

Chapter 19. *Tenemos cita con el arte*: a pilot project of visits and workshops with people affected by Alzheimer's disease in the Prado Museum, the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía Museum and the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Complutense University of Madrid

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Abstract

GIMUPAI is a research group comprising teachers and researchers from the Faculty of Fine Arts (University Complutense of Madrid) and the Department of Social Psychology and Anthropology (Salamanca University) who have been working in art and health projects over the last thirteen years. Recently, we have carried out *Tenemos cita con el arte*, part of a national research project entitled "Art education in museums and other cultural institutions as a tool for increasing the wellbeing of people affected with Alzheimer" (Ministry of the Economy and Competitiveness-EDU2013-43253-R). The main objective of the program is to make the museum's artworks available to people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers, at the same time encouraging them to participate in artistic activities and artistic creation through art workshops. *Tenemos cita con el arte* has been designed as a program of visits of the Prado Museum and the Centro de Arte Reina Sofia Museum. The program also has included participation in workshops on visual arts and artistic creativity in the Faculty of Fine Arts. The program was undertaken between October and December 2015 with a group of 15 participants (Alzheimer's patients, caregivers, and other health and social workers).

Keywords: Alzheimer, dementia, art, museum, wellbeing.

Theoretical background

Looking after the needs of people with dependencies is one of the great challenges for social policy in Spain. This circumstance is the result of the huge progress made by medicine over recent years, together with the combination of other demographic and social factors that have resulted in an ageing population. Against this background, this project falls into the European research and innovation framework of *Horizon 2020*, specifically the *Health, Demographic Change and Welfare* action plans, in which one of the main challenges is lifelong health and welfare for all. The approval of this national project, “Art education in museums and other cultural institutions as a tool for increasing the wellbeing of people affected with Alzheimer's” (Ministry of the Economy and Competitiveness-EDU2013-43253-R), implies the need and the priority that should be given to art and arts education in a society that is ageing but must prepare for an active and participative ageing process. In this context, it is a fact that there is a need to come up with meaningful experiences and alternative leisure and cultural programmes. The overall aim of this research project is to assess the ability of art education to be a resource for the wellbeing of people with early dementia, by designing and implementing arts activities in museums and cultural institutions. The specific objectives of the project are described below:

1. To ascertain the degree to which wellbeing is produced in people with early dementia by carrying out activities related to contemporary art within the specific context of museums and/or cultural institutions. To assess patients' level of connection with social reality and relationship with their surroundings, the extent of their sense of personal achievement and improvements in their cognitive and memory skills.

2. To assess the methodological advantages of the pedagogical model to be used to implement the activities to be undertaken with the sample and in the contexts described, evaluating the advantages of a collaborative pedagogical model that encourages creativity and involves the creation of knowledge.

3. To assess the benefits that the context of application (museums and cultural centres) provides for the two previous objectives, depending on patients' level of connection with social reality and relationship with their surroundings and on their degree of social acceptance.

This paper describes work carried out to date by the research team. This work has focused on collecting and reviewing similar projects both in Spain and abroad, briefly described below and in the set of papers on *Arte y Demencia* (Art and Dementia) in the academic journal of the Complutense University of Madrid, *Arte, Individuo y Sociedad*, to be published in 2017. The papers give an account of the most recent experiences on the project as well as interviews with a number of professionals involved in the study. The monographic also describes the design of *Tenemos cita con el arte*, a pilot programme of museum tours and creative arts workshops that aim to promote an artistic experience that can be shared by the people taking part and their caregivers.

In Spain, the inclusion of people with early onset dementia in the museum context has focused mainly on integrating these participants in activities along the lines of the ones being run by MoMA in New York since 2006. The New York Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) was one of the first museums to provide programmes aimed at improving access to the collection for people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. The first programme was called *Meet me at MoMA* (Rosenberg, 2009) and offered work areas, an exhibition of the

museum's major works and discussion forums for evaluating, improving, sharing experiences and increasing both the museum's and society's understanding of the disease. The museum became a tool for better treatment of the disease, providing affection and understanding, for people in the early and intermediate stages of the disease, their caregivers and their families. The programme was a huge success and led to the MoMA Alzheimer's Project, which together with the MetLife Foundation is now in charge of devising resources such as publications, websites, lectures and study areas for people with the disease and to improve understanding of it. *Memories in the Making* developed in Cincinnati (Kinney & Rentz, 2005), and *Visiting the museum together* (McGuigan, Legget & Horsburgh 2015) set up by the Auckland Museum in New Zealand, have also served as precedents for producing the design protocol for the *Tenemos cita con el arte* programme. Other experiences carried out in Spain and which are shaping an interesting panorama of action over the last few years are the following:

In 2002 La Caixa Foundation developed a programme for Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases, aimed at promoting research, training and raising awareness of the condition. The programme included an interesting guide for patients and their caregivers, entitled *Recordar en los museos* whose purpose was to encourage Alzheimer's disease patients to remember their childhood and youth by stimulating their memory with a museum visit.

In 2006, the Xunta de Galicia regional government launched an initiative for using cultural heritage as a therapeutic resource for improving quality of life for patients and their families. This initiative, called *Lembrar no museo*, involved participants recreating their life history by making murals with themes based on tours of the Ethnological Museum in Ribadavia, the Museo

da Escola y de la Infancia (School and Childhood Museum) in Pobra de Trives and the Museo do Xoguete (Toy Museum) in Allariz.

In 2009, the Museum of Fine Arts in Murcia ran the Alzheimer's Project in the Museum of Fine Arts in partnership with the Alzheimer Foundation, the Caja Murcia Foundation and Murcia City Council.

In 2010, equally inspired by the MoMA experience, the CCCB (Contemporary Cultural Centre of Barcelona) also ran its own programme. Madrid's Thyssen Bornemisza Museum signed a collaboration agreement with Nintendo Spain to act as art education advisers for one of the company's new educational products: *Art Academy*. The project explored the potential of both the programme and the consoles for working with people with diversity, especially in terms of cognitive stimulation and psychomotor training for people with Alzheimer's disease. The Prado Museum, with its *El Prado para todos* programme, is undoubtedly at the forefront of this type of project, available to associations and centres working on inclusion issues with these groups. In addition to these initiatives, a number of other actions have also been carried out, such as the *Mental Health Days* at MUSAC in León; the *Memory Workshop* at the Picasso Museum in Malaga; the *Reminiscences. Art and Culture against Alzheimer's* project at MACA in Alicante; the *Art and Memory* workshop project at Sala Rekalde in Bilbao and the *Album of Life* project run by Visiona in Huesca.

Method / Description of the experience

As this paper describes a pilot programme, it does not give a detailed description of the four museum visits (two visits of the Prado Museum and two of the Reina Sofía Museum) or a detailed account of the four artistic

creativity workshops. Instead, it provides a table with guidelines that serve as a protocol or guide, enabling the programme to be reproduced and tested.

In terms of the first protocol (designing the museum visits), the previously described experiences and recommendations have been taken into account but adapted to two specific museums, the Prado and the Reina Sofía

Table 1. Protocol for museum visit *Tenemos cita con el arte*

| Items | Description |
|------------------------|---|
| Works selected | 5-6 |
| Duration of the visit | Approximately 1 hour 30 minutes |
| Number of participants | 10-12 (people affected by Alzheimer's and other dementias, caregivers and health professionals) |
| Educators | 2 leading educators to present the works in two groups of 5-6 participants each 2 support educators to accompany the discussion in pairs or in small groups of 3 |
| Schedule | Meeting point, welcome and general presentation of the visit Guided visit of the works following the pattern of a brief presentation and dialogue in accompanied pairs or small groups End of visit and farewells |

List of works selected:

Prado Museum, tour 1:

1. *Las Meninas*. Velázquez, 1656
2. *Baltasar Carlos*. Velázquez, 1635
3. *The Spinners*. Velázquez, 1655 – 1660
4. *Apollo in the Forge of Vulcan*. Velázquez, 1630
5. *The Drinkers*. Velázquez, 1628 – 1629

Prado Museum, tour 2:

1. *The family of Carlos IV*. Goya, 1800
2. *The Clothed Maja*. Goya, 1800 – 1808
3. *The Naked Maja*. Goya, before 1800
4. *The Grape Harvest*. Goya, 1786
5. *The Kite*. Goya, 1777 – 1778
6. *The Parasol*. Goya, 1777

Reina Sofía Museum, tour 1:

1. *Girl at the Window*. Salvador Dalí, 1925
2. *Sailor with Guitar* (sculpture). Jacques Lipchitz, 1917
3. *Portrait of Josette Gris*. Juan Gris, 1916
4. *La bouteille d'anis*. Juan Gris, 1927
5. *Le moulin à café*. Juan Gris, 1920
6. *La fenêtre ouverte*. Juan Gris, 1921

Reina Sofía Museum, tour 2:

1. *Triadic Ballet*. Oskar Schlemmer, 1922
2. *Girondelle*. Miró, 1937
3. *Escargot, femme, fleur, étoile*. Miró, 1934

4. *Portrait*. Miró, 1938
5. *Tête de Femme (I, II, III, IV)*. Picasso, 1937
6. *Guernica*. Picasso, 1937

In respect of the second protocol, referring to the analysis and selection of activities and creative art tasks, attention was paid to leading studies in the field that discuss the positive effects gained from creative and artistic activities and processes (Camic, Tischler & Pearman, 2014). Previous experience gained by the research team was also invaluable, especially with activities carried out in the *Centro de Referencia Estatal de Atención a Personas con Enfermedad de Alzheimer y otras Demencias* (CRE Alzheimer) in Salamanca, using techniques such as collage, photo collage and cyanotype (Ullán, 2012; López Mendez, 2015).

Each workshop was based on participants producing their own work based on the dialogue with the original artworks during the museum visits. Although the four workshops undertaken in the pilot programme *Tenemos cita con el arte* did not offer a wide range of possibilities in terms of the techniques used, they did allow the focus to be centred on two in particular (cyanotype and collage), enabling the team to pinpoint and list the guidelines that any artistic technique should provide in a context and with participants with these characteristics. A detailed version of this list will be included in the article to be published in the monograph mentioned earlier.

Table 2. Protocol for *Tenemos cita con el arte* creative art workshops

| Items | Description |
|------------------------|---|
| Techniques selected | Collage Cyanotype |
| Workshop duration | Approximately 2 hours |
| Number of participants | 10-12 (people affected by Alzheimer's and other dementias, caregivers and centre professionals) |
| Educators | 1 leading educator to present the creative art task 2-3 support educators to accompany the creative process |
| Schedule | Welcome and reception Virtual tour of the works selected on the previous tour Presentation of the creative art task Individual work on the creative art task Sharing work produced Farewells |

Results

The artistic experience, whether it involves observing, discussing or making art, triggers intellectual and emotional stimuli to which people with dementia are more than capable of responding (Camic, Tischler & Pearman, 2014). Studies on people affected by Alzheimer's and other dementias taking part in artistic and creative activities and tasks have shown that they have both a social impact (in the way they

relate to others, to caregivers and in terms of interaction with the group) and an impact on certain cognitive skills (concentration, memory, persistence with the task and commitment to it, decision taking) and affective skills (pride in the results, pleasure, fun, etc.). Both in the visits and in the workshops, art becomes a perfect vehicle for personal expression and exchange of impressions. For the caregivers it also provides an opportunity for exploring their own artistic interests together with their relative in a setting where they can interact with other caregivers and feel supported. Undertaking a shared cultural activity improves communication and connection between the caregiver and the person with Alzheimer's. It places them both in a context that is different than their usual one to carry out a cultural and creative activity that could turn out to be interesting for any adult person. The pilot programme *Tenemos cita con el arte*, has produced results that emphasise the importance and positive outcomes of these experiences.

Discussion

The awarding of this nationwide project implies the need and the priority that art and education should have in a society that is ageing but that must prepare for an active and participative ageing process. In view of this, it is undoubtedly our responsibility, as cultural agents and as a university research group, to investigate how to come up with meaningful experiences with this group of people and to assess alternative leisure and cultural programmes. With the cultural and artistic resources to hand, investment

needs to be made in the human resources (artists and educators) who can contribute new perspectives and views on this active ageing process, working with the idea of achieving wellbeing by ensuring cultural and artistic participation in the community (Ávila et al, 2016). Within the framework of wide-ranging research, the programme *Tenemos cita con el arte* seeks to be an accessible resource that is available to the community at large, replicable by any of the participants and professionals involved in the task of ensuring a healthy and active ageing process.

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