

IDENTITY AND MISSION

Museology and Values. Art and Human Dignity in the 21st Century, a conference held in Florence, Italy, on 28 and 29 September 2018, affirms that museums change lives by inspiring engagement, reflection and debate, and links this experience to what Renaissance thinkers called “the dignity of the person”, seeing it as a component of integral human development. In the diversity of their cultural expressions, museums invite an empathetic approach to differences, favouring openness and tolerance. Hospitable, inclusive and respectful, they foster the awareness of a universal community and the conviction that what unites people is more important than what divides them. Museums turn memory wars into dialogues and are part of the mechanism ensuring continuous human existence. Museology - the art and science of exhibiting works of genius in ways that touch the humanity of the beholder – situates Beauty in relation to Goodness and Truth, suggesting how its persuasive force extends beyond the museum to the city and the world. In the way it presents religious artifacts, a museum installation can evoke the bond between aesthetics and the sacred, reminding visitors of the place faith has in the perception of reality. In their arrangement of historical subjects and portraits, museum installations fulfill the moral function assigned to culture by Enlightenment philosophers. To this end museum curators must interpret their role literally as one of ‘care’ (*cura*) for every visitor, offering a depth of encounter with beliefs, ideas and images able to transform tourists into lifelong lovers of learning. Adolescents and young adults must be helped to recognize themes close to their concerns and to build ‘museums of emotions’ in our galleries. Immigrants must perceive museums as places of enfranchisement and venues of citizenship, in which intercultural storytelling reveals unsuspected affinities. All must be invited to measure their own humanity with the values transmitted in the works they see.

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Museum of Islamic Art, Doha

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The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg

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The Museum of the Bible, Washington DC

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Studio Adeline Rispal, Paris

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Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence

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Vatican Museums, Rome

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Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence

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