VIDEOGRAPHIES PROJECT AT THE BERARDO COLLECTION MUSEUM - CASA PIA DE LISBOA

Carlos Carrilho, Sílvia Moreira
Museu Coleção Berardo

Keywords: Empowerment; To Involve; Participatory Video;

Summary

Videographies at the Berardo Collection Museum - Casa Pia is a participatory video project integrated in the extension programs that the Educational Service of the Berardo Collection Museum has been developing in collaboration with schools and other institutions. Its main idea was to invite the members of the public to create their own unique view on the museum and its relation with its urban and social environment, which resulted in the production of the collective video Videographies: Three-dimensional Lisbon. This was carried out through a partnership between the museum and the Pina Manique School – Casa Pia de Lisboa, both of which are in the Belém neighbourhood of Lisbon, Portugal. This project was developed with 16-to-19-year old youngsters, 1st-year students of a professional course on 3D digital design, between November 2015 and June 2016, throughout 25 2-hour weekly sessions. It took inspiration from the videoart works of the Museum's collection and of the temporary exhibition “Interregnum” by Stan Douglas; interconnecting in a transdisciplinary way the museum's contents with diverse courses in the students' curriculum. The project was developed in three stages: pre-production, filming, and edition. During the first stage, contact with the art primed different interpretations and meanings, stimulating imagination and critical sense, which led to the understanding of the story behind the moving image and second frames, were filmed in the museum, at the school, and in the surrounding urban environment, which resulted in a caleidoscope of multiple perspectives. A rotating film crew had students fulfill different tasks throughout this stage. The images emerged from individually pre-defined concepts, inherent in the works of art and in the diverse spaces. In the editing stage four distincts films were edited (trailer, making of, single-channel version and video installation) and exhibited in both institutions.

Reflection

This project emerged from the desire to offer visitors the chance to become transformative agents of the Museum, by creating their own way of looking at it, and to connect it to the ways of looking of other visitors. They would thus be able to offer fresh, free, renewed views, which reveal varied levels of consciousness of the museum and contribute to its renewal. In other words, it emerged from the wish to empower people. Instead of being mere receptors of contents defined by the institution, they can be themselves creators, becoming involved, providing a unique and experientially informed view. For this, we adopted the strategy of offering each participant theoretical and technical knowledge so that they could autonomously capture on video their his or her own perspective on a specific aspect of reality - the piece of art, the museum, the school, the environment – with a rotating, supporting film crew, in which each member has a task, as in a real film crew. The length of the project allowed participants to use the artistic range of the museum's collection to explore contents.
related to visual literacy and image composition, to cinema and video history, and to technical skills in the different stages of film-making. The project was designed at its start, but was readjusted as the activity progressed according to the rhythm of conception and execution.

The possibility of partnering with a school and the surrounding patrimony was very productive. The enthusiasm and support of the teachers, who found in the project points of contact with the contents of their teaching and used it in their classes, was an important factor in its success. On the other hand, the regularity of project sessions throughout the school year led even those students who were most resistant to art to become involved with museums and contemporary art, allowing themselves to be seduced and to relate to art in often unexpected ways.

One of the great findings of this project was the unique and surprising point of view of each participant onto what we already knew or thought we knew; the idiosyncratic dilemmas of each of them (and of ourselves) in being involved and creating their own point of views and in relating to those of others.

This project made us rethink the museum as an institution, offering visitors the conceptual and technical tools to create a new, critical point of view towards the place, what is done there, and what can be reflected in it and about it, fulfilling one of the guiding actions of its Educational Service: TO INVOLVE.

Videographies led to the creation of an institutional project between the Berardo Collection Museum and the Casa Pia de Lisboa, expressing the will to develop a network-based work between the museum and an institution of reference in the fields of education and social solidarity.