



New ideas on museum activities for people with dementia

Cristina Bucci, Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, Italy

Palazzo Strozzi is the main place for temporary exhibitions in Florence, Italy and the city's laboratory for adding new cultural value. *A più voci-With many voices* is Palazzo Strozzi's project for people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers.

In 2011 Palazzo Strozzi's Education Department decided to create this program, after hosting three successful sessions based on *TimeSlips* conducted by the geriatric educator Luca Carli Ballola. A pilot program was created by a team of two museum educators (Irene Balzani and Cristina Bucci) and three geriatric educators (Luca Carli Ballola, Michela Mei and Silvia Melani), coordinated by Devorah Block, with the intent of designing a museum project to meet the needs of people with dementia and include them in the cultural community.

Since the Spring of 2012 during every exhibition, Palazzo Strozzi has offered four or more cycles of three-meetings each for the participants, who come directly from nursing homes or families. The first two encounters of every cycle are devoted to a work of art. Each participant, both people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers, are asked their opinion of the painting after carefully observing the work. Then the educators invite participants to contribute to the creation of a collective narrative or poem about the selected work. The third meeting of each cycle is devoted to a hands-on creative workshop inspired by the objects in the exhibition. Two special dates are dedicated to the caregivers, to present them the project and to evaluate it.

The success of this program inspired a new project in 2012, *Art in Your Hands*, at the Marino Marini Museum, developed by Cristina Bucci, Luca Carli Ballola, Chiara Lachi and Michela Mei. This new project utilized additional senses including touch, hearing (music) and movement (dance) which was made possible by the specific characteristics of this museum. This then led to a training course promoted by the Tuscany Region to be disseminated throughout museums in the territory.

Cristina Bucci

Cristina Bucci graduated and specialized in art history at the University of Florence and has a master's degree in museum education from the University of Roma Tre.

She is part of the Education Department of the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi which deals with Access Programs (with Irene Balzani) and in particular the project *A più voci-With many voices* (with Irene Balzani, Luca Carli Ballola and Michela Mei). She also works with the Family Suitcase and writes interpretive materials for families (with Chiara Lachi). Cristina is also responsible for activities for Primary School students.

She is a founding member of the cultural association "L'immaginario" that manages the Education Department of the Horne Museum and the Marino Marini Museum in Florence. Here, Cristina promoted the *Art in Your Hands* program, dedicated to people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. Within the project, *Art in Your Hands*, she has designed and conducted (together with Luca Carli Ballola, Chiara Lachi and Michela Mei), a training course for professional development for museum educators and geriatric educators of Tuscany. This program is promoted and financed by the Tuscany Region and it is aimed at disseminating the museum initiatives targeted at people with dementia in Tuscany. She also teaches Museum Education for post-graduate master's students at the Institute for Art and Restoration-Palazzo Spinelli, in Florence.