

Isolated, in search of managers and funds But their role in society remains strong

Results of the ISPO study on Contemporary Art Museums in Italy.

Rome, May 26, 2009. Compared to international colleagues, the directors of contemporary art museums in Italy feel more isolated and less appreciated. The Italian Museums, therefore, complain about the isolation of cultural institutions compared to other important international contexts. New “art managers” are also missing and as always is the case, funds are also lacking. This is what emerged from the ISPO study conducted by Renato Mannheimer for Terna interviewing the directors of Contemporary Art Museums of the Amaci network and the principal Italian Foundations.

After having studied in 2008 the perception of art and the artist’s profile as seen by the Italians, the survey on museums provides further elements for better analyzing our country’s art system.

Over 90% of the directors interviewed believe the level of collaboration and interaction between the contemporary art museums in our country and those abroad is insufficient. 100% of those interviewed also believe that our museums are less visible and not as appreciated as foreign ones.

The opinion is unanimous on the need for new professional figures: art managers. Experts capable of combining the economic and cultural worlds, of introducing managers that in addition to enhancing artistic aspects should also contribute to creating profits for the museums. A modern vision of the museum where human resources contribute to making them cultural centers providing advanced and multi-media services.

All museums perceive their role in society very strongly: the directors feel they are invested with a sort of “moral duty” with respect to the community, in terms of cultural education, development projects and community involvement that they feel represents an invaluable resource.

Today, as in the past, the major difficulties for a contemporary art museum include old problems, particularly financial ones and lack of appropriate policies, also fiscal ones, at the national level. The lack of an international network felt by over 35% of those interviewed represents one of the largest problems today. A strong collaboration is lacking within such a vast and multi-form system which apparently is not yet ready for creating a “large network” of museums, galleries, artists and many stakeholders that form the universe of contemporary art.

Where do our Museums buy artworks? Over half of those interviewed replied they buy them from national circuits, preferably, through two principal channels: galleries (50%) and directly from the artists (25%). Supply sources are not considered nor are art fairs (less than 1%) and auction houses (0%). With regard to forming a collection, over 90% of the directors did not express a preference among collections of Italian or foreign artists.