

European Museums: Surviving the COVID-19 Pandemic

DOI: 10.30819/cmse.5-2.06

ABSTRACT

Due to the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, European museums were required to close their doors to the public for several times, which made it difficult for them to fulfill their mission, and at the same time, it caused them significant financial losses. Nevertheless, European museums quickly adapted to the current situation, changing their staff tasks and switching to online communication with their audience, doing the best they could with the resources they had. The main aims of this study are to investigate and analyze changes in the work of European museums during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, especially during the periods of lockdowns, and the main research question focuses on what we can learn from the experience in order to be more ready to face future challenges. The research is based on content analysis, but two focus group surveys were also conducted.

KEY WORDS

European museums, COVID-19 pandemic, digital activities, museum audience, museum finances

Paper received: 11 June 2021 • Paper revised: 14 August 2021 • Paper accepted: 11 September 2021

Dejana Prnjat, Ph.D., is an associate professor at the University of Novi Sad (Academy of Arts). She completed her doctoral degree in Sociology of Culture and Cultural Policy at the University of Belgrade, and her postdoctoral research in Arts Marketing at London Metropolitan University. She has published a few books and several dozens of articles, and she actively presents her work at international conferences, the UNESCO's 2nd World Conference on Arts Education being among the most important ones. Her areas of interest include arts, cultural heritage, cultural policy, marketing, media and communications. prnjat.
Email: dejana@gmail.com

References

- Avery, J., Prnjat, D. (2008), Consumer decision-making in the museum marketplace, *International Journal of the Inclusive Museum*, 1(4): 147-156.
- Barnes, S. (2020), People are Still Recreating Artwork From Home for the 'Getty Museum Challenge', available at: <https://mymodernmet.com/getty-museum-challenge-update/> (accessed 10 December 2020).
- Bartolini, C. (2020), Rethinking the role of museums in a time of crisis, available at: <https://culturalpractice.org/rethinking-the-role-of-museums-in-a-time-of-crisis/> (accessed 24 October 2020).
- Bowen, J. P., Giannini, T. (2019), The Digital Future for Museums, In: Giannini, T., Bowen, J. P. (Eds.), *Museums and Digital Culture*, new perspectives and research, Cham: Springer.
- Carisson, R. (2020), Museum staff force Luvre to close over Coronavirus fears, available at: <https://www.museumnext.com/article/museum>

- staff-force-louvre-to-close-over-coronavirus-fears/ (accessed 22 July 2020).
- CIMAM (2020), Preparing for the New Everyday, available at: <https://cimam.org/resources-publications/preparing-new-everyday/> (accessed 22 August 2020).
- Coles, A. (2020), What Do Museums Mean? Public Perceptions of the Purposes of Museums and Implications for their Use in Art Therapy, In: Coles, A., Jury, H. (Eds.), *Art Therapy in Museums and Galleries, reframing practice*, London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Dragičević Šešić, M. (2020), Contemporary Arts in Adaptable Quality Management: Questioning Entrepreneurialism as a Panacea in Europe, In: Byrne, W. J., Brkić, A. (Eds.), *Routledge Companion in Cultural Management*, London: Routledge.
- Dragičević Šešić, M., Stefanović, M. (2021), The ethics and aesthetics of museum practices in Serbia during the pandemic and the digital turn, *IPSI Transactions on Internet Research*, 17 (2): 34-44.
- Dvorak, J., Burkšienė, V., Sadauskaitė, L. (2019), Issues in the implementation of cultural heritage projects in Lithuania: the case of the Klaipėda region, *Cultural Management: Science and Education*, 3(1): 23-37.
- Farago, J. (2020), Now Virtual and in Video, Museum Websites shake off the dust, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/arts/design/best-virtual-museum-guides.html> (accessed 22 June 2020).
- Heimbrock, A (2020), Corona-proofing museum interactives, available at: <https://www.museumnext.com/article/corona-proofing-museum-interactives/> (accessed 3 December 2020).
- ICOM (2020a), Museums will move on: message from ICOM President Suay Aksoy, available at: <https://icom.museum/en/covid-19/advocacy/museums-will-move-on-message-from-icom-president/> (accessed 29 April 2020).
- ICOM (2020b), Museums and end of lockdown: Ensuring the safety of the public and staff, available at: <https://icom.museum/en/covid-19/resources/museums-and-end-of-lockdown-ensuring-the-safety-of-the-public-and-staff-2/> (accessed 22 September 2020).
- ICOM (2020c), Museums, museum professionals and COVID-19: follow-up survey, available at: https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FINAL-EN_Follow-up-survey.pdf (accessed 20 December 2020).
- Imperiale, F., Vecco, M. (2017), Deaccessioning and capitalisation in museums from an international perspective, *Cultural Management: Science and Education*, 1(2): 17-31.
- Itzkowitz, L. (2020), How the Coronavirus Pandemic is Affecting Museums, available at: <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/covid-19-impact-on-museums> (accessed 13 August 2020).
- Leahy, H.R. (2020), Cultural Access and the 'New Normal', available at: <https://culturalpractice.org/cultural-access-and-the-new-normal/> (accessed 9 August 2020).
- Maddock, Z. (2020), Birmingham Museums launches new recipe box delivery service, available at: <https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/blog/posts/birmingham-museums-launches-new-recipe-box-delivery-service> (accessed 18 February 2020).
- NEMO (2020a), Initiatives and actions of the museums in the corona crisis, available at: https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/NEMO_documents/Initiatives_of_museums_in_times_of_corona_4_20.pdf (accessed 11 January 2021).
- NEMO (2020b), Survey on the impact of the COVID-19 situation on museums in Europe, Final Report, available at: https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/NEMO_documents/NEMO_COVID19_Report_12.05.2020.pdf (accessed 2 June 2020).
- NEMO (2020c), 1 out of 4 museums in The Netherlands fear permanent closing due to COVID-19, available at: <https://www.ne-mo.org/news/article/nemo/1-out-of-4-museums-in-the-netherlands-fear-permanent-closing-due-to-covid-19.html> (accessed 24 October 2020).
- NEMO (2020d), Various museums forced to close to the public due to Covid-19, available at: https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/NEMO_Statements/NEMO_Statement_27.10.2020_Various_museums_forced_to_close_to_public_due_to_Covid-19.pdf (accessed 12 December 2020).
- NEMO (2021a), Statement to reopen museums in Europe with a comprehensive and sustainable plan, available at: https://www.ne-mo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/NEMO_Statements/NEMO_

- Statement_and_Overview_of_Museum_Reopenings_02.2021.pdf (accessed 6 March 2021).
- NEMO (2021b), Follow-up survey on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on museums in Europe, Final Report, available at: https://www.nemo.org/fileadmin/Dateien/public/NEMO_documents/NEMO_COVID19_FollowUpReport_11.1.2021.pdf (accessed 15 February 2021).
- OECD (2020), Coronavirus (COVID-19) and cultural and creative sectors: impact, innovations and planning for post-crisis, available at: <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/culture-webinars.htm> (accessed 20 April 2020).
- O'Neill, M., Seaman, P., Dornan, D. (2020), Thinking through health and museum in Glasgow, In: O'Neill, M., Hooper, G. (Eds.), *Connecting Museums*, London, New York: Routledge.
- Pedram, A. (2020), France's Rodin Museum sells bronzes to weather virus crisis, available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/frances-rodin-museum-sells-bronzes-to-weather-virus-crisis/2020/07/07/c73f3bac-c073-11ea-8908-68a2b9eae9e0_story.html (accessed 7 February 2021).
- Prnjat, D. (2010), How much can arts education affect the decision-making process when choosing classical or pop music? Paper presented at the Unesco 2nd World conference on art education, available at: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/artseducation/pdf/presentation203dejanaprnjat.pdf> (accessed 15 December 2020).
- Rodley, E. (2020), The distributed museum is already here, it's just not very evenly distributed, In: Lewi, H., Smith, W., Vom Lehn, D., Cooke, S. (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of New Digital Practices in Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums and Heritage sites*, London, New York: Routledge.
- Rogers, T. (2020), Europe's Museums Begin Reopening, Cautiously, With New Rule, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/12/arts/design/museums-reopening-europe-berlin.html> (accessed 16 December 2020).
- Rovetta, A., Rovida, E. (2018), *Scientific Knowledge Communication in Museums*. Cham: Springer.
- Sawer, P. (2020), A site for sore eyes: Florence's Duomo reopens with high tech social distancing alarms, available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/23/site-sore-eyes-florences-duomo-reopens-high-tech-social-distancing/> (accessed 29 July 2020).
- UN (2020), Covid-19: UNESCO and ICOM concerned about the situation faced by the world's museums, available at: <https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-unesco-and-icom-concerned-about-situation-faced-worlds-museums> (accessed 17 June 2020).
- UNESCO (2020), Museums Around the World in the Face of COVID-19, available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373530> (accessed 22 January 2021).
- UNESCO (2020), Covid-19 crisis closes 90 percent of museums globally, UNESCO plans for reopenings, available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1064362> (accessed 11 June 2020).
- Wróblewski, Ł. (2020), Building the Relationship Between Cultural Institutions and Citizens of a Small City Divided by the Border, *Cultural Management: Science and Education*, 4(1): 119-128.
- Zuanni, C. (2020), Digital responses from locked-down museums, available at: <https://culturalpractice.org/digital-responses-from-locked-down-museums/> (accessed 3 November 2020).