

# Art, school and museum: the analysis of an experience in art education at the university Museum of Art - MUnA

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## Abstract

From a theoretical and empirical perspective, the article analyzes an experience in art education developed with students of the public school system in Uberlândia city, Minas Gerais State, at the University Museum of Art - MUnA, Brazil. With a qualitative approach and a descriptive and interpretative character, the research found that the contact with an art museum allows the student not only to broaden his knowledge of the world, but also to enrich his cultural education and improve his capacity for expression. It also provides students a greater interaction with the social environment in which they live. Knowledge in art is an apprenticeship that starts from the observation of a work of art, reading and artistic practice. The readings and behaviors that each student has when appreciating a work of art are related to his experience with different artistic manifestations. It is indispensable that schools, art teachers and educational actions in museums be important mediators for the art knowledge production to students. Building this knowledge from the constant access to these artistic and educational spaces, as well as the development of artistic activities in these spaces, may allow the student to broaden his understanding of the national culture. We also verified that the students produced significant artistic works during the educational action in the museum, which contributed to their greater experience with art.

## Keywords

Art education – Art museum – Artistic experience – Culture.

## Introduction

From a theoretical and empirical perspective, the main objective of this article is to analyze an art education experience developed with students from the public school system in the city of Uberlândia, Minas Gerais, through the contact with contemporary works of art at the University Museum Gallery - MUnA. This research, with a qualitative and descriptive, interpretive<sup>2</sup> characteristic, was developed with students from two classes of the last year of elementary education – 9th grade – totalling 51 students from a public school<sup>3</sup> located in Uberlândia, Minas Gerais state. As an instrument for data collection and analysis, field observation at the museum, a semi-open questionnaire, of 5 (five) questions

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**3-** In order to preserve the anonymity of the researched school, we use only the term "school" to designate it in the course of this article.

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each – three closed and two open questions – was applied to the students subjected to this research.

In the first part of this work, some reflections on the teaching of art in spaces of non-formal education – museums – are developed briefly, aiming at contextualizing this study. Next, the field class is presented in MUnA, with the intention of describing and analyzing an experience in art education developed with students of elementary school from the contact with contemporary works of art, in harmony with the educational action carried out in this institution. The next part refers to the analysis of the semi-open questionnaires applied to the students about the class in question. Finally, some conclusions about the study are presented.

## **On art and museums: some reflections**

Since time immemorial, many people have sought to establish a dialogue with the world, having in art a productive means to produce and disseminate new ideas and knowledge. It is no longer a novelty that art can be found easily on urban public roads by means of graffiti, architecture of public monuments, music festivals, theatrical performances, among many other means. However, it is not enough just to look at the works of arts, one must appreciate them so that one can understand the intentions of the artist and produce significant readings and interpretations of the work.

The expressive language of art has the power to interrogate patterns, values, conceptions and tastes. It requires reflection. In front of it we find, for example, various concepts of beautiful and ugly, and for them we can think of the values that circumvent our lives and impress identities and belongings. (JOHANN, 2015, p. 07).

According to Barbosa (2012, p. 33), art in education has the main objective to stimulate the development of the human being who knows, appreciates and decodes the work of art, since, “a society is only artistically developed when along with a high quality artistic production there is a high understanding capacity of this production by the public”, that is, art plays a fundamental role in the cultural progress of any society.

Fróis (2011) considers that museums nowadays are undergoing changes, which affect museum visitors, their access and their knowledge about works of art. Perhaps it is a way to reach previously “unattainable” audiences who, until then, had never had contact with art or conditions of attending these places. Through virtual tools like the internet, viewing art collections from some of the world’s top museums has become more accessible these days. For this theorist, these transformations allow people to broaden their understanding of the role of these places in contemporary times.

Furthermore, there are researchers who conceive art museums as true encyclopedias in art history, as it is the case of the theorist Lara Filho (2013, p. 64), who emphasizes that artistic exhibitions are examples of “manifestation of museums before their audience.”

In a panorama complementary to the previous reflection, Arrais (2013) considers that in the twentieth century museums had a greater recognition as educational spaces.

This is similar as regards the relationship between art and education emphasized by Selli (2013, p. 41-42): “every year Brazilian museums have been improving in terms of receiving the public, offering mediation services, promoting workshops, refresher courses, and so many other things.”

In a historical and timeless perspective, museums were constituted for heritage, communication and education preservation, the latter being a theme that has been growing significantly in national and international studies on museum education, from different methodological approaches, focusing on pedagogical, educational and non-formal learning aspects (MARANDINO, 2015).

In this sense, the accessibility to museums and the availability of their collection to their audience – including students and teachers – are only one way of corroborating their social role in contemporary times, because “only then, the museum meets its role of teaching its spectators, reaffirming itself as a cultural and educational institution.” (PINTO, 2012, p. 87). In fact, preserving the culture of a people, enabling the interaction between the work of art and its public, producing knowledge and disseminating it, can also be another example of its social role today.

In light of these reflections on the social and educational role of museums, Pérez and Gordillo (2011, p. 49) understand that “cultural institutions, one of the main axes of non-formal education, are being understood as an educational and communication space for continuing education in society.” That is, art museums are considered one of the main educational and cultural spaces in contemporary society.

It is important to point out that art and education have become important objects of study in the last decades in Brazil, under a strong foreign influence. According to Loponte (2012), research on this relationship has considerably grown in Brazil since the 1970s, being published in books, articles in scientific journals, annals of events, dissertations and theses, especially after the establishment of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the area of arts and education which problematize issues related to these two areas. Concomitant to this moment, it is also important to point out the emergence of important scientific events that disseminate intellectual production in the country in the field of art and education, with emphasis on CONFAEB<sup>4</sup>, ANPAP<sup>5</sup> and ANPED<sup>6</sup>, contributing proficuously to new ways of discussing, analyzing and thinking about art in society.

In the wake of this thought, Martins (2011) states that although the educational sector was given importance in museums in the late nineteenth century, scientific research on museum education increased considerably only in the 1970s, which helped to understand the relationship between museums and their audiences and, consequently, to broaden the dialogue between the museum and the educational field.

Barbosa (1998) emphasizes that the teacher’s art experience can influence the student’s art experience, whether or not the student finds it interesting, and regardless of the teacher’s choice. On this subject, Lavelberg (2003, p. 12) states: “the teacher must know

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**4-** Congress of the Art Federation/Educators of Brazil.

**5-** National Association of Fine Art Researchers.

**6-** National Association of Postgraduate and Research in Education.

the nature of the artists' creation processes, giving the students opportunities to generate their own ideas about art."

According to Dewey (2010, p. 109) not only local art, but knowledge of other peoples' art enables the individual to broaden their understanding of culture. Thus, "experience continually occurs because the human being interaction with environmental conditions is involved in the very process of living." In this sense, the experience is not only individual, but also a continuous interaction with the social environment. In this way, experience can be understood as "a question of the organism interaction with its environment, a medium that is both human and physical." (DEWEY, 2010, p. 430).

After this brief theoretical discussion to situate what this text proposes, I present below the analyses of the field class developed at the University Museum of Art - MUnA, based on an experience in art education.

## **An experience in art education at the University Museum of Art - MUnA**

The data collected for this research occurred during the observations carried out in the Art classes in the school researched, with students of two classrooms of the 9th grade of Elementary School, as well as during the field class that took place in the museum with the participation of these same students and the Professor of this school subject. The questionnaires were given to the students in the Art class at the school, a week after their visit to the MUnA.

Alves (2015) clarifies that to visit virtually an art museum does not replace, in fact, a face-to-face experience, because the sensations and emotions will be different. However, it was through an Art Project from 2011 that visiting an art museum without leaving home had a significant advance in art and education and, consequently, in the field of visual arts, through the use of educational methodologies such as computers, videos and internet. In this perspective, we take Arrais (2013, p. 91) digital museum concept by describing it as "any digital initiative on or off the internet with the aim of bringing art closer to the citizen, preserving memory and heritage."

In this reasoning, the importance of the use of technologies in classes of art is highlighted by Ana Mae Barbosa:

With the attention that education has been giving to the new technologies in the classroom, it becomes necessary not only to learn to teach them, inserting them in the cultural production of the students, but also to educate for the reception, the understanding and the construction of values of the technological arts, forming a conscious public. (BARBOSA, 2010, p. 111).

The understanding of the new communication technologies applied to art education in recent years can be used to help the student in fostering a critical spirit, and that allows him to develop the ability to analyze aesthetically a poor-quality work and a good one (BARBOSA, 2010). This is in line with Arrais (2013, p. 89-90), when he states that: "the potential of the use of technology in art education is indisputable. However,

computing has increasingly assimilated and developed imagery resources so that written texts prevailed.”

In the Art classes with students of the 9th grade in elementary school, academic texts by authors like Alves (2015) and Barbosa (2012), concerning the art and the museum, were presented and discussed. In one of the classes, students were invited by the teacher to go to the school’s computer lab to research virtual museums, especially the Art Project of the country’s Cultural Institute of Google, Brazil, which brings together thousands of art works from different museums. This is possible for anyone with internet access to approach and interact “virtually” with the work (ARRAIS, 2013).

Thus, in one of the classes prior to this visit in the art class, in which the students went to the computer lab to conduct research in digital museums through the mediation of the art teacher, students came across different museums and works, so that they could learn a little more about the history of universal art. At that moment, students compiled a list of museums that were found in their virtual research, such as the Louvre Museum in France and Art Museum of São Paulo, among others. Although some of the students had trouble in focusing during the research, most of them were able to carry out the activities proposed by the teacher. After the virtual research, which lasted fifty minutes (the duration of a class), the students returned to the classroom and the teacher explained the importance of knowing art museums, in order to understand Brazilian culture and other countries.

In the class prior to the visit to the museum, the art teacher instructed the students about the main procedures that should be followed during the museum visit, such as avoiding snacks inside the place, as well as not touching works of art, unless the works allowed this interaction with the public.

In the subsequent class, the field research was carried out with the classes of the 9th grade of elementary school. It is appropriate to emphasize that for some students that was their first visit to an art museum. The museum chosen was the University Museum of Art - MUnA, which is located in the center of the city of Uberlândia, Minas Gerais. This museum is part of the Federal University of Uberlândia (UFU). This particular museum was chosen due to two factors: it is easily located and accessible, and it offers the internal and external community several educational actions throughout the year regarding the artistic exhibitions it receives in a continuous flow. According to the information provided by the MUnA, personally collected with the management of the museum and through the internet – the museum’s website – this space was created in the 1970s and is a complementary organ of the Institute of Arts of the Federal University of Uberlândia – IARTES/UFU, coordinated by the Visual Arts Course. The museum is made up of exhibition spaces, namely: gallery and mezzanine; an auditorium with sixty seats; an arts workshop focused on educational actions and courses offered to the community; a collection of modern and contemporary works of art, as well as a conservation and restoration room. It also has archives with official documents about the history of the museum and its collection.

MUnA aims to train professionals for the visual arts, in line with teaching, research and extension activities developed by UFU. Activities such as courses on

drawing, painting, photography, and etching among others; seminars, lectures, and film screenings often take place throughout the year in the museum, attracting a diverse audience of different ages, including students from public and private schools, from various parts of the city and from other locations.

Thus, when students were taken to the field class in MUnA, they were sent to the museum auditorium first, so that they could receive the first instructions on what the field class and the activities carried out on that day would be like. A professor of the UFU Visual Arts course and museum monitors were in charge of providing the students with information, and acting as mediators. The students were then sent to see the exhibitions that took place in this institution, and were surprised by the contemporary works of art present there, as it can be seen in figures 1 and 2:

**Figure 1-** Students at the art exhibition in MUnA.



Source: Researcher's record

**Figure 2-** Students at the art exhibition in MUnA..



Source: Researcher's record

The students walked in the spaces of the museum observing carefully the works of art exhibited there, always accompanied by some monitor and the teacher of the university who coordinated the educative action.

It is important to point out that the works of art exhibited in the museum were selected from the call for exhibitions published by MUnA in 2014 – “Edital Exhibitions 2015” –, which aims at selecting national and foreign artists to exhibit their works over the following year. This selection occurs annually.

At that moment, the students were divided into small groups, guided by each of the monitors and by the coordinator of educational action, to analyze and “read” works of visual arts. Some students were watching closely, and made questions about the artists and the technique used, whereas others just took a glance at the works. However, it was possible to verify that most of the students were interested in the exhibitions.

The exhibitions are in themselves a learning environment, in which one can know the curatorial intentions, the constructed narratives, the planned routes. And the student needs to be informed about facts and actions contained in an exhibition montage and what kind of ordination one can experience during a visit. (IAVELBERG; GRINSPUM, 2014, p. 05).



In the following stage, the students were taken to the workshop located in the museum itself, in order to conduct a practical activity on the exhibitions, also coordinated by the monitors and the coordinator. It is important to emphasize that the art teacher at the school accompanied the pupils at all times in the museum spaces. In this educational action, the instructors asked the students to cut out in different sizes small colored papers, delivered to them, and to write down what feelings the exhibitions brought to them. Thus, some students reported feelings like “joy”, “sadness”, “strangeness”, among others. However, some students described having not understood what certain works – drawings, photographs, books of artists among others – meant.

Although this is a profitable contribution in the field of visual arts studies and research, Barbosa (2010) clarifies that it is important to highlight this reading in spaces of non-formal education by enabling the individual to contact the original work of art, which favors the development of his experience with the arts. For this thinker, the teacher or art-educator plays a fundamental role in this process by mediating in students, from different age groups, the understanding and interpreting of the work of art.

In this sense, it is emphasized that the art-educator, at school, also plans to take students to museums and other exhibition spaces. This will, of course, allow students to have experiences of reading images from original works, as well as having a true encounter with art and expanding repertoires of knowledge. (BARBOSA, 2010, p. 149-150).

This means that the ability of the public to understand the work of art is related to their artistic experiences, their experiences with different objects of art throughout their lives. It is important to use appropriate methodologies so that students and the audience as a whole are able to read the work of art performed in these spaces. Thus, they will be able to construct meaningful interpretations of the exhibitions, broadening their understanding of the culture.

Underlying this moment, we share the thinking of Braga et al. (2015) regarding the relationship between teacher and student in the teaching and learning process:

The task of the arts teacher is to be a mediator capable of articulating the students' knowledge and experiences with the new knowledge and practices demonstrated. That is to say, it is a relational, dynamic and interdependent process in which the teacher will help the student to learn, to learn to research and to evaluate what is being researched. (BRAGA et al., 2015, p. 23-24).

In the following figures 3 and 4 we can observe some moments of the creative process of the students on the works produced in MUnA's arts workshop during the educational action:

Subsequently, the same papers delivered to the students would be made into art by the students themselves. In this creative process, different objects were created: a kite

**Figura 3-** Students in the artistic production in MUnA



Source: Researcher's record

**Figura 4-** Students in the artistic production in MUnA.



Source: Researcher's record

produced from the cut papers to posters, letters and three-dimensional objects, built from collages, folds and cutouts made by the students themselves. Even though some students presented some difficulties in creating the objects, they were able to produce them from the orientation of the monitors and the coordinator of the educational action. The students' creativity was evident in their work. It took them approximately forty minutes to complete this activity, which was done in groups of approximately five students.

It should be noted that during the mediations held with them in the art museum, the educational action team has the important role of selecting the contents of the works with which the students were having contact at that moment, some even for the first time. In this way, students can be able to understand the technical and artistic processes of visual works present, which is important for a more meaningful art learning.

In accordance with Figures 3 and 4, Figures 5 and 6 show other moments of the field class developed in MUnA:

**Figure 5-** Students at the art exhibition in MUnA.



Source: Researcher's record.

**Figure 6-** Students at the art exhibition in MUnA.



Source: Researcher's record



In this sense, Freedman (2010) reinforces that it is important to pay attention to the external experiences of the individual with these visual communication media, because they are part of society, so that people can broaden the knowledge of the culture in which they are inserted, assuring a culture manifested by different ways.

Figures 7 and 8 show other works produced by the students during the educational action in the museum:

**Figure 7-** Students in the artistic production in MUnA.



Source: Researcher's record

**Figure 8-** Students in the artistic production in MUnA.



Source: Researcher's record

Soon after the workshop, students were again asked to return to the auditorium to watch a video on the university museums, among them MUnA itself. Students of the Licentiate in Visual Arts course at UFU presented the videos. Afterwards, the instructors and coordinator of the educational action asked them about the visit and what they had found and learned during the lesson. Then, some testimonials were recorded from a video about the field class, which, according to this coordinator, was intended to show the schools that would visit the museum in the future a different view on the exhibitions.

For Iavelberg and Grinspum (2014), both the school and the museum need to promote learning situations that can contribute to the construction of students' art knowledge. They stress the importance of the teacher or art-educator in mediating the student's "reading" of the work of art. In fact, the student's experience in the visual arts in the museum will accompany him throughout his life, enabling him to extend and share this experience with other people. In addition, "in the artistic experience the student can transfigure his reality, know and even transcend the instituted, elaborate his emotions and give visibility to his perceptions." (JOHANN, 2015, p. 07).

In addition to this reflection, Carvalho et al. (2015) argue that taking students to art museums can also be considered a form of social inclusion by making this audience more critical and participatory, since "it is especially through exposure that the public is involved in teaching and learning processes in museums." (MARANDINO, 2015, p. 710).

Martins (2014) understands that the term “mediator” refers to teacher and educator, who mediate the student during the art experience, But it can also refer to the parents, grandparents, uncles among other people, who provide this student with opportunities to have encounters with art. Faced with this, it is essential “to offer the means for each subject that participates in a mediating action to create, and that his creation feeds the creation of all, building dialogues that allow this expansion of points of view that so enriches.” (MARTINS, 2014, p. 260). It is possible to affirm, therefore, that the practice of mediation in the process of teaching and learning in these spaces cannot be restricted only to the school and the teacher, that is, it must be extended.

However, Barbosa (2016, p. 18) brings the concept of critical mediation in museums that, according to her, refers not only to knowing what mediators and educators think, “but also to know what actions trigger and what the bases of these actions are.”

In another study on mediation processes, Braga et al. (2015) have revealed four conceptions of mediation with the work of art, namely: mediation between subject-mediator-object, referring to the relationship established between among these three; mediation as pedagogical intervention, which reports the intervention of the teacher in the process of teaching and learning of the student; mediation as a man-technology relationship, which concerns mediation through the use of technological tools such as the internet; and mediation as a methodology or educational action. For these theorists, these terms are related to educational practices developed in art museums, which I understand are also related to the teaching and learning processes carried out at the University Museum of Art - MUnA during artistic exhibitions and educational actions.

After recording the testimonials, the students returned to school. In the art class that took place a week later, the art teacher asked the students who visited the museum to answer a questionnaire of five open questions about their impressions of the field class. Next, we present the analysis of these questionnaires.

## **Analysis of questionnaires**

Subsequently to the field class held with the two classes of 9th grade in elementary school from a public school in Uberlândia, State of Minas Gerais, a semi-open questionnaire was given by the researcher to all students who went to the University Museum of Art, so that they could answer five questions – three closed and two open – about the field class held. Among these, we highlight the open questions in this article. It is important to note that this questionnaire was applied at the school during the Art class in two classrooms and, after the students answered the questionnaire, the researcher collected it for further analysis. In this sense, when asked about what they learned during this visit, the students thus stood:

MUnA is an important cultural center of the city of Uberlândia and region. MUnA is home to exhibitions of various genres, and offers several courses to the community as a whole and free of charge. (A3)<sup>7</sup>.

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**7-** The identities of the students were kept secret, in respect to their anonymity and abiding by the established ethical procedures for scientific research.

I have seen the passion that authors have with their works, the care they have with them and the emotions they put into them. (A4).

It was interesting to see the different works of different artists and the way in which they express their feelings, opinions, etc. (A9).

I found it very interesting. I discovered many things. I learned many things and the one I liked the most was to make bees wax arts. (A14).

It was very good, I enjoyed all the art works. It was a very good practice class, I learned several things. I learned how to do an activity building on any object. (A15).

It was amazing to see artwork. I did not know that there were books of artists and works with any material. (A16).

I thought it was great. I learned that through a museum we can know about several things that are not said in our daily life. (A23).

It was a different and fun experience at the same time. I learned that we can know different works of art. (A26).

It was very good. There we can see how with limited resources we can make art. It's a good place to study art. (A28).

It was a different and fun experience. I learned stories of works and artists, learned new things that I did not know. (A32).

The visit was superinteresting and educational. On this visit, I could see works in which artists express themselves, and what they use to do their works. (A44).

I found the museum intriguing and interesting. The skill with which artists have made art is extraordinary. I learned to admire an artistic content with intensity and, in this way, I learned to have feelings for the art according to what it presents. (A46).

The students' statements show that the majority liked the class held at the University Museum of Art. They present recurrent in expressions referring to art conceived as culture and expression of feelings, which refer to some of the functions of art: to express the sensitive and to promote cultural development. Additionally, some students demonstrated in their lines that art can be produced from any material, which evidences the student's understanding that it is possible to produce art from any object, which is quite characteristic of contemporary art.

However, a few students reported that they did not understand the field class held at the museum. In addition, the student A5 drew many colleagues' attention by saying that he only went to the MUnA class to earn a degree in Art:

Nothing, I just went to get extra marks. (A5).

I do not understand anything. (A41).

I do not understand anything. (A43).

I do not understand anything. (A51).

In our view, the main lack of some students' understanding about the field class is again related to the difficulty of understanding some contemporary art works, the reception of the work, which was highlighted in the previous section of this paper when we analyzed the creative process of these students. Of course there may be other reasons that have contributed to this lack of understanding by some students about the class. But it is important to note that if the student cannot understand what he sees in a painting, photograph, engraving, or any other artistic object, he gets uninterested in the subject and does not feel motivated to appreciate other works, nor wants to participate in activities developed in educational actions. The student is interested in what attracts his attention, which arouses his curiosity in learning, and this may be related to his previous experience with art.

However, the fact that seems to be predominant in elementary schools, especially in the subject of Art, refers to problems concerning the reading of visual works carried out in the classroom, that may not be happening properly with the students. Or perhaps due to mistaken methodologies of readings done with the students, or, still, a lack of the teacher's knowledge about this activity. We observed that a few students mentioned to the monitors both during the visit to the exhibitions and during the art workshop that they did not understand certain works, and asked what they meant. These questions occurred throughout the class on that day. We think that this may have contributed to some students' lack of interest in class that day.

This finding corroborates what Martins (2011) points out: it is necessary to increase people's capacity of visual reading, so that these people are not stuck to the academic norms of art when enjoying a painting, photograph, drawing among so many other artistic languages. In the wake of this reflection, Iavelberg and Grinspum (2014, p. 07) make an important observation:

Just as the exhibitions constitute the main communication vehicles of museums and, therefore, in the central learning environment, the moments of reading a work of art in a group, with the mediation of educators, are the most important didactic resource for the authorial participation of students emerge in speeches and interactions that can be provoked, instigated, expanded and added content mediated by the educator to the extent of the assimilative possibilities of each group.

In this aspect of the art work reading in spaces of non-formal education, Martins (2011, p. 315) considers: "cultural mediation can be the space for conversation, for exchange, for the gaze extended by the gaze of others that does not eliminate the subject

of the reader, whoever he may be". And he completes this reasoning by stating that "the invitation of mediation does not mean divination or explanation, but deciphering, shared reading, amplified by multiple points of view." That is, the reading of the artwork must be related to a cultural mediation developed in cultural and educational spaces, such as art museums, since "every student who understands what he reads must also interpret what he sees." (SELBACH, 2010, p. 102), and it must also be a critical mediation, since "mediation is not measurement, it is action." (BARBOSA, 2016, p. 18).

Another point that deserves to be highlighted in this work is contemporary art. It is well known that contemporary art does not follow strictly established standards<sup>8</sup>, unlike other artistic styles such as the neoclassical art of the eighteenth century and, therefore, some works exhibited in MUnA may have led some students to have difficulties in understanding them. Perhaps this happens because they are "accustomed" to artistic productions labeled as "beautiful", widely disseminated by social media, since some of these artistic images seem to us to be found with some ease in textbooks, which students have a lot of contact with. When confronted with contemporary art, which breaks down this whole paradigm of what is "beautiful" and canonical in art, throughout the process of visual reading some students find some works "strange" and "different".

The lack of quality training and adequacy to the art teacher these days in dealing with situations that involve reading the image and reading the artwork in the classroom and the reception of the work by the student can influence the learning process of understanding. Perhaps the teacher is not being able to guide and mediate the student in this important process of reading. The school, the art teacher and the professionals who work in educational actions in spaces of non-formal education must pay attention to this aspect, because reading a work of art is part of the intellectual formation of the individual.

In the wake of this thought, Loponte (2012) clarifies that one should not read a contemporary work of art through "renaissance" or "modernist" eyes. However, it is necessary to take into account the context of the work, when it emerged, the time when it was created, among other factors. Each period in the art history has its critical and aesthetic presuppositions, and in contemporary art this is not different. That is, what was beautiful in rebirth may not be beautiful these days. This aspect was highlighted by the monitors during the educational action in the museum.

This cult of the more classic or traditional notions of art, according to Loponte (2014), is derived from the most frequent impressions that emerge between teachers and students in contemporary art education. It seems to us that a European hegemonic culture still prevails in art classes of elementary schools, which influence the readings and the "looks" of students when analyzing a work of art during the pedagogical activities carried out in the school subject of Art. In this sense, we believe that it is important nowadays to have a broadening teacher training in art, which can contribute to a higher quality teaching in this subject, by approaching appropriate methodologies of reading of the image and reading of the work of art, as well as studies of artists, not only foreigners.

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**8-** REY, Sandra. Por uma abordagem metodológica da pesquisa em artes visuais. In: Brites, Blanca; Tessler, Elida (Org.). O meio como ponto zero: metodologia da pesquisa em artes visuais. Porto Alegre: UFRGS, 2002. p. 123-140.

Javelberg and Grinspum (2014) give their contribution by stating that mediation in contemporary art has been based on the practice of reading the work of art, seeking to understand the work exposed to the public, and not only to understand the intentions of the artist.

Some students, when asked if they had ever visited an art museum, reported on the first time they have been to a museum:

The museum is really cool. I had never gone there, but I really enjoyed the first time I went. I intend to go more often. I learned that art can be anything. (A21).

It was very good, because I learned many things. I'd never been to the museum. Unforgettable. (A22).

It was very interesting because I'd never been to the museum. It was a different feeling. (A27).

It was a new and very interesting experience. I had never been to the museum before, I really enjoyed the artwork, the workshop, the lectures. (A31).

I had never been to the art museum and, arriving there, it aroused interest and curiosity in seeing works and paintings of art with phrases of artists demonstrating their feelings. I learned many things about the artists, about their stories, among others. (A35).

According to their reports, students who had never been to an art museum got satisfied with the field lesson held at the University Museum of Art, where they had the opportunity to approach and broaden their knowledge of local, regional and national artistic culture from the works of art exhibited, from different artists. The opportunity of leaving the classroom and having a closer contact with different paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, books of artists and other works, as well as the history of the artists of the exhibition and the organization of works in the museum space, enables the student to significantly increase his experience with the visual arts, fundamental for their cultural training and knowledge enhancing.

The educational action carried out during the day of this lesson, as well as the mediation developed by teachers and museum monitors, helped students to express aesthetic conceptions of art itself, by talking about the museum, motivating them to want to go back to school and visit an art museum again. This was evident in their reports.

Braga et al. (2015) state that this mediation in visual arts has not been disseminated in Brazilian education in recent years as a constant practice for research in art and research in education, and consider it as an important instrument of cultural inclusion.

Students and the audience at large, who attend these spaces, having real contact with art, must receive guidance on the artists and exhibitions that occur in these places. These are essential aspects for people to broaden their cultural knowledge and their experience with artistic diversity. In this view, it is important to emphasize that "to mediate between the public and the work is to teach art." (IAVELBERG, 2003, p. 77). In complement to this



reflection on art and museum, we highlight again in these analyses the thought of Mirian Celeste Martins, which corroborates our reflections:

We consider that the mediating action cannot rely only on good proposals; also on educational materials, with proposing objects, with a good website, with a good training of the educators who work, with a welcoming team. And at school, it is also up to the teacher to favor cultural access, to build educational curatories that expand the repertoire of his students by offering access not only to art but also to cultural heritage. (MARTINS, 2014, p. 261-262).

Underlying this reflection, Pérez and Gordillo (2011, p. 51) affirm: “through this experience, artistic education offers us a wide variety of perspectives, the student’s gaze and the artist’s eyes, looks at the cultural institution and above all, its content.” Thus, cultural institutions such as art museums can give the individual different perspectives on artistic and cultural production, which implies a diversity of interpretations of reality that can be developed from direct contact with art, expanding the field of reading of art. Indeed, “a visit to a museum generates the possibility of re-signifying the way to look at things that surround us, as it moves us to another culture, another time.” (PINTO, 2012, p. 82).

In this sense, we think that access to art museums should be expanded through educational actions that allow both the school and the general audience such an access. Social media such as the internet used for virtual mediation in museums enables people an online approach to universal art and reduces the distance between the erudite culture of the audience. However, nothing replaces actual contact with works of art in their genuine form.

## **Conclusions**

The University Museum of Art - MUnA often hosts art exhibitions from different regions of Brazil and international artists. It offers the public a diversity of courses geared towards the arts and educational activities regarding the exhibitions they receive throughout the year, making it possible for visitors, especially students, to be in closer contact with art.

The analysis carried out in this research made it possible to understand that knowledge in art is an apprenticeship that starts from the observation of a work of art, reading and artistic practice. In addition to enabling students a better interaction with the social environment where they live, artistic knowledge broadens their understanding of the world and improves their capacity for expression. The Art subject at school should provide students with these experiences, which can be expanded from visits to art museums, exhibitions of artists and other cultural events.

The contact with art museums enables the student not only to broaden his knowledge of the world, but also to enrich his cultural education and to become more participatory. However, it is necessary that the school and teachers provide students with means to access these educational spaces, so that such places are not only restricted as

mere images in textbooks. It is indispensable that school, art teachers and people involved in educational actions in museums be important mediators for this knowledge enhancing process, by providing conditions so that students can learn to understand and appreciate an artistic object.

By giving the student the opportunity to expand his knowledge from the constant access to these artistic and educational spaces, as well as the development of artistic activities in these spaces, the student may be given the chance to broaden his understanding of the national culture. We also verified that the students produced significant artistic works during the educational action in the museum, which contributed to their greater experience with art.

It is important to say, therefore, that from the experience in art education analyzed the behaviors and readings carried out by students in appreciating a work of art are related to their experience with different artistic manifestations. Although some students had difficulties in visually understanding certain works, they were able to produce significant works of art during the educational action and express themselves clearly and extensively in their speeches when asked about what they learned in the field class, presenting their interpretations and conceptions of art aesthetics.

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