

Art Education for adults through photography and museums

Educação artística para adultos com visitas a museus e prática fotográfica

Educación artística para adultos con visitas a museos y práctica fotográfica

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ABSTRACT

The present research approaches the need to bring art closer to adult students, analysing the process and the results of a course in a university program for the public over 55 years old. The interest of these students in art is given in most cases because they would have wanted to study these issues in their youth. Beyond the usual proposals focused either on Art History or Art Workshops, this proposal generates a multidisciplinary experience, introducing concepts and practices such as urban derive or performance. Aspects such as visual culture or digital technologies and art education are also integrated. Research methodology is mixed, combining the Case Study with Arts-Based Research. The photographs acquire an important value as a result of the research. We value positively the benefits of lifelong learning, using participatory practices that take into account the experience and knowledge of the students. Through individual surveys and focus groups, the information is collected, which finally offers us a positive and rewarding result, as stated by the students.

KEY-WORDS

Education; Lifelong learning; Photography; Museums; Sustainability.

RESUMO

A presente pesquisa levanta a necessidade de aproximar a arte e a prática artística dos estudantes adultos, analisando o processo e os resultados de um curso ministrado por meio de um programa educacional oferecido pela universidade para públicos maiores de 55 anos. O interesse desses alunos pela arte se dá na maioria dos casos porque eles gostariam de estudar esses temas na juventude. Para além das habituais propostas centradas na História da Arte ou nas Oficinas de Arte, nesta ocasião é gerada uma experiência multidisciplinar que também introduz conceitos e práticas como a deriva urbana ou a performance artística. Aspectos como a cultura visual ou as tecnologias digitais e a educação artística também estão integrados. A metodologia de pesquisa é mista, combinando estudo de caso com pesquisa baseada em artes. As fotografias adquirem valor importante como resultado da investigação. Valorizamos positivamente os benefícios da aprendizagem ao longo da vida, recorrendo a práticas participativas que têm em conta a experiência e o conhecimento dos alunos. Através de pesquisas individuais e grupos focais, as informações são coletadas, o que acaba nos oferecendo um resultado positivo e gratificante, conforme explicam os alunos participantes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Educação; Aprendizado contínuo; Fotografia; Museus; Sustentabilidade.

RESUMEN

La presente investigación plantea la necesidad de acercar el arte y la práctica artística al alumnado adulto, analizando el proceso y los resultados de un curso impartido a través de un programa educativo que oferta la universidad para público mayor de 55 años. El interés de este alumnado por el arte viene dado en la mayoría de casos porque hubiesen querido estudiar estos temas en su juventud. Más allá de las habituales propuestas centradas o bien en Historia del Arte o bien en Talleres de Arte, en esta ocasión se genera una experiencia multidisciplinar que, además, introduce conceptos y prácticas como deriva urbana o performance artística. También se integran aspectos como la cultura visual o las tecnologías digitales y la educación artística. La metodología de investigación es mixta, combinando el estudio de caso con la Investigación Basada en Artes. Las fotografías adquieren un valor importante como resultado de la indagación. Valoramos positivamente los beneficios del lifelong learning, utilizando prácticas participativas que tienen muy en cuenta la experiencia y los saberes del alumnado. Mediante encuestas individuales y grupos focales se recoge la información, que finalmente nos ofrece un resultado positivo y gratificante, tal y como expone el alumnado que participa.

PALABRAS-CLAVE

Educación; Aprendizaje continuo; Fotografía; Museos; Sostenibilidad.

Introduction

Some Spanish universities, mostly public, have implemented programs designed for the senior public in their academic offer. This offer is due to several interconnected factors, of which we will highlight three: 1) It is considered necessary to meet the demand of a type of student who no longer studies for work or initial training purposes, since they are retired or early retired, having worked for decades a paid job; 2) With this type of face-to-face offer, public universities amortize their potential of teaching staff and facilities, at the same time that they cover a social demand; 3) Many people developed tasks during their lives out of imperative necessity, having always postponed their desire to study humanities subjects, such as art, history or philosophy, something they would have always wanted to learn.

University training programs for older people are usually created by connecting with conventional subjects and courses, so that this senior public shares learning experiences with much younger students. But in addition to these compulsory subjects of the profile in which they are enrolled, complementary itineraries are also offered, usually made up of workshops or subjects of a more practical nature. Within this complementary offer, in 2022 the subject "Photographing the city's museums" was activated at the University of Valencia. It is from this innovative training experience that the present study is generated, through which each step of the process carried out is observed, examining the important moments and the potential for creativity that erupted during the sessions (Torres, Mouraz & Monteiro, 2022).

The course investigates the students' creative possibilities, attending to innovative pedagogical approaches that contain a critical social load (Pallarès & Lozano, 2020). It is about learning to take photographs, while visiting and getting to know different museums in the city, thus turning the practice into an authentic performance, at the same time carrying out an artistic urban drift (Ramon & Alonso-Sanz, 2022). What is truly complex is taking advantage of this academic environment to turn the experience into a space that generates creativity (Meléndez, Alfonso-Benlliure & Mayordomo, 2018). And this is possible thanks to the attitude of all the people involved (students, teachers and mediation managers), since the experience accumulated by these senior students is taken into account, and it is from said seniority, added to an environment relaxed academic, that we can achieve a high degree of creative maturity (Said-Valbuena, 2019). It is a very attractive photography workshop, which increase creative and visual capacities and skills, influencing visual culture, as defended Paul Duncum (2015).

The project offers the possibility of getting to know the city itself better, enjoying the spectacle of its museums and other urban heritage elements (Huerta, 2021). To achieve this, a device set in urban drifts is elaborated, organizing actions of various types that involve walking and walking through the city, emulating the figure of the *flâneur*, who links with the tradition of art that leads us reviewing Charles Baudelaire (2006).

This research highlights the value of museums as spaces of cultural and educational intensity (González-García, 2019), something that is linked to the

importance of heritage education. According to the latest definition approved by ICOM on August 24, 2022 at its General Assembly held in Prague, “a museum is a non-profit, permanent institution at the service of society, which investigates, collects, preserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. With the participation of communities, museums operate and communicate ethically and professionally, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and the exchange of knowledge”. It is clear, therefore, that museums have to promote the education of citizens, and it is from this intention that we promote creative thinking and creativity (Gonzales Soto & others, 2020), with a healthy critical perspective (Hamlin & Fusaro, 2018).

In a group of people over 55 years old, we especially value maturity and acquired knowledge, encouraging their concerns and desires. We encourage them to experiment, while we strengthen their skills and expertise with the camera, encouraging them to make images, to reflect on the power of photography (Sontag, 2001) and post-photography (Fontcuberta, 2016). This empirical part of the project will be fundamental, since the theoretical classes from a certain moment on will have their own photographs as their starting point, which will be analyzed in the classroom and commented on by all the participating students.

The members of the group are 17 people, 6 men and 11 women, some with various jobs (dentist, administrative, commercial, designer, chemist), being the majority teachers, although we have a part of the participants who have opted for early retirement, or retired. Thanks to Arcadi Cotolí Melià, Dolors Enrique i Ferrada, María José Fiz Quilis, Mercedes Garcés Ruiz, Maria Alonso, Miguel Marín Jiménez, Amparo Orts Cortina, Gema Pla BARGUES, Antoni Pons i Frígols, Carmen Primo Zaragoza, Isabel Quereda Palop, Maite Rabena Pérez, María José Tamarit Moradillo, Isabel Torres Igual, Miquel Valls Marco, Manuel Zapata Rayo and Vicente Zaragoza Dolz, for their involvement and great interest. In their photos they express a great sense of composition, demonstrating their expertise, aptitude and ability to generate images, sometimes with virtuosity and mastery. It is about taking advantage of their knowledge and experiences to take them to the field of creativity, influencing to increase their self-esteem and capacities, generating healthy habits from innovative pedagogical practice.

Methodology

The methodology that we apply in the research is of a mixed nature, since it combines the Case Study (Stake, 2005) and the Arts-Based Research (Navarro-Espinach, 2022). Our purpose during the process is to work from critical and creative thinking, assuming the role of participating observer. When inquiring into teaching with senior students (people over 55 years of age) we opted to create spaces for participation,

both from reflection (dialogue, debate) and from artistic creation, taking photographs that are used in the classroom as elements of analysis, favoring learning from their creations. The creation of images and the analysis of these images is one of the defining characteristics of the Arts-Based Research (ABR) methodology. In this way, we sponsor a space for the construction of knowledge, prioritizing problems, through the study of factors offered by the images themselves, both in their formal aspect and in the construction of content. Methodology is qualitative, applying participatory action to the research design, so that the entire participating group becomes a researcher and researched, using techniques such as brainstorming, visits to museums, urban *deriva* (drift), creation of images, or critical reflection.

The experience we are studying combines a theoretical part with a series of practical sessions (Tavin & Tervo 2018). This combination serves to adequately train students, both in the creation of images and artistic education, as well as in the knowledge of museum spaces and art galleries. We approach contemporary art and other artistic expressions, including museums of different types. With this combination of theoretical and practical elements, incorporating drift as an element that enhances creativity (Huerta, 2022), the participants are prepared to train them in the creation of photographs with a communicative intention, establishing and legitimizing spaces that combine debate and training. We offer the possibility of learning about museum processes from a broad cultural vision, with the intention of promoting flexible areas of participation, thus bringing them closer to the mechanics of art and images from a current perspective. We also promote a model of workshops among adult audiences to train them when it comes to creating photographs and facing the challenges of the future of museums as cultural promotion entities and spaces for dialogue.

We encourage creativity, establishing a schedule of sessions with original titles in each of them:

Session 1. *Identity* (presentation of participants and explanation of the course, dynamics and intentions of each planned activity)

Session 2. *Territories* (visit the websites of the city's museums)

Session 3. *Voluptuousness* (first visits with practical photography workshop)

Session 4. *Privacy* (visits with photography workshop)

Session 5. *Memory* (theoretical class on the creative possibilities of photography, based on the work that the students are doing)

Session 6. *Collecting* (visits and discussions through focus-group)

Session 7. *Deriva / Drifts* (students are organized in pairs or teams and they are assigned museums to visit)

Session 8. *Practice* (new drift and preparation of the final work, a group video)

Session 9. *Vanity* (theoretical class with issues related to the current situation of digital museums)

Session 10. *Memories* (last session to review and comment the students' work).

The main objective of the pedagogical activity is to promote an approach to the enjoyment and knowledge of art and images through the enjoyment of exhibition spaces in museums and other heritage environments. Among the subsidiary objectives we highlight the following: a) approach to the main concepts of photography, applying this theoretical basis to the possibilities of creating images in exhibition spaces; b) understand the importance of museums in the idea of cultural transmission; c) design and create images coherently through lived experience; e) encourage personal artistic practice in the workshops that are given during classes and visits; f) addressing the city's museums as a key element of visual culture; g) walking around the city as an aesthetic practice; h) create images, photographing details, elements, objects, interiors, landscapes and exteriors; i) revisit the city as a typographic museum, detecting the aesthetics of urban letters; j) listen to the lights and shadows of the city, also appreciating the magic of the liminal zones.

We emphasize the use of Arts-Based Research creating images (Maeso-Broncano & Martínez-Morales, 2023). A paradigm is proposed to shift the focus from the interpretation of images towards a transformation of reality promoting their use, through a performative approach, exploiting their pedagogical possibilities. Issues of gender and diversity are also incorporated during the explanations and debates in class, using a virtual museum, which the students can consult both on their mobile phones and through the projected presentations.

The study uses a mixed research methodology, combining a descriptive-exploratory qualitative one, and an artistic methodology, using a socio-educational approach, taking into account incidence factors such as the age of the students or teacher involvement. An ethnographic perspective of the research is adopted, which is oriented towards teaching innovation, promoting educational change. As the research takes place in the same teaching activity, awareness of the interactions that take place in the group as a whole that constitutes the educational event and the people involved is made (Tirado de la Chica, 2022). The data collection is carried out during the teaching exercise itself, and in an inductive way a participant observation is developed on the educational activity that is taking place, tutoring the work with the students, detecting the critical moments of learning, both the difficulties and the benefits. The responses of the participants, their expressions and narratives, are collected from the actions carried out in the teaching-learning processes (Ramon, 2019).

The main data collection tool is the analysis of the images created by the students, critically reviewing them during the different teaching work sessions, an observation that is added to the research results. The information is classified focusing on two main aspects: on the one hand, the artistic results of what has been learned and, on the other, of the didactic activities as an observed environment. For the study sample, the teaching experience itself was taken as a reference, as well as the history of materials that the students have prepared. Acquiring resources to promote learning and participation throughout life in artistic activities favours interaction with participating senior students.

We propose drifting for museum visits to students, as conceived by Guy Debord, as a technique linked to the action of walking through varied environments with a playful-constructive behaviour, something that Francesco Careri emphasizes with his theory of *walkscapes* or aesthetic walks. This type of drift is raised with awareness of the psychogeographic effects it generates, effects that the activity has on the person who performs it, and therefore with notions different from those of the trip or walk. Numerous artistic collectives have practiced drift since the beginning of the 20th century, such as the Dadaists, later in the wanderings of the Surrealists, as in the urban explorations of Walter Benjamin, or in the psychogeographies of Letrist and Situationist artists, as well as in the “wanderings” of Land Art, or the experimental practices of groups like the Italian Stalkers in the 1990s.

The city is the perfect place to practice drifting. Urban environments are full of spaces that stimulate the development of learning experiences, thus becoming places where each artist acts as an archaeologist of the city itself, investigating from artistic practices with elements extracted from urban life. In this way, we break certain prejudices that we have regarding places where we can express ourselves without coercion (Foucault, 2009). Museums are urban spaces suitable for generating drift, especially when the group of students leaves the classroom and walks to the indicated site, although each participant can establish their own particular itinerary, with complete freedom and autonomy (Freire, 2015). Based on artistic experiences, it is essential to define new methods that can be used to develop innovative research approaches, from broad and diverse conceptual frameworks.

Results and discussion

Drift and photography are the two artistic discourses that methodologically frame the educational experience that we investigate, thus proposing a teaching approach with which it is intended to promote creativity. The results are both written documents and records of the students’ opinions, as well as their image creations. During the course, the group visited different museums in Valencia (Museum of Fine Arts, IVAM, MuVIM, Casa Museo Benlliure, Ceramics Museum, Fallero Museum, Silk Museum, Museu de Prehistòria, L’Etno, Museu de l’Arròs, Museu de les Ciències, L’Íber, MHV), as well as some heritage spaces (l’Almoina, Ciutat de les Arts i les Ciències, La Nau, San Nicolás, El Patriarca, Centre del Carme, Las Naves, Center d’Artesania, Palau de les Arts, Grau Cemetery). The participants took thousands of photographs, something use mobile phones (Mascarell Palau, 2020), although most used their digital SLR cameras. Each student choose an image from each museum.



Fig. 1. *Photo of the Museu Faller.* Author: Arcadi Cotolí Melià.

The most intense and rewarding part of the process is choosing a single photograph, forcing students to question many aspects of their own creations (Barthes, 2009). The number of photographs uploaded (17 per museum) allows for an explanation in the classroom, with enough time to analyze each image, encouraging the teacher to generate debate among the students (Souza, Salgado, Chamon & Fazenda, 2022). It is from their images that we address formal issues, content, semiotics and symbologies. For example, in the case of the images of Arcadi Cotolí [figure 1], the importance of geometry in the creations of this mathematics teacher was commented. In addition, we take advantage of some element of each photograph to talk about artists who use photography as a means of expression.

The art teacher María José Tamarit uses an expressive resource for her photograph of a detail from ceramics [figure 2], accentuating the intensity. This decision allows us to reflect in class on the use of filters and effects in photography. This analysis is based on demonstrating the pedagogical capacity that this type of research practices have in students in the construction of their personal identity, as well as in understanding the identities of their cultural reality, thus promoting a global understanding of the social environment from proposals for active and participatory methodologies (Bourriaud, 2009).



Fig. 2. Photograph of a piece from the Museu de Ceràmica. Author: María José Tamarit Moradillo.

The work develops an analysis of the value of the photographs taken during the drift, as a means to investigate the social environment from the lived experience (Sutton, 2020). It is investigated from an ethnographic, narrative and artistic perspective, involving all the research agents in the construction of an active story that is complemented and built in different phases: search, analysis and selection of images, discussion, analysis and joint reflection with the group (Ramon, 2021).

The analysis of images is carried out through educational research actions with senior students, where the artistic gaze plays a priority role in their practice, with a process consisting of: image search through inquiry; selection, compilation and analysis of these images (Huerta, 2020); elaboration of a personal proposal from the images; collective exhibition and analysis through discussion groups of the results of the images; and finally systematization and joint debate of the result of the discussion groups on the images (Monleón Oliva, 2021). Among the images collected, those offered to us by the montages that are made in the exhibition halls of the museums stand out, as reflected by Miguel Marín in his image [figure 3].



Fig. 3. *Assembly of the room in the permanent exhibition of the Museu Falla.* Author: Miguel Marin Jimenez.

Collecting photos that have been taken of the exhibitions set up in museums allows us to prepare detailed reports on the discussion processes, based on the analysis of the photographs presented by the students. It is convenient to influence this process as one of the keys of the investigation, since it generates a pedagogical practice in which the result is a conscious learning process, based on an auto-ethnographic visual story. The use of digital technology to take the images and share them with the group promotes an exchange of mutual knowledge (Haraway, 2019).

To promote the development of critical and creative thinking, it is important to give students spaces for debates that promote analysis, synthesis, interpretation, inference, and the issuance of judgments. In this way, a more daring and disobedient education is promoted, from which to formulate ethical and aesthetic questions (Atkinson, 2019). Creative skills are also required that contribute to looking with different eyes, based on current challenges, especially when it comes to senior students, who come to the classroom with an important baggage, due to their accumulated life experience. Critical and creative thinking must be present in the activities that students carry out inside and outside the classroom, giving them the ability to propose innovative solutions to specific problems.



Fig. 4. An IVAM mediator explains the sample to the course students during the visit to the Anna Boghiguian exhibition. Author: Maria Alonso.

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze and reflect on facts objectively, in order to form a judgment or opinion, solve problems systematically, and understand the logical connections between ideas, values, and beliefs that are based in society. The necessary data must be collected to understand situations, reaching logical conclusions. When a person has the ability to use critical thinking, they are not easily manipulated. The psychologist Joy Paul Guilford points out sensitivity to problems, fluidity, flexibility, novelty and originality, elaboration, analytical and synthesis capacity, reorganization or redefinition, complexity and evaluation as proper aptitudes for the success in the development of creative thinking. Both in the classroom and during the drifts in museums, the students have been able to experience these skills by incorporating said baggage into their creations, developing an artistic discourse through images, and reflecting on said narratives. When commenting in class on the images taken during the visit to the Anna Boghiguian exhibition at the IVAM, the majority highlighted the motivation that caused them to be able to “enter” the works of this octogenarian artist [figure 4].

We observe how the images that are part of this research connect us with the human, which has implications in the conceptual and pedagogical approach to these images, since they bring us closer to the forms of life, their behaviors and roles, their relationship with others and with the world, which allows us to investigate this research process from the personal and the lived. The personal is part of the social, it places us in front of the symbolic visualization of what we know, and from it emerge stories

and discoveries that tell us about social relations, how we observe the city, the way we live in it. In educational research, it is convenient to establish and connect with educational practices, since these same practices, based on ethnographic and artistic visual research, are articulated in turn in the double axis of research, teaching and the improvement of their own, integrating practices in their environment.



Fig. 5. *People observing the painting The glory of the people (1895) by Antonio Fillol Granell, in the permanent exhibition of the Valencia Museum of Fine Arts. Author: Gemma Pla.*

In addition to the details of art works, exhibition rooms, pieces on display, and other elements typical of museums, another facet that is reflected in the students' photos of the is the urban landscape as the environment of the museums visited.



Fig. 6. Image that becomes a baroque still life, created by Miquel Valls Marco taking advantage of the gloomy lighting of the Museu d'Història de València.

Working from Arts-Based Research offers senior students the enormous possibilities of a research methodology as a pedagogical construction process on which to learn about themselves and the society of which they are a part. In addition, it allows them to inquire about the creativity generated by their own history, and collectively reflect on burning issues that include the city, museums, collective heritage, and knowledge of art from artistic practice (Alegría, Acevedo & Rojas, 2018). Using drift as an activating element turns them into flâneurs, observant walkers aware of the aesthetic capacity generated by the urban environment. The results are, finally, aesthetic, since reflection allows them to obtain surprising and attractive images, beyond the document that certifies their visit to the museum, as occurs in the photograph presented by Miquel Valls after his visit to the History Museum of Valencia [figure 6]. It is not a work exhibited in the museum, but the compositional game that light generates with the exhibited pieces.

By creating a visual discourse from their own images, students can offer topics that are dealt with in the classroom, incorporating issues that really interest them, or that emerge from the images. In this way, knowledge is born directly from the photographs they have created, images linked to the environment visited, which tell us about the museum as an institution, which respond to specific sociocultural and

personal conditions. We detected that there is an artistic intention in these images, an aesthetic element that is articulated in this case as an ally of the research process, as we have remarked in the description of the methodology, facilitating and allowing a greater depth in some of the aspects that each person who intervenes wants to stand out above others. Analyzing the results of the focus-groups, several issues can be determined in relation to the comments from the sessions for viewing the photos, reinforcing the conclusions of the research process. The impact caused by the images themselves affects the analysis prepared by the participants in the focus-group, allowing them to deepen and learn about issues related to the history of photography, the characters that generated it, and their own involvement in the process.

The great diversity of the museums visited also makes it possible to understand the potential of these institutions, since beyond their collections, their architecture, or the distinction that may emanate from the image they offer, what matters in this case is that the senior students enjoy, learn, and above all create, practicing an exercise in artistic production that empowers them as inspired designers [figure 7].

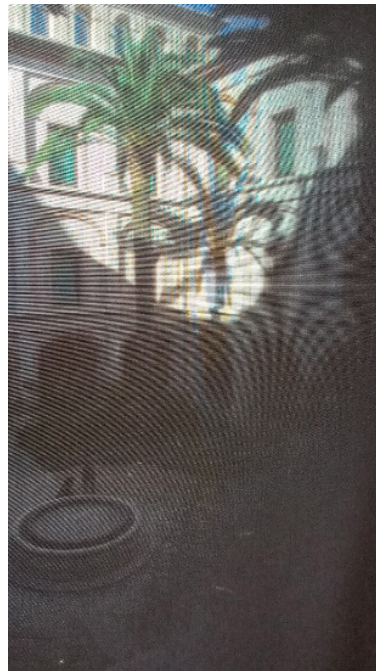


Fig. 7. *View behind the blinds in a courtyard of the Museu de Belles Arts.* Author: Maite Rabena Pérez.

According to Alessandro Luigini, “the ability to use graphic skills, and in general the ability to integrate the use of the visual, the mind and the hand (perception, thought, representation) to solve problems and create effective products, facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge” (Luigini, 2020: 89). The Italian author also reminds us, referring to the advice of Edgar Morin, his definition of art as the human capacity to create works, shapes, colours, sounds, give or should offer aesthetic emotions. For Edgar Morin, aesthetic emotion is the mirror of creative emotion. The artist, to create, appeals to unconscious (inspiration) and conscious (corrections) forces. In the same way, the aesthetic emotion that seizes us in front of a work is both rational

and irrational, since it appeals to both feeling and intelligence. And is this aesthetic emotion useful? Echoing Plato's catharsis, based on the theories outlined by Aristotle, the author demonstrates how, in these times of crisis that we are going through, beauty is a formidable antidote against fear, horror, anguish and death (Morin, 2016).



Fig. 8. *Interior of the Church of San Nicolás, in Valencia.* Author: Vicente Zaragoza Dolz.

Based on the debates in the classroom, and the answers to questionnaires, a synthesis of the results of the analysis sessions has been prepared, systematizing the issues that arose by theme. Some issues prevail in their observations, and therefore in their learning, which helps us understand how interests in making one type of image or another arose. This revealed several realities. First, how the images themselves built a series of meanings, with narratives that were implicit in the photographs on a recurring basis. This remarkable facet allows us to make generalizations and reach consensus based on the experience arising from the images themselves, and not only through the institutional discourse in which we usually fall, something that reinforced our perspective and our conviction about certain social, cultural situations, political and economic of our environment, marked by the very image of the museums visited.

A case that we consider interesting to highlight is the visit to the Benlliure House Museum, the place where the brothers Mariano and José, sculptor and painter respectively, lived and worked. These artists are an important benchmark of Valencian art, but the most attractive thing about visiting this house-museum is that it is a space that preserves the workshop where José Benlliure painted. Walking through the artist's studio means having within reach both the large window (facing north) through which

light entered the workshop, as well as numerous materials that the artist used to paint, highlighting elements of costumes and props with which he dressed their models. It is also worthwhile as a space to photograph the cemetery, a place where memory is very present [figure 9].



Fig. 9. Photograph of a sculpture detail in the Grau de València Cemetery. Author: Dolors Enrique.

The students expressed their preferences in relation to photography artists, resulting in the following names of artists (in parentheses the initials of the students): Ramon Masats (MA), Robert Capa (AC), Dorothea Lange (DE), Ron Galella (MJF), Cindy Sherman (MF), Del LaGrace Volcano (RH), Francesc Jarque (MM), Sebastiao Salgado (AO), Chema Madoz (GP) Spencer Tunick (AP), David Hamilton (IQ), Brassai (MR), Man Ray (MJT), Ouka Lele (IT), Sally Mann (MV), Henri Cartier Bresson (MZ), Luis Calvente (VZ). We therefore see a great variety of styles and origins, thus configuring an eclectic value to the whole, which allows working with greater freedom from the teaching experience, while reinforcing the wealth of opinions during debates.

In the questionnaires we check their interests. To the first question in the questionnaire, why did you choose this course? Most responded that it was because of how attractive they found the proposal, which combined photography and museum visits, although in three cases they thought it would be more than a conventional course of photography, precisely the three most experienced students in photography. To question 2, what has the course given you? Six answers have an impact on the discovery of museums that they did not know, in two cases they consider it very

interesting to have been able to learn to take photographs, and the rest indicate that they have discovered their creative and artistic facet. In question 3, what would you highlight on a positive level from what you have experienced during the course? All the answers agree that the experience as a whole was worth learning and enjoying.

To the question "What aspects could be improved or changed?" six people indicated that the afternoon schedules do not allow them to go deeper into museum visits, since there is a lack of time; four indicate that the theoretical part on photography and the history of photography should be expanded, while the rest highlight the need to extend the hours of the course. Question 5 refers to the museums they were not aware of and have discovered thanks to the course, most of them were unaware of the Casa Museo Benlliure, the Centre d'Artesania, the Grau Cemetery and the Museu de l'Arròs, but all agree that they have rediscovered some that they had already visited, such as the Fallero Museum, the Silk Museum, the Museu de Prehistòria, L'Etno, and the Museu d'Història de València MHV. In the case of the L'Íber, which is a museum of miniatures (tin soldiers), they were surprised by the originality of the proposal. When asked about the aspects of photography taught that have been interesting to them (question 6), they especially value the aspects of composition and the technical possibilities offered by cameras, even those of their mobile phones. They are asked to assess the visits with the group (question 7), and they make it clear that sharing these experiences is one of the most positive elements of the experience. Being a group of senior adults, it was very common for a pleasant chat to be organized spontaneously after the visits on a terrace or cafeteria. The answers to question 8, what role have museums and photography played in your life? As it is an open question, it leaves us with a true life story of each participant, something that as a teacher I value extremely. And finally, to question 9 about whether there is any aspect that they would like to highlight, they agree again in positively assessing the experience as an example of participatory teaching that provides artistic results and enhances the creativity of those who have experienced it.

A notable aspect of the results obtained is that the participating senior students have developed their capacity for observation, something that we consider especially important, considering the value that we currently place on time, and how we take advantage of it (or not) by being so impregnated by the presence of digital devices. For Byung-Chul Han, among the practices that require time is careful and careful observation, since "the perception attached to the information excludes long and slow observation." The philosopher continues arguing that "the careful contemplation of things, attention without intention, which would be a formula for happiness, recedes before the hunt for information" (Han, 2021: 20). Recovering the concepts of *studium* and *punctum* elaborated by Roland Barthes (2009) when reflecting on photography, Han insists that greater attention to things goes hand in hand with forgetting and losing oneself. When the ego weakens, it becomes receptive to that silent language of things (Han, 2021). In fact, "things allow us to see the world. They create visibilities, while non-things destroy them" (Han, 2021: 113).

Conclusions

We highlight some issues as a conclusion and final balance of the investigation. Senior students have shown their creative ability to generate speeches through images, creating photographs from lived experiences. These photographs tell us about their interests and their way of understanding life, something that fits with the long life experience that characterizes them, which fits with their desire to materialize this acquired knowledge. They had never had notions of photography before (except in one case, that of a student who is a graphic designer and has practiced as such for decades), but this has not prevented the results from being optimal. They have been able to revisit their city through the museums, since the images were made during a series of drifts to different urban spaces, especially museums.

The combination of men and women offers us an interesting result that we can approach from a gender perspective, since we detect particular ways of deciphering social rituals, depending on the perspective taken, something that is revealed especially in identity aspects, both through personal and collective level. It is also clear that this type of research, carried out based on teaching experiences, allows for innovation in education, demonstrating the theoretical and practical foundation it contains, and incorporating a certain margin of risk, always necessary, as it is an artistic subject. The emotional impact multiplies the educational effect of the action, and this is possible thanks to the programming of visits to museums, some of which are more well-known, together with others with which the students were not so familiar. The age of the participants favors a type of very intense and enriching reflections, taking into account their life experience and their desire to share ideas in the debates. The images that they have created and shared constitute a great element to better understand the interests of these students.

A research design has been developed to work on critical and creative thinking among senior students, who had no knowledge from the practice of the arts. Artistic and creative skills have been developed from a critical position. To achieve this, visits to different museums have been scheduled, where the students have taken their photographs, knowing that there was no broad knowledge of what critical thinking and creativity means and characterizes, as a starting point to work on the different situations and themes. The participating action research took into account the time, participation, means, dedication and responsibility of the students, who have known how to take advantage of each planned and lived experience. The purpose of the participating action research was to become a valuable instrument, as a potential transformer of a concrete reality, involving creative thinking from the role of the actors in the research, with new visions of change in learning. The research has made it possible to solve the problem of the incipient knowledge about creativity as a perspective of the experience carried out, in this case with senior students.

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Submissão: 30/10/2023

Aprovação: 20/11/2023