

The Coronavirus Pandemic as an Opportunity for Pedagogical Innovation. Research of Didactic Resources of Art Museums and Galleries

La pandemia del coronavirus como oportunidad de innovación pedagógica. Investigación de Recursos Didácticos de Museos y Galerías de Arte

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Sugerencias para citar este artículo:

Jiroutová, Jana; Mesdag, Kateřina; Šobáňová, Petra & Bařtanová, Pavla (2022). «The Coronavirus Pandemic as an Opportunity for Pedagogical Innovation. Research of Didactic Resources of Art Museums and Galleries», *Tercio Creciente*, (extra6), (pp. 281-294), <https://dx.doi.org/10.17561/rte.extra6.6984>

Recibido: 25/02/2022
Revisado: 27/03/2022
Aceptado: 27/03/2022
Publicado: 01/04/2022

Abstract

Our paper deals with online educational resources created by art museums and galleries of the Czech Republic in the time of the coronavirus pandemic. This paper is a partial outcome of a research project currently conducted by the authors at the Palacký University Olomouc in the Czech Republic. The primary focus of the research is to analyse online accessible digital educational resources of educational departments of art museums and galleries, the ways of their presentation to the public, and the way they can be used by art educators for distance teaching of art education not only in the time of coronavirus. As part of our research, we will create a set of case studies, on the basis of which a typology of online educational resources will be formulated. This paper presents the up-to-date results of the research as well as analyses and gives examples of three categories of online educational resources, namely motivational challenges, educational tutorials, and interactive websites.

Keywords: Online Educational Digital Resources of Art Museums and Galleries; Art Educators; Closure of Museums, Galleries and Schools; Distance Teaching of Art Education; e-learning; Educational Resources; Museum Education; Museum Studies; Museology.

Resumen

Nuestro artículo trata sobre los recursos educativos en línea creados por los museos y galerías de arte de la República Checa en tiempos de la pandemia del coronavirus. Este artículo es el resultado parcial de un proyecto de investigación que actualmente llevan a cabo las autoras en la Universidad Palacký de Olomouc en la República Checa. El objetivo principal de la investigación es analizar los recursos educativos digitales accesibles en línea de los departamentos educativos de los museos y galerías de arte, las formas de su presentación al público y la forma en que pueden ser utilizados por los educadores artísticos para la enseñanza a distancia de la educación artística no solo en tiempos de coronavirus. Como parte de nuestra investigación, crearemos un conjunto de estudios de casos, a partir de los cuales se formulará una tipología de recursos educativos en línea. Este documento presenta los resultados actualizados de la investigación, así como también analiza y brinda ejemplos de tres categorías de recursos educativos en línea, a saber, desafíos motivacionales, tutoriales educativos y sitios web interactivos.

Palabras clave: recursos digitales educativos en línea de museos y galerías de arte, educadores de arte, cierre de museos, galerías y escuelas, enseñanza a distancia de educación artística, e-learning, recursos educativos, educación en museos, estudios de museos, museología.

Introduction

This paper is a partial outcome of the ongoing project entitled The Coronavirus Pandemic as an Opportunity for Pedagogical Innovation | Research of Didactic Resources of Art Museums and Galleries currently conducted at the Palacký University Olomouc in the Czech Republic by the authors of the paper. The primary objective of our project, which began in March 2020 is to analyse educational production of educational departments of galleries and art museums of the Czech Republic. In particular, we focus on online accessible educational resources that art museums and galleries began to create mainly as a response to the pandemic situation and the closure of museums, galleries and schools that was introduced in the Czech Republic in March 2020 and which lasted until 13 April 2021 when the rotation model of teaching began at both primary and secondary schools. The traditional face-to-face teaching started on 16 May 2021 which was after more than a year of distance teaching.

The main outcome of our project will be a monograph in which we aim to identify and further analyse online accessible digital educational resources created by educational departments of art museums and galleries. Furthermore, we will also address the ways in which they were pre-sented to the public and used by art teachers for distance teaching of art education. They will also be analysed as a source of inspiration for face-to-face classes of art education in the future. The monograph will also present a typology of educational resources of art museums and galleries which we will formulate on the basis of case studies which are part of our research. Individual categories of the typology will include examples of virtual educational resources of art museums and galleries from the Czech Republic as well as from abroad.

The intention of the authors is also to contribute to the professional reflection of the possibilities by which museums and galleries can address today's children and young people that is the usual recipients of e-learning, or digital products, who naturally use different procedures and strategies to acquire new knowledge than their parents and grandparents. The approach of the younger generations to information acquisition and learning in general is diametrically opposed to that of all previous generations; some experts talk about a different way of thinking and processing information, the reason for which is the long-term interaction with a modern type of media. (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, p. 16; Siemens, 2014) Even before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was clear that museums must learn to respond to these changes and that it is an important challenge for them to find their place in online world and reach your visitors there as well. (Šobánková et al., 2016) The current global situation has accelerated this process and offers a lot of material for research.

Objectives and Methodology of the Research

As already mentioned, the main goals of our research include analyses and evaluations of di-dactic resources of art museums and galleries in the context of current possibilities of presenta-tion and education (including e-learning). Therefore, we have attempted to:

- identify the types of digital-based educational resources art museums and galleries offering freely to the public,
- find out what their content is and how it relates to the mission and collections of art museums and galleries,
- describe and evaluate their implementation, design and original creative and technical procedures used,
- perform their didactic analysis (especially the analysis of the content and applied pedagogical approaches and strategies – including the possibilities of their application),
- evaluate the level of quality and their educational potential in comparison with classical educational resources – and in the context of current trends in education and e-learning,
- re-evaluate the functionality of the classical typology of educational resources given in a new global situation, or to propose its modifications in order to capture the real state of the practice of museum culture.

The theme of our research implies that the survey also deals with how digital formats and shar-ing on social networks transform the content and form of museum communications, specifically didactic resources. By analysing digital educational resources, we answer the following ques-tions:

- (1) How do the educational resources of art museums and galleries and the presentation of col-lection objects change due to the influence of digital technologies and online communication?
- (2) Do digital technologies and online opportunities create new formats and types of educa-tional resources?
- (3) How do the communication with visitors and the forms of their engagement change due to digital technologies and online sharing on social networks and the web?
- (4) Do the form and new ways of communication also change the content of these educational resources and the methods of didactic transformation?

Our inquiry also addresses a general question that our entire research also seeks to answer: how the specific social situation in the period marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, along with digital technologies and online sharing, has transformed museum culture and

education, and what means are appropriate to further navigate the accelerated development so that museums and galleries address their visitors even in the online environment and keep pace with the development of society and the changes in human communication. During the pandemic, the museum has spontaneously responded to society's needs and offered an answer to the question of the museum's social role in the 21st century. The authors of the research would also like to reflect on these essential contexts of the given topic.

The basic set of our research is very broad and confusing, in principle, all digital communications of an educational nature, produced by Czech art museums and galleries during the of the Covid-19 pandemic and made available to the public on the web and social networks.

The research sample has primarily included online accessible educational resources of art museums and galleries, which were created at the time of the closure of museum institutions and schools as a result of epidemiological measures and which potentially represent all recognised types and formats of the basic set. Subsequently, the research sample has also expanded to include online educational resources that were created before this period. The reason for this addition was clearly the recognizable potential of these resources to fulfil the role of online educational art resources for distance teaching of art education during the pandemic time.

Our research strategy is based on case studies; individual cases show the scope of today's development of online educational resources of art museums and galleries, and offer basic information on individual types of these educational resources, their content in the context of a given museum, its collections and mission, their implementation, design and original procedures used, their content and the pedagogical approaches and strategies applied, their quality and educational potential in comparison with classical educational resources – and in the context of current trends in education and e-learning. During the content analysis of each educational resource, we have focused on the collection to which the transmitted content is related, whether it directs the user's attention only to the museum object or the wider context, the educational goals it fulfils, how its content is didactically transformed, what methods and procedures were selected, and whether the educational resource offers the visitor developing activities and whether it activates them. The analysis of the method of content delivery was focused on the quality, efficiency and imaginativeness of the didactic transformation; we have tried to evaluate whether the activities to which the educational resource leads the visitor are developing, whether they are information-, edutainment- or just entertainment-based. We have tried to note possible shortcomings and in some cases, when the resource does not use its potential or offers non-developing functions and tasks, we suggest alternatives.

We have also monitored the aesthetic and technical quality of the educational resources and its effectiveness, or originality of the design and its uniqueness – in short, the overall design.

Using an inductive approach typical of qualitative methodology, we have generated a typology from the individual cases. Based on the pre-research test, we were able to

produce certain categories which we then applied to the research phenomena. As for data gathering, we relied upon our own observations and testing of products; in the follow-up analysis, we focused mainly on the manifest content of the online educational resources. Product testing was performed by the authors of this text, with a few exceptions where others were involved. The data obtained was analysed and processed, and then subjected to further analysis. We looked out for information that would apply to our given categories, and then produced the descriptions that would give an account of the content, function, and design of the selected online educational resources. While analysing data, we also applied a constant comparative method that enabled us to define a case typology.

Partial Results of the Research

The data of our research that we have processed so far show a huge boom of newly emerging types and forms of educational resources of art museums and galleries in the Czech Republic. This rapid growth of new forms and especially online material-based educational resources of art museums and galleries is the result of the new society-wide need for distance education. We have found that the current typology no longer corresponds with today's practice, and therefore a new typology must be created, that would reflect the current state of practice.

To date, we have analysed ten types of online material-based educational resources produced by art museums and galleries in the Czech Republic. These include: motivational challenges (art-expressive and expressive-creative); educational video clips (and other short videos aimed at making the content of fine arts accessible to public); educational tutorials; video workshops for children linked to exhibitions; interactive websites; interactive games; worksheets; podcasts; mobile applications; virtual tours of permanent exhibitions.

In the following text, we analyse three categories including motivational challenges – art-expressive, educational tutorials, and interactive websites. Each category will be briefly characterised and illustrated by examples from galleries and art museums of the Czech Republic.

1 Motivational Challenges

The purpose of motivational challenges is to offer online visitors of art museums and galleries the content of fine art as a source of inspiration for their creative artistic or other creatively expressive work. They are often linked to the collection of given art museum. Motivational challenges are published by art museums and galleries on social networks as events and their accompanying content is offered on the website of the relevant museum and is freely downloadable in a .pdf format often with illustrative “step-by-step” photo instructions. To show visitors what to do and to attract their attention, challenges can also be published in the form of a trailer.

In the course of our thorough analysis of the different types of motivational challenges from our research set, we have distinguished two groups of challenges. The

first one includes such challenges that offer experience through a creative artistic process ending with an original artistic result. The work of art, which is the source of inspiration for the challenge, is usually connected to the museum collection of the relevant museum institution. The aim is to acquaint the visitor with a specific work of art and with the process of its creation, where the visitor themselves participates in this artistically creative process. Furthermore, the challenge indirectly attempts to transform “a non-visitor into a visitor”, inviting them to the art museum, where the visitor can see the original now familiar to the visitor because it was the subject of the challenge.

The second group includes challenges that offer experience through a spontaneous creative expression which the visitor is part of and which commonly refers to other than artistic fields (for example: music education, drama, physical exercise, etc.). The source of inspiration for such a challenge is appropriately selected content not only from fine arts, but also from nature or inspiration from topics that directly affect the individual’s life and daily functioning in the environment that surrounds them. The aim of such challenges conceived in this way is to open an interdisciplinary dialogue of all arts disciplines and motivate the visitor to seek their own inspiration in various sources and topics related to their life, which will stimulate their expressive interpretation and will inspire any type of creative expression.

Here we present a case study of a challenge created by the National Gallery in Prague entitled Soap Sculptures. The National Gallery in Prague (NGP) is a state organisation that manages the largest collection of fine arts in the Czech Republic, including the Collection of Old Art, the Collection of 19th Century Art and Classical Modernism, the Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art, the Collection of Graphics and Drawings and the Collection of Asian Art. The works of art of all collections are gradually digitized and presented to visitors in online form on the NGP website under the name NGP Online Collections.

This motivational challenge that complies with the description of the first group is the first challenge from the series of nine challenges entitled the Art (of being) at Home created by educators Ida Muráňová and Barbora Škaloudová based at the educational department of NGP as part of the project entitled Národní galerie Praha online dětem [National Gallery Prague Online for Children]. The challenge motivates visitors to engage in a creative activity in their homes, without the need for special art tools or materials. It is inspired by the artwork Bud [Pupen] by Hana Wichterlová from the collection of the NGP. The challenge is available in both a trailer and a .pdf format, which provides a photograph of the artwork and instructions in five steps accompanied by 10 illustrative photos of how to proceed at home using available work tools: a knife and potato peeler, and materials: a soap, so we can create a “useful” sculpture. Simultaneously and indirectly the challenge encourages visitors to wash their hands, so necessary right from the start of the pandemic. The aim of this challenge is to give online visitors an opportunity to experience the process of creating their own sculptural work.

NÁRODNÍ GALERIE PRAHA
NATIONAL GALLERY PRAGUE

NGP

Umění (být) doma
ONLINE PROGRAM NGP

Inspirujte se uměleckými díly a tvořte přímo u vás doma. Zvládnete to všichni a z dostupných materiálů! Každou středu vám přineseme jednu výzvu, která vás bude motivovat k tvůrčí práci.



FB událost: [bit.ly/umeni-byt-doma](https://www.facebook.com/umeni-byt-doma)

1. VÝZVA

Mýjete si teď pečlivě ruce? Pojďte si tuto činnost trochu oživit! Dnešní výzva je zaměřená na tvorbu užitečné mydlové sochy. Potřebujete k tomu jen obyčejné mýdlo a škrabku na brambory.

INSPIRACE

Inspirujte se dílem Puppen od Hány Wichterlové ze sbírek Národní galerie Praha, která má krásné hladké povrchy.



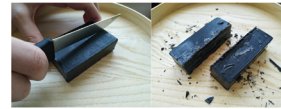
Autorky výzvy: Ida Muráňová, Barbora Škaloudová (Edukátky NGP)

NÁRODNÍ GALERIE PRAHA
NATIONAL GALLERY PRAGUE

NGP

JAK NA TO?

1. Kosičku mýdla rozpuzte podélně nožem.



2. Škrabkou na brambory mýdlo jemně tvarujte.



3. Mýdlením vyhladíte tvar do „dokonalosti“.



4. V rámci důkladného mytí rukou sledujte a zaznamenávejte vaše proměnlivé dílo.



5. Vaše sochy z mýdla můžete sdílet v komentářích příspěvku na naší FB události nebo pod hashtagem #uměnímbytdoma #sochyzmýdla. Nemáte FB profil? Zasiťte nám fotografie na isk@ngprague.cz a my je nasdílíme za vás.

Fig. 1–2 An example of motivational challenge entitled Soap sculptures from the series of the Art (of being) at Home available in a .pdf format on the Gallery's website: https://ngp-prod.brainz.cz/storage/1207/umeni_-byt-_doma_vyzva_1-3.pdf

2 Educational Tutorials

Another type of an online educational resources of art museums and galleries that we have analysed are educational tutorials. The purpose of these educational tutorials is to demonstrate some of the principles of artistic creation using a suitable example from fine art. These are not just simple manuals on how to proceed in order to achieve a final result – such tutorials are known as DIY and show how to produce something. Neither are these simple instructions on how to achieve one predetermined result (make a gift, decoration, etc.), or a simple practice of a skill. Educational tutorials as we define them are attempts to demonstrate and mediate a principle of creation that can be identified in the work of a selected artist. Thanks to own en-gagement in a creative process, online visitors understand a given work of art or a given art movement. It is not a “production”, but a demonstration of some technological or creative process and a challenge to take part in one's own artistic experiment.

Educational tutorials are mostly inspired by artworks managed by art museums and galleries. Tutorials are usually published on their websites in the form of videos as well as online image slideshows. As part of the museum presentation, those interested in art are offered tutorials on social networks, as the following example shows.

As an example, we present the educational tutorial created by the Prague City Gallery (GHMP) entitled Jiří Sopko. The Prague City Gallery (GHMP) is a museum-gallery institution whose collections include Czech art from the 19th to the 21st century. This cultural institution also takes care of Prague's monuments, memorial plaques, publicly accessible sculptures, fountains located in the capital city of Prague. GHMP manages both fully or partially 7 premises accessible to the public and the collections located in them. An important collection of sculptures, drawings and prints by František Bílek is located in Villa Bílek. A permanent exhibition of works of art is open to the public in his birthplace in Chýnov near Tábor. Another art-historical building and exhibition space in the care of the gallery is the baroque Troja Castle with a French garden, a chateau woodshed and an orangery, one of the most significant examples of Baroque architecture in Bohemia. The GHMP exhibitions are also held in the Gothic Stone Bell House in the Old Town Square and on the 2nd floor of the Municipal Library in Prague. The gallery also takes care of the Baroque Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace and also manages the collection of the House of Photography in the Old Town.

The video entitled Jiří Sopko, from the series of two educational tutorials created by authors – educators Markéta Slachová and Veronika Stojanová based at the educational department of the Prague City Gallery, was created as part of the project entitled Online Educational Activities of Prague City Gallery during the coronavirus closure of Czech schools. The tutorial introduces the work of Czech painter Jiří Sopko, his principle of working with bold colours and other aspects of his distinctive penmanship and style (reduction and simplification of shapes, playfulness, humour and exaggeration). Samples of the work of Jiří Sopko from the gallery's collections are used in the video. The video explains the theory of colour (primary, complementary / contrast colours), and offers online visitors a tutorial guiding them to their own creative work inspired by combining complementary colours and thus compiling their own multi-coloured images from objects in their immediate vicinity.



Fig. 3

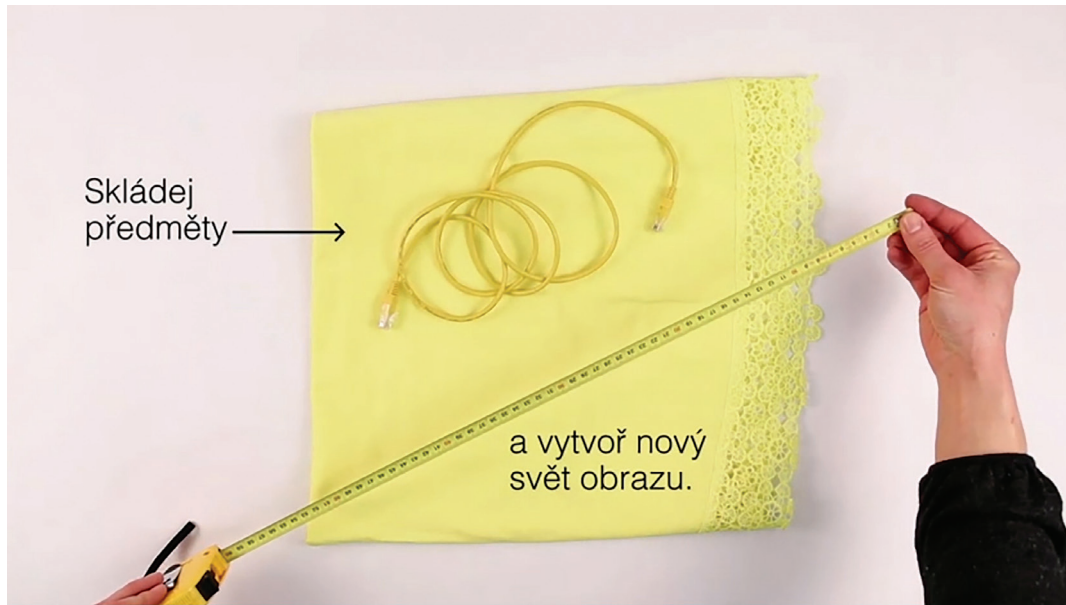


Fig. 4



Fig. 5

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.17561/rte.extra6.6984>
Investigación

such as worksheets, vid-eos, a “time machine” or interactive timeline with a historical overview of fine art, a map of galleries and museums involved in the project and a rich visual material of their collections.

The authors work interactively with the title page using it as a guide while reducing contents to the most frequently asked questions related to fine arts or the way museums and galleries operate. The questions are supplemented by amusing interactive pictograms, which give answers when clicked on. The interactivity of the website consists not only in clicking on individual pictograms and assigning a role to oneself (a teacher, student, I don't know who I am), but also in the possibility of sending own idea of what a specific question might look like.



Fig. 7 An example of interactive website entitled Proč umění? [Why art?] available at: <https://procumeni.cz/>

Conclusion

Our research is outlined by our effort and the need to identify trends and innovations in educational resources in the field of museum and gallery education in their rapidly emerging new forms, which can be used not only for museum presentation, but especially as motivation and content resources for distance and face-to-face classes of art education. Although our research is currently ongoing and it is too early to draw conclusions, we can already see that new types of educational resources have emerged and that they are entirely influenced by current methods of electronic communication. Here, too, the classic saying ‘the medium is the message’ applies, meaning that the medium – that is, the Internet and especially the social networks through which the educational resources we analyse spread – also changes the content itself. Technology has provided us with an environment and communication channel, thanks to which, for example, galleries could communicate with their audience and thanks to which teachers could stay in touch

with their pupils during the pandemic, but this technology also influences content and its stylisation, and didactic transformation. Authors of other studies have come to rather similar conclusions (Šobánková et al., 2016). It will be interesting to further analyse these changes and pay attention to their positive aspects, but also to the risks they may present. In any case, some phenomena are obvious at first glance: speed, brevity, a tendency toward amusement and sometimes even flashy nature, a certain superficiality or the adoption of formats known from social networks (typically challenges). At the same time, striking features of high-quality educational resources are creativity and playfulness, as well as a tendency to stand in opposition to the above: in the fast and superficial world of networks such resources present challenges to slow down and to think, for those interested there is an offer of more demanding content, an offer of unusual visuals making the 'feed' full of advertisements and fashion images more interesting, a creative game with the principles of network communication, the use of humour or nonsense.

The descriptions and analyses of various original approaches, as well as the ways of didactic transformation of the content of fine arts will help us identify key trends of the current times. We recognize that our research can provide important feedback to the creators and galleries but can also be of interest to art teachers. It has become evident that galleries are their very important partners who can enrich classical teaching not only with classical educational programs, but also with a huge range of interesting educational resources. We believe that our research will provide a clear report on these resources and will help expand these different types of educational resources of art museums and galleries into pedagogical practice.

The results of the research will be presented at professional meetings and conferences and will be processed in a monograph, which will contribute to a better understanding of this influential educational area and strengthen the connection between cultural education and formal education. The importance and benefits of this interconnection have become fully apparent in the current crisis and need to be further developed. The results of the research will contribute to the ongoing discussion on the possibilities of distance education.

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