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The Migrant Every Country Wants to Have: Motion, Emotion, Imagination at the Joe Petrosino Museum in Padula, Italy



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Abstract Celebrated by movies, press, and myths, as the one who institutionalized the fighting against the Mafia as Head of the Police in New York, Joe Petrosino is a hero both in the USA and Italy. The House-Museum *Joe Petrosino* (J.P.) is the only museum dedicated to the unrivalled pioneer in the fight against organized crime. Located in the native house of Petrosino in Padula, the J.P. exploits highly advanced multimedia formats and cultural communication concepts to produce in an artistic language the anti-mafia struggle led by Petrosino. Exploiting the powers of multivision technologies and image manipulation, the J.P. production has extensively used static documents of varied kinds to produce responsive cultural manifestations in an interactive continuum with the audience. This paper is a first attempt to fill the gap in defining the usability of multivision technologies for cultural heritage and a novel communication pattern with multigenerational and multicultural audiences. We analyze the pathway to a production solution and the methodology to ensure the communication of resource inherent values, scientific and historical fidelity together with attractiveness and empathy so as to engage the audience through new digital heritage artworks for an enriched cultural heritage experience.

Keywords Digital heritage artworks · Multivision · Haus-Museum Joe Petrosino

1 Introduction

In his seminal work *Pièces sur l'art* Paul Valéry analyzes that interacting with art created in the past, differs from our way of interacting with contemporary art in its productive context for the very reasons of its making, while the task and purpose of art is to create harmony between the audience and reveal messages that the works convey through sense and [1]. In this vein an *arti*-fact, an object that emerges from

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771

the past, is a *fact* defined through its proper making. Objects and monuments that mirror past civilizations, which have broken the barrier of time, as Fernand Braudel so eloquently formulates in his *Grammaire des Civilisations*, we call *cultural heritage* [2]. They have a great social value because they represent “outstanding universal values” generating the social glue of civilization by being the source of collective identity based on history, tradition, territory [3, p. 9]. However, to grasp their significance, history and use, depends on our ability to look at them with the eyes of those times, imagine them in their splendor and discover the hidden meanings. Along the lines Walter Benjamin indicates in his reference work *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* that photography is capable of spreading art and heritage among peoples and classes [4]. However, although a vast assortment of media tools is available today to those who want to create social value from the traces of past history, the fact that they are available is not enough [5–8]. The audiences that encounter a work of art or a monument should be enabled to interact with it and to perceive what they see in front of them within what they *already* know, through a cluster of links that facilitates perception (Papathanasiou-Zuhrt et al. 2018, p. 42) [9]. The J.P. builds a first attempt to culturally recreate those worlds by exploiting static archives and objects images, sound, text and shooting on location, while maintaining the historical fidelity. The result ensures a cognitive, emotional and multi-sensory experience around the Italian Mafias in the twentieth century, with EUROPEANA rating the J.P. as one of ten the best museums for cultural communication in 2017.

2 From Artifacts to Digital Artworks

The enormous possibilities of manipulation that digital images offer to contextualize cultural heritage, could open the doors to the story, to a structure deriving from human language increasingly and specifically at the service of culture and articulated to influence cognitive-emotional experiences without fossilizing in the search for the suggestive effect without internal logic. That is to say that in a digital audiovisual dedicated to cultural communication, ontology and epistemology must coincide [10, p. 173]. The condition is that the AV languages used can be deciphered by the audience, and that this can be done only through the rules of meaning. Theatre and cinema have done this a long ago to communicate with its varied audiences. Already in the early nineteenth century Schopenhauer clearly formulates that “with the work of art you should not give the senses absolutely everything, but only what is required to put the imagination on the right track as it is an allegory of what it represents”, or as Voltaire puts it, the secret to becoming boring is to reveal everything [11, p. 870; 12, p. 23]. Along the lines the J.P. animates an extensive variety of static documents to produce cultural manifestations in a cohesive and interactive continuum with the audience, leaving the necessary space for imagination, contemplation and reflection [13, 14].

Not much has changed in the twenty-first century: according to the EC Reports *Mapping the Creative Value Chains* and the *New Renaissance: Bringing Europe's Heritage Online* many aspects need to be reviewed, perhaps the whole value chain, but imagination: imagination will continue to play a fundamental role and becomes perhaps the most important feature which supports the choices for the construction and articulation of the sense as a function of a cognitive path [15, 16]. This is an opportunity for the development of knowledge at museums, sites and collections and those who want to welcome visitors are to know how to build everything that serves to tune the public with the work of art, with the artifact, with the historical period of reference and break the vicious circle of the superficiality of the tourist visit [17]. An unparalleled, revolutionary approach for cultural communication is formulated by Eco: he envisages placing, alongside the work, a series of narrative modules that give meaning to historical time, although aware of the present time, an ad hoc construction made of images words and sounds to carry the time, push into the orientation criteria: reconstructing a context path that takes in account those with a minimum of prior knowledge, but providing them with the emotional and sentimental education tools towards the progressive approach and the right use of context [18].

3 Background

Giuseppe Petrosino (1860–1909) was born in Padula, a small town in southern Italy, from where he leaves for New York with his family at age of 13. He enters the NYPD in 1895. He was promoted to detective in 1905. Criminals in Little Italy are now facing an enemy, who speaks their language, knows their methods, and can enter into their milieu. He organized a team of Italian policemen, the 'Italian Branch', through which he identifies criminal connections between the Black Hand and the Sicilian Mafia. Following this track, he arrives in Italy in 1909, to stay for 48 hours in Padula, before going to Palermo, where he was assassinated on March the 12th, 1909. The *House-Museum Joe Petrosino* (J.P.) is located in the house where Giuseppe Petrosino was born in 1860. The building was renovated in 2015–2016 to host the Museum. The J.P. is the only museum dedicated to an unrivalled pioneer in the fight against organized crime. Located in the native house of Joe Petrosino, in Padula in southern Italy, the Museum exploits highly advanced multimedia formats and cultural communication concepts to introduce the audience to the anti-mafia struggle led by the Italian-American Joe Petrosino. The Museum is created thanks to the agreement between the City of Padula, the Association LIBERA CONTRO LE MAFIE and RAI, Italian Public National Broadcaster.

4 Methodology

Culture and art, heritage and production are no longer objects of contemplation, but links that connect history, science, cosmology, making the imaginary true. It was precisely this frontier which developed the methodological tenets the design of a *Museum of the Legality* built inside the family house of Petrosino in his birthplace. We present below the methodological steps that led to the design and delivery of the visitor experience within the J.P. Museum:

1. *Respecting the Historic Structure*

Within the functional restrictions a registered historic building dictates and the opportunities it offers at the same time, the J.P. explicitly demonstrates how history can become a participatory experience engaging the audience in situ by being composed from editable and manageable chronicles instead of historic lesson plans and labels.

2. *Selecting the Audiovisual Media*

Conservation, scientific research and representation for the public aligned and oriented towards a strategy and a result, imagining a space usable both for educational use and for scientific research, which only the digital revolution allows [7, 19, 20].

3. *Arranging the Space*

On the first floor visitors familiarize with the personal objects and furnishings that belonged to Petrosino and his family. A space is dedicated to the materials related to the cult of the character (photos, prints, comic books, and works of art). In the next two floors a sophisticated interactive space is offering a unique multi-sensory experience to the audience: significant audiovisual documents from the RAI archives have been digitized and reorganized with a dual purpose: (a) the popular dissemination of a significant shift of the Modernity through a new digital heritage artwork, and (b) scientific research available to researchers, journalists, teachers and schoolers in situ.

4. *The Conceptual Map: Fear; Courage; Connivance; Freedom*

Four embedded in four multivisions display the evolution of the mafias in four rooms: (1) The American Cosa Nostra (fear); (2) Mafia and Anti-Mafia (courage); (3) Camorra and Anti-camorra (connivance); Venti Liberi (freedom), dedicated to the history of the first 20 years of the Anti-mafia movement). Each room has a series of short videos reconstructed from chronicles of those times that now are analyzed as history. The route is marked by four scenes in a composite technology film, where Petrosino meets four characters, which are archetypes of the Mafia mentality or of the Anti-mafia spirit. In every room visitors see and reconstruct, assisted by 100 audiovisual narratives, the history of the Mafias, but also the distinguished examples of men and women who fought organized crime. In the last two floors a sophisticated interactive space is offering a unique multi-sensory experience to the audience.

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significant shift of the Modernity through a new digital heritage artwork, and (b) scientific research. In the first case, visitors can explore the history of Mafia and Anti-mafia through audiovisual narratives (multivisions) activated by touch screens. In the second case scholars can access the Digital Library to study the audiovisual repository of the RAI. Thus the J.P. becomes a 'station' of Public & Digital History for all who wish to consult and analyze documentaries heritage made available by RAI Teche on a free access basis.

5. *The Red Thread*

Petrosino is the immigrant that any country would like to welcome and had to be represented in an environment where his ideas could live on. That is why an unusual *Little Italy* has been designed: real in all its elements but redesigned precisely so that it could be the environment of Joe's ideas and not his real life. And it's precisely this abandoned reality that allows approaching the truth to be shared with the public. The red thread that connects the J.P. experience trail is a digital narration made using the most modern tracking and mapping technologies. The actors act in an imaginary *Little Italy* reconstructed through pieces of real set design, pieces of set design digitally reconstructed in 3D and pieces of set design designed in pencil to enhance the imaginary component of the story that winds through the encounter between Petrosino and characteristic figures of the mafia and the fight against the mafia. The last narration enables the audience to meet with Don Luigi Ciotti, the clergyman and founder of the LIBERA Association. LIBERA's principle "resist means to exist" is explicit for the struggle against the mafia in defense of legality all over the world. Don Luigi Ciotti acts himself in the film in order to bring out the universal components that make our daily behavior the real substratum of the fight against organized crime.

5 Application

The J.P. is a storytelling museum that aims to train its visitors to grasp the current and past realities of the many mafias and embrace the struggle of the anti-mafias. Its global aim is to train its visitors perceive and practice legality and raise their ability for semiotic codes and critical reflection in the critical topic of good citizenship. Four components have been integrated in the design of J.P.: (a) the scientific component led by the Department of Communication Science, Chair of Public and Digital History, University of Salerno; (b) the digital archive of news made available by RAI TECHE (RAI Digital Archives), which has been re-configured into an structured archive of history available to the audience; (c) the creative component that has involved authors and artists from different backgrounds; (d) the component that daily contributes to the culture of the fight against the mafia represented by the LIBERA Association.

Bridging the space-time gap between contemporaneity and past civilization is one of the most important themes and challenges that a narrator has in front of him. A fracture creates inner disarray because the references and beliefs relating to one's

own value system, but it is this disharmony that leads to reflection. As John Dewey suggests in his *Art as an Experience*, emotion is the conscious sign of a fracture, present and looming [21]. Disharmony is thus the opportunity for reflection- a guiding principle for the design of J.P. The desire for the restoration of unity transforms the mere emotion to the condition for the realization of harmony. This J.P. harmony is made of sensory perceptions and rational processing together, is therefore an interactive process. When harmony is achieved, reflection is incorporated into objects such as meaning. It's the beginning of the chain reaction where the past is brought into the present in such a way as to make it possible to the broader and deeper the content of the latter. This complex and articulated process, made up of crises, reflections and answers, is able to restructure the criteria of analysis towards a new and more advanced balance useful to the J.P. audience, as the whole museum is built as theatrical performance around the ideal and archetypal evolution of Patrosino's drama: it is the hero's ability to cross into the legend and imagination of his time that led the building of the J.P. experience as a balance between history and memory through the lens of dramaturgy.

The main medium used in the J.P. design to create the harmony condition is the *multivision*, a complex audiovisual technology, which is integrated different types of documents (fotos, texts, manuscripts, objects, acting, shooting on locations, archival materials, newspapers; permanents; digitized objects; animations, music, sound etc.) into meaningful subdivisions (chapters) and integrates the whole into a cultural communication project through comparisons, juxtapositions and contrasts continuously counter-placing contemporary elements incorporating rich media. The four multivisions projected in the four rooms have allowed to fully exploiting animation and use the RAI Teche archives and documents and all real deposits of culture available. Thus we are enabled to exploit the infinite potential of static documents with unprecedented possibilities for the creation of emotions and special effects by enriching them with new elements. The use of digital graphics and videos have allowed many possible changes, enabling to infer the unknown from something known within the horizon of the visitors, put together and reassemble. Stories presented in the four guiding multivisions in the four rooms are dealing with four concepts, that make up the mafia mentality (1,3) and the anti-mafia mentality (2,4): (1) *Fear* in front of the many mafias; (2) *Courage* to stand up against them; (3) *Connivance*, illegality and complicity with the many mafias; and (4) *Freedom* from complicity, are not made only by documents, but by a cluster of links between each document that creates a bridge between each event, between a letter and photograph, an object and a label i.e. multiple links between different elements. The J.P. multivision set has thus merged elements of archives in one great ensemble that offers the possibility to create emotions and thus interact with the audience, where varied data are put together in a counterpoint of a contemporary event to facilitate perception and understanding (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Visitors customizing their experience in the J.P. itinerary. Joe Petrosino House Museum, 2017. Courtesy, Aldo Di Russo

6 Conclusion

The digital revolution has changed our way to access culture and the technologies used are can have a function in completing the path to the innovation. Scientific research for the last 30 years has turned on a light in the operation of our cognitive/emotional system, has given us a coherent vision on the role and mechanisms of acquisition of the knowledge and importance of the emotional system on the results.

In Europe, the prevailing idea is that of a creative and artistic with the works of the past that can offer the possibility for cultural heritage to ‘interfere’ and interact with the creative and cultural industry, which is currently growing rapidly, precisely because of the digital revolution. The need to enhance the value of cultural heritage identified the need to elaborate new narrative structures and new thinking is required to contribute to increasing social and economic value of the same mechanisms that push the public towards exhibitions, museums and excavations, helping them to interpret the message and reveal meanings and consequently values. The heritage sector is not always successful in activating the cognitive-emotional process of the audience because it is still hostage to the belief that there is a need for an indoctrinated interpretation. The widespread view that the mere contact with domain specific information transmits culture by osmosis is proved false. Instead, the narrative museum, by its very nature, induces empathy through the active participation of the audience. The audiovisual, in its most advanced forms, becomes the protagonist of the museum itself. Adherence to the rigor of research is an essential and not alienable point, and for this reason the presence of the team of multiple experts in the field is essential to the experience design.

The presence of different professional points of view is useful: one archaeological and historical, or historical and epistemological, or a sociological and an aesthetic one, important to provide the narrator with the data around which to make the story flow and around which to develop the imaginary part. Imaginary, as already mentioned, does not mean ‘fantasy’ but means, once identified with the experts the point of arrival, to break away from reality and bring the public closer to the truth. We need to take on board a new overall vision. We need to realize that knowledge is not an accumulation of information, but a reconversion of internal balances within its own context, the re-establishment of a balance altered by emotion.

The information, explanations and lessons are absolutely necessary and offer insights that each one of us to refine knowledge and context, but they can't be the first page of the interface speaking of museums. It is necessary to know how to integrate the component of the audiovisual language design as part of the process without relegating the content and content modes as if they were the add-on of a technology, planned downstream of it. On the contrary it is the artistic language, articulated on the basis of a narrative, to attract the audience and set in motion a cognitive activity and an aesthetic experience at the same time. The success of the J.P. depends on the value chain put in place for its implementation. It was not a question of exposing information about the character to the public, despite the fact that there was a long and articulated research behind it. It was also not a question of describing the biography of a man who was also a key figure in the history of the struggle against the mafia, nor of "administering" the interpretation of the curator, but of constructing the tools so that the public could interpret the phenomenon and enter, each with its own context of use, in harmony with the world we wanted to represent. That's why literary passages were used instead of editorial descriptions, and archival materials were re-purposed in a new audiovisual language and varied virtual environments suitable for multimedia installations. To combine art and science means to respect the historical rigor, adapting the imagination necessary to go beyond the simple vision of reality towards the search of truth.

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