The «Árvore - Tree Project» born from the idea and the need to provide young institutionalized children a link with the museum and allow them a full involvement, which could foster the discovery, the demand and the participation, in order to arouse an intrinsic motivation, critical thinking and reflection on contemporary society.

With this project we aim to address an issue involving institutionalized children, in imminent danger, allowing them the contact with art and by turning this experience into individual and collective learning.

From a sensible selection of artists from M C Berardo's collection, some proposals were designed, compiled independently for each one of the sessions, and held from January to June 2016, every Saturday morning, with a group of youngsters aged between 6 and 21 years old. For an audience that came as circumspect to the museum, it was essential to establish a weekly relationship, so that throughout the sessions an empathy with the space could be achieved, and so that they could feel the museum as their home.

Therefore, after visiting the permanent - or temporary - exhibitions, it was chosen an artist and a technique, so that each journey could be done in a single session of 2 hours, worked in groups and individually. Each practical challenge was thought to have a beginning, a middle and an end. This was the way we found to work issues related with self-esteem, time reflection and easing frustrations. When realized that the visit to the museum meant an important accomplishment, and that was recognized by those who were on this side, and by the public as well, through a documentary that recorded the whole process, carried over 13 sessions, and a public presentation of the works conducted at the Museu Coleção Berardo and an exhibition at the Centro Casapiano de Lisboa.

https://vimeo.com/182551862
Tras la actividad/proyecto... la experiencia

The Educational Service of Museu Coleção Berardo, through a diverse and inclusive programming, creates activities whose goal is to challenge minds, critical thinking, reflection, engagement, affections and leisure from our raw material - the work of art.

The «Árvore-Tree Project» is a particular case in this educational service because of the specificity of its performers. Further than to thinking the museum area as an educational or a recreational space, this project allowed us to rethink the museum as a hosting, familiar and loving space and work with an audience segment with which we had no experience at all.

Due to the specific features of the group - children and youngsters from imminent risk contexts, and whose lives are still dependent on a court decree - the work was undertaken out of the school and family contexts, and doing without this eventual support. In this context, it seemed clear that the best name for this project would be "Árvore-Tree", which is the word that best translated the idea of growing roots that systematically had to be fed in order to thrive.

We all need food, knowledge, still affection above everything. A tree with its inaccurate branches so that, week after week, we could never know that a leaf had fallen and another arose. The situation of each of these youngsters could change at any time without notice, and therefore the working groups were constantly changing. This project strives for the constant change and adaptation. Despite the work sessions were planned so that every week they could provide a different challenge, the staff had also to be able to rethink every time how to motivate them. Every session included an adaptation to the youngster's interests: adopting specific slangs from the subcultures they belong, emphasizing contexts which initially were not treated in the museum, compelling us to look for the artists who could best sustain this relationship; this was the way to make them feel included. An audience that came wary though, over the sessions, created an empathy with the museum bringing its own rhythms, which changed the dynamics of work. Thus, the learning we take from this project is really plural. Who was in fact the tree? The children? The museum? The educational service agents? No one leaves indifferent form this process. It was actually a truly deep bounding moment, never before seen in the museum.

Although it wasn't planned, the settled ties in the midst of this project have shown that it made sense to think of a more permanent work in the museum, so we granted them a week's holiday in residence, a week without a rigid structure where the youngsters could foresee that their rhythms and
interests were respected, which was proved by the motivation and willingness they brought to the museum.

More than the evidences on the documentary and the exhibition, the museum has proven to be a shelter, a caring meeting point. We all grew up with it and we are all eager to proceed it.