το Τηλέφωνο»

Photos by Natalia Kouhartsiouk

2.7 "Beginning of a Tale, Good Evening to You All!" / «Αρχή του Παραμυθιού, Καλησπέρα της Αφεντιάς σας!»

Photo by Natalia Kouhartsiouk

3. Research Findings

3.1 Participation Age Range

Participation Age Range

■ 18-25   ■ 26-35   ■ 36-45   ■ 46-55   ■ 56-65

2%
10%
29%
59%
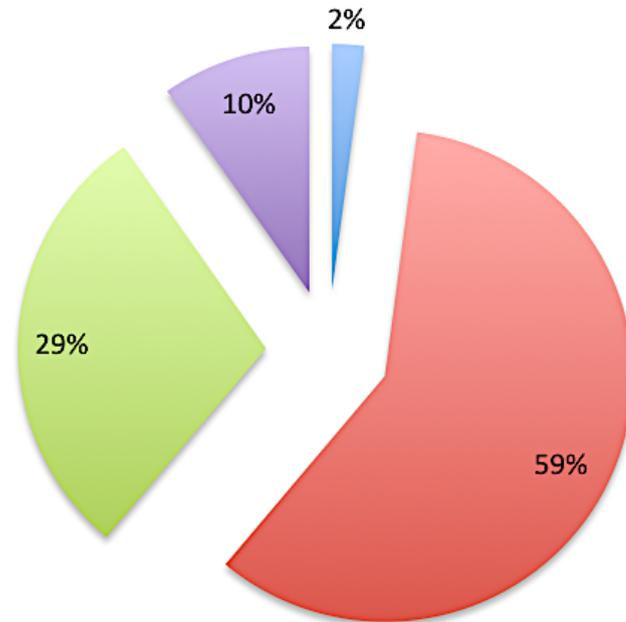
3.2 Which words best describe a museum?

Which words best describe a museum?

■ Knowledge   ■ Exhibits/Exhibition   ■ Antiquity / Ancient   ■ History   ■ Art/Paintings   ■ Boredom   ■ Fun/Entertainment   ■ Experience   ■ Participation

1
1   1
7
35
89
42
67
71
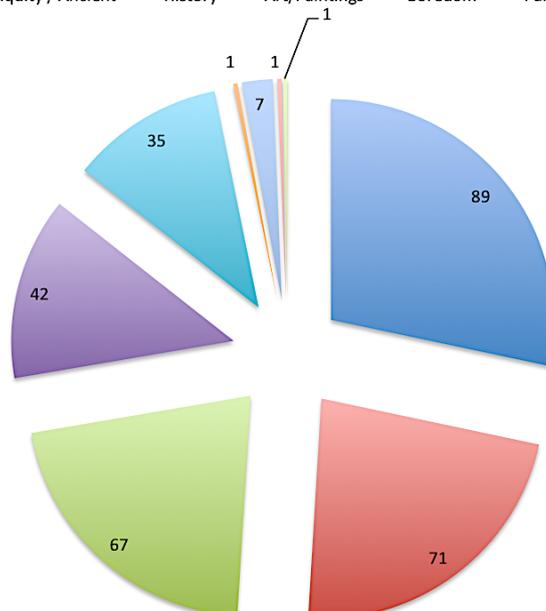
3.3 How important is the existence of museums?

How important is the existence of museums?

■ No Importance   ■ Of little importance   ■ Quite important   ■ Very important

1%

31%

68%
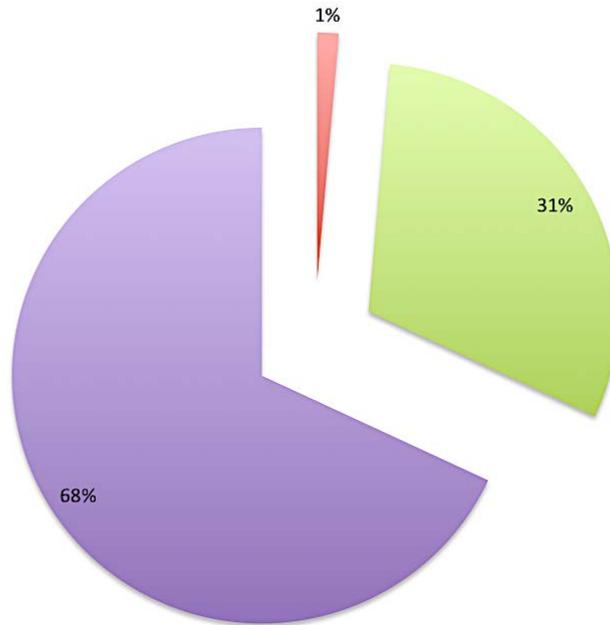
3.4 How often do you visit museums?

How often do you visit museums?

■ 1-2 times yearly   ■ 3-4 times yearly   ■ 5-6 times yearly   ■ > 6 times yearly

6%

9%

33%

52%
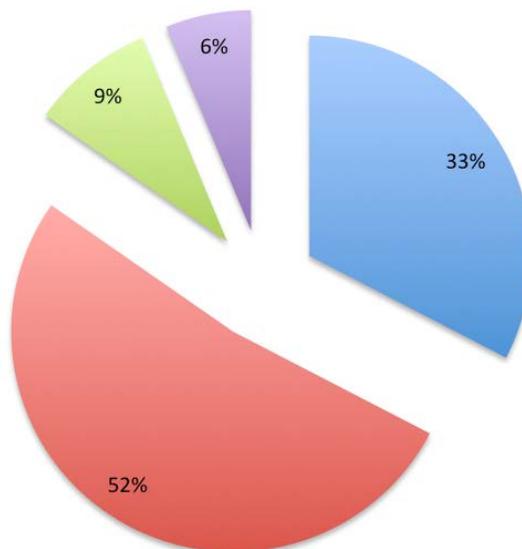
3.5 Why do you visit a museum?
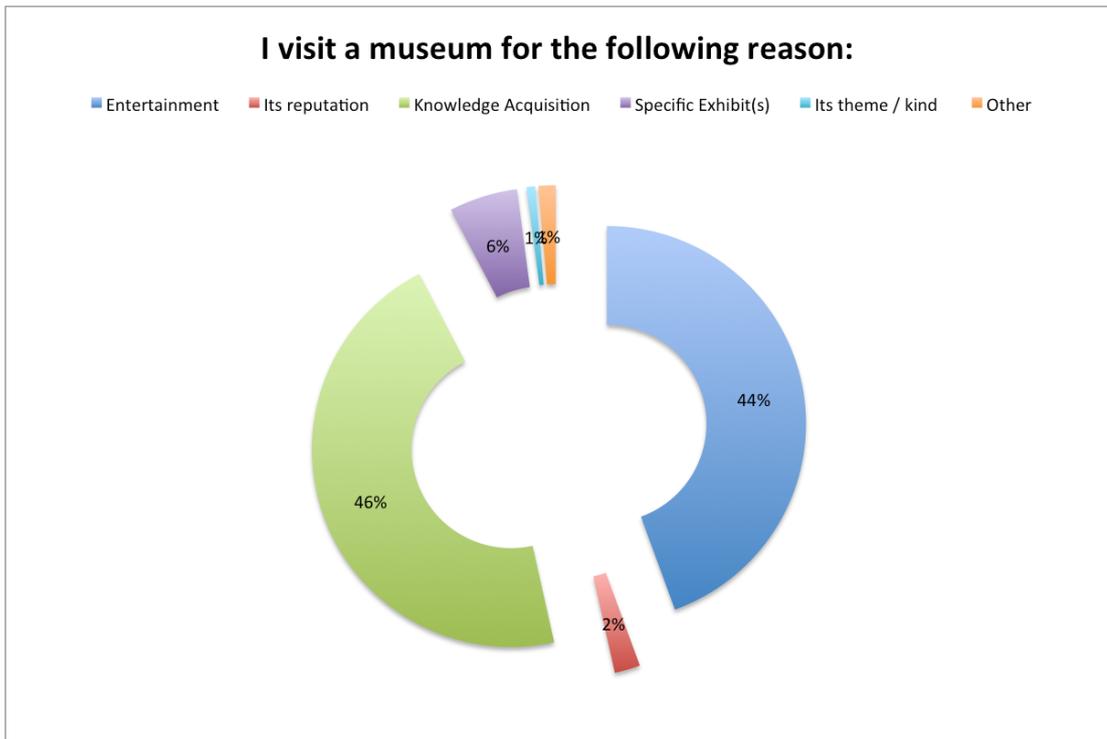
3.6 Place in an order of importance the elements that are of interest when visiting a museum (1=highest importance, 6=lowest importance)

Place in an order of importance the elements that are of interest when visiting a museum (1=highest importance / 6=lowest importance)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Exhibits	63	33	28	6	3	11
Staff	3	6	2	38	63	32
Labels/Info Text	0	33	38	46	24	3
Building / Spaces	8	31	52	38	13	2
Activities / Events	63	37	24	10	10	0
Other visitors	7	4	0	6	31	96
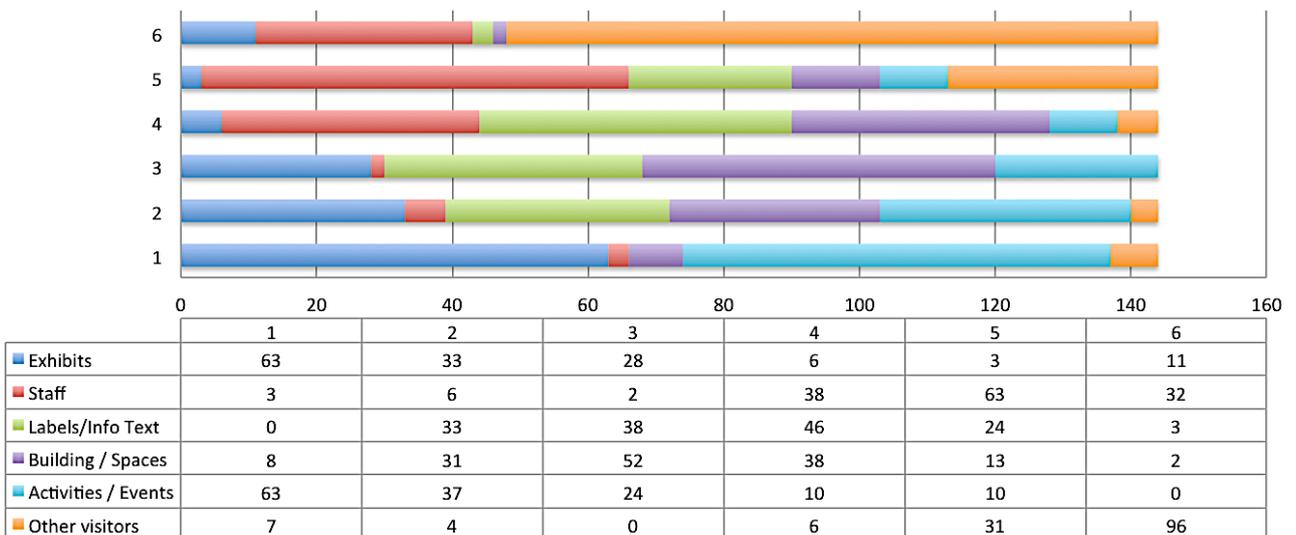
3.7 Who visit the museum mostly?

The main visitors in a museum are:

Highly educated people ▪ Students / School groups ▪ Families with children ▪ Everyone ▪ Other

1%

4%

24%

33%

38%
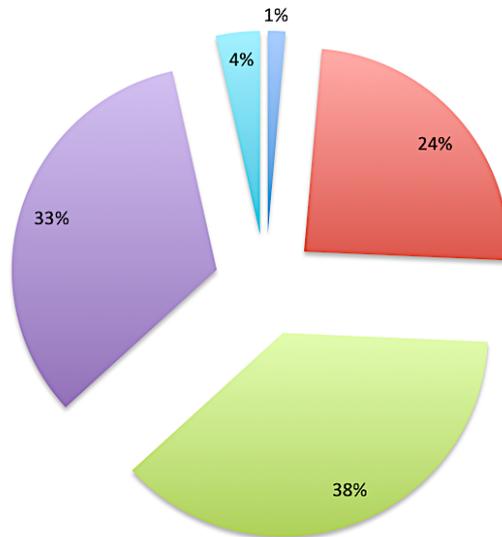
3.8 Who visit the Fairy Tale Museum mostly?

The main visitors in the Fairy Tale Museum are:

Highly educated people ▪ Students / School groups ▪ Families with children

Everyone ▪ Other

8%

42%

50%

3.9 Why did you choose to take part in this activity?

Why did you choose to take part in this activity?

| Reason	Value
Να ζήσω μια πρωτότυπη εμπειρία | To have an innovative experience	34
Μου αρέσουν τα θεατρικά παιχνίδια | I like theatrical conventions	2
Με ενδιαφέρουν οι δραστηριότητες με πρωτότυπο περιεχόμενο | I am interested in activities with innovative content	9
Απορία για το άγνωστο | The unknown	2
Απόκτηση νέας εμπειρίας - Για να βιώσω κάτι καινούργιο | To have a new experience - To experience something new	15
Για να περάσω όμορφα με φίλους μου | To have fun with my friends	11
Για την παρέα | Because of my friends	6
Μπαίνεις σε ένα ρόλο/ ταξιδεύεις και διασκεδάζεις | You enter a role / you travel and have fun	4
Για να επανασυνδεθώ με μια παλιά μου φίλη | To reconnect with an old friend	1
Το ενδιαφέρον μου για το θέατρο | I am interested in theatre	2
Μου αρέσουν οι καινούργιες περιπέτειες, γνωριμία με άλλα άτομα και ψυχαγωγία | I like new adventures and to meet new people and entertain myself	1
Εισήγηση της παρέας ότι θα ήταν κάτι διαφορετικό - Μοναδική εμπειρία και κάτι το ξεχωριστό | My friends suggested it as something different - A unique experience	8
Ήθελα να βιώσω την αντίδραση ενός παιδιού στο άκουσμα του παραμυθιού | I wanted to experience the reaction of a child hearing a story	1
Να δώσω χαρά σε παιδιά | To give joy to the children	1
Για εθελοντισμό και για την πρόκληση της εμπειρίας | For volunteering and the challenge of the experience	1
Ευχαρίστηση από το ευχαριστώ που λαμβάνεις | For the pleasure for the thank you your receive	1
Διαφυγή από τη ρουτίνα της καθημερινότητας | To escape the everyday routine	9
Έχω σπουδάσει δάσκαλος και μου άρεσε η ιδέα της αφήγησης σε κοινό που ενδιαφέρεται | I am a teacher and I like the idea of narrating to the audience	1
Πρωτότυπη, Ενδιαφέρουσα, Προσφέρει χαρά σε όλους | Innovative, Interesting Idea that offers joy	2
Για την εμπειρία και για τον ευγενικό σκοπό της | For the experience and its noble cause	1
Ανήκω στην Παγκύπρια Οργάνωση Γραμματισμού | I am a member of the Cypriot Literacy Association	1
Ενδιαφερουσα Ιδέα | Interesting Idea	3
Περιέργεια για το πως θα πραγματοποιηθεί και ενδιαφέρον για συμμετοχή σε καινοτόμες ιδέες | Curiosity about how this activity would take place and interest in participating in something	7
Ψυχαγωγία | Entertainment	21

3.10 Do you usually prefer to be a participant or an observer in such activities?

## Do you usually prefer to be a participant or an observer in such activities?

■ Observer   ■ Participant

45%

55%

3.11 How would you describe your experience?

How would you describe your experience?

■ Tiring ■ Useful ■ Boring ■ Interesting ■ Educational ■ Entertaining ■ Demanding ■ Other

1% 3%

12%

31%

41%

12%

3.12 This activity would be characterized as "social"

This activity would be characterised as "social"

■ Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Do not know

3%

7%

90%

3.13 As a participant in this activity, I learned something about the exhibition

## As a participant in this activity, I learned something about the exhibition.

■ Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Do not know

7%

51%

42%

3.14 I would visit the Fairy Tale museum again

I would visit the Fairy Tale Museum again

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Do not know

1%
3%
96%

3.15 I would take part in a similar activity in the future

I would take part in a similar activity in the future (at the Fairy Tale Museum or another museum)

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Do not know

1%
10%
89%

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