

Managing an Exhibition: The Example of the Municipal Art Gallery of Thessaloniki

Panagiota Papanikolaou

Department of Plastic Arts and Art Sciences

University of Ioannina

Greece

Project Idea

The project idea is based around a great historical and temporal exhibition, which would take place in the Municipal Art Gallery of Thessaloniki and as a two month event; it would including artworks from both Byzantine and Modern Art; two areas comprising the main themes of the project. The aim would be to explore and demonstrate the relationships and interactions between the art of the Byzantine era and modern art. In terms of specifics, it would contain exhibits from famous artists, such as El Greco (1541-1614) and Kazimir Malevich (1878-1935), who would constitute the two keystones of the exhibition. It is well known that both were extensively influenced by Byzantine art (Hadjinikolaou, 1995; Riese, 1999).

Recently, enquiries and exhibitions investigating the associations between Byzantine and modern art have increased dramatically. For example, in 1997, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki organized a conference entitled "From the post-Byzantine art to Contemporary Art (18th -20th century)" (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1998). Its main topics dealt with the connection between secular and religious painting, the influence of Byzantine art on contemporary Greek artists and vice versa, as well as the influences of modern art on contemporary hagiographers. In addition, another conference was held in the State Museum of Contemporary art in Thessaloniki, with the topic of *Modernism and Byzantine tradition* (Papanikolaou, 2002), which elucidated the many similarities and ideological correlations between these two civilizations.

In that conference, Christine Stephan Kaissis explored the origins of Byzantine art in the works of Kazimir Malevich. In her announcement she mentioned that "the existence of a strong Byzantine "subject" gives us a concrete due as to the sources he drew on for his inspirations for suprematism. Suprematistic art unveiled a world of ideas moulded from the former Byzantine world of intelligible reality, a world, however, which in the art of Kazimir Malevich, was to become unequivocally modern" (Papanikolaou, 2002). Some of the artworks that I would recommend for the exhibition would come from the Costakis Collection, which, since 2000, has belonged to the State Museum of Contemporary Art in Thessaloniki. Works of Kazimir Malevich such as *Woman in childbirth*, *Black quadrilateral*, *Red square*, as well as some of his abstract designs of the suprematistic period, would be dominant in the exhibition.

Byzantine art, in the proposed exhibition, would be represented by selected portable icons, which form part of the collection of the Municipal Art Gallery. Additional items would be borrowed from the Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki, such as *The accusation and the judgment of Joseph*, *The Virgin Galactotrophousa*. All the above works belong to the 16th century onwards. Some paintings of El Greco, especially those from the artist's early period, would be loaned from other Greek Museums. Some of his Byzantine artworks, which would be included in the exhibition, are *The Dormition of the Virgin*, *Saint Luke*, *The adoration of the Magi and Mount Sinai* (Hadjinikolaou, 1995).

To complement these, in the course of the exhibition there would also be displayed works by Greek artists of the later period. These artists, active in the early 20th century, are characterized by similar trends and influences. Visitors to the proposed exhibition, especially if they were Greek, would be familiar with the art of Byzantium, but their interest and curiosity would be aroused, and they might even be surprised, by the juxtaposition of such works with the abstract artworks of Malevich and El Greco's Byzantine works, which, when viewed together, would make them aware of the complexity and interweaving of influences and relationships in the development of artistic forms.

Background

The Municipal Art Gallery of Thessaloniki is housed in a historic building, one of the oldest in the city, and was founded in 1966; it is funded solely by the Municipality of Thessaloniki (Art Gallery's Catalogue, 2003). As such, it is a public institution with a permanent art collection accumulated through donations and purchases and includes paintings, sculptures and prints by Greek artists. As a visitor progresses through the exhibition rooms, the influence of the Byzantine style becomes quite obvious. The exhibitions that are housed in the Gallery are of local status, without any significant extension into areas of foreign art. The institution, overall, oversees the operation of five autonomous buildings, including the Municipal art Gallery, otherwise the *Villa Mordoch* (constructed in 1905), which belonged to an old Jewish family.

Mission Statements

Organization Mission

The purpose of the Municipal Art Gallery in Thessaloniki is to "preserve, register, study and classify the artworks that belong to the municipality of Thessaloniki, to promote scientific research and other work in Thessaloniki and abroad" (Sources: Regulation, 2005). The majority of the collection comprises artworks by Greek artists of the 19th and 20th century together with a collection of Byzantine icons. The exhibitions usually organized by the Gallery are intended for an audience without any specific interests or requirements, an audience that is used to viewing exhibitions only of interest to Greek culture. In particular, the organization's key audiences are somewhat limited and consist mainly of school groups and visitors over 50 belonging to the older generation, something that could be changed in the future by the planning of larger, more significant and more interesting exhibitions, which would be more interesting and stimulating in attracting and holding the attention of visitors.

Project Mission

The purpose of this artistic action- Byzantine and modern art exhibition- is to promote the image of the museum, and enhance its prestige and credibility with the public, focusing mainly on specialists, pupils and students of Fine Arts as well as young artists. Additionally, the public will not only satisfy its curiosity but will also acquire knowledge, the experts will find answers to their questions, younger people will benefit from the exhibition as a lesson in the history of art, and the young artists will be stimulated to come up with new ideas. Through this prototypical exhibition, particularly through the very prestigious artists represented in it, the Gallery could become a more attractive destination for local people and, at the same time, an opportunity for touristic development. Such an exhibition would not be without interest to sponsors who are seeking for different ways of advertising.

Also, in a period of economic crisis, the Gallery's administration would be relieved to see that that the exhibition brings in revenue, which would be a welcome addition to the municipal budget. Visitor numbers would be increased dramatically and the revitalized image of the Gallery would have a positive impact not only for sponsorship, but also for the neighbouring social environment. From the above, the relation between the two mission statements is clear. First of all, the proposed exhibition would contain works of Byzantine, as well as, works of Greek artists of Modernism. Both of these styles are prominently displayed in the Gallery. The only innovation would be the presentation of foreign artworks, which would add a different dimension in the exhibition.

Objectives

The main project-objectives that we were asked to undertake, in order to reach a desirable outcome, are: first of all, to promote the Gallery and its collection so as to increase its visitor numbers considerably over a two month period. Secondly, a very important issue is to target and attract new audiences, such as students of the School of Fine Arts. Overall, our priority is not only to increase the numbers of attendees, but also to "build" our own audience (Hill et.al, 2010) that will become regular visitors and follow the exhibitions continuously. A major objective of this new exhibition is to increase the income from ticket and other sales, which is a prerequisite for the subsequent evolution and operation of the organization.

It needs to raise a significant amount in order to balance the exhibition's expenditure. Furthermore, its aim is to reach out for sponsors, who would like to advertise through this high-quality, as well as diachronic and international exhibition.

Finally, special interest would be drawn to the neighbourhood of the art gallery; an urban and quite populous area. The ulterior objective would be to make the residents of this neighbourhood see the Gallery's events as happenings, which refresh their daily interests and give prestige to their suburban area.

Context and Market overview

• **S W O T analysis (current market overview)**

<p style="text-align: center;">S (strengths)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure municipal funding • Cooperation with other institutes • Use of 5 other municipal buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry • Catalogues, posters and banners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Support 	<p style="text-align: center;">W (weaknesses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced staff • Low visitor numbers • Limited Sponsorships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No gifts hop • Not concrete audience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of revenue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free entry • No volunteering • Inadequate advertisement
<p style="text-align: center;">O (opportunities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to the commercial centre • Close to 3 cultural institutions 	<p style="text-align: center;">T (threats)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearby competitive organizations

The operation of the Art Gallery of Thessaloniki, like ail the other art organizations, is affected positively or negatively by internal and external factors. Starting from the internal factors, the Gallery has a secure funding from the municipality, but it has virtually no funds for high-expectation exhibitions and as a result, there is not any particular interest on the part of sponsors' to invest in its current exhibitions. The money that exists is spread over many exhibitions, which tend to be small and lacking interest. Secondly, there is inadequate staff and no gift shop as well, which leads, on the one hand, to the malfunction of the organization and, on the other hand, to the lack of income.

Thirdly, there is no volunteering in the organization, except the voluntary assistance provided by University students, as part of the *Student Training Programme*. Furthermore, there is no actual advertisement of the exhibitions, for instance through the web or television, which would attract more visitors to the Gallery. However, there are many banners and posters of the Gallery in various parts of the city, like in theatres or other cultural centres. Additionally, there is free entry for everyone, which is both a strength and a weakness of the Gallery; this is because it may attract more visitors but at the same time it does not bring adequate income. Moreover, although there is a flow of daily visitors to the Gallery, this number is very low and its audience is neither permanent nor concrete;

That is, those who normally visit the Gallery, are school groups and middle-aged people; as for the number of visitors, according to information given to me by the director of the museum, over the last two years, the Gallery organized thirteen exhibitions with total visitor numbers 37.790 people (Annual Report, 2003). According to official reports, in 2009 the total expenses of the Municipal Art Gallery amounted to 508,531.65 Euros, without including staff salaries (Annual Report, 2009). Finally, in the artistic area the Gallery works in cooperation with foreign institutions, such as English, French, German and Italian.

It also uses four other municipal institutions for its exhibition needs as well, such as the *Former Archaeological Museum* (known as Yeni Djami), the *Alatza Imaret* (old Turkish mosque of the end of the 19¹ century), *Casa Bianca (1912)* and a new building, where the administration centre of the Gallery has been situated. Regarding the external factors, the existence of two museums, both of which include artworks of the same period as those which are represented in the Gallery, constitutes a permanent threat to its advertisement and display; on the other hand, the fact that is very close to the centre and to three cultural institutions (Music Hall, Vafopoulio-cultural centre, Ethnological Museum), is considered as a great opportunity for the promotion of the Gallery.

Administrative structure of the organization and Staff

The Municipal art Gallery consists of four administrative departments: a) Department of Research and Collections, b) Department of Library and Records, c) Department of Administration and Financial Management and d) Public Relations Department. The opening times are from Tuesday-Friday, 09.00-13.00, 17.00-21.00 and also in the weekend at 09.00 to 13.00. According to the organization's regulations, the statutory positions are the following: the Director, two Curators, the Head of the administration, a Secretary, the Conservator, a public relations office and two security guards. The staff is supplemented by external co operators as well. In addition, the City Council supervises the Gallery, designates the Director, the President and the eleven-member Administrative Board.

Finally, the Municipality of Thessaloniki owns a central technical service, including electricians, mechanics, carpenters, who undertake the technical support of the exhibitions. The objective of the proposed programme bears reasonable relevance to the content of the Gallery's collections. Apart from the works of El Greco and Malevich (approximately 20), which are expected to come from other Greek museums (mainly of Athens and Thessaloniki), the rest of the exhibits constitute a part of the Gallery's collections. In other words, only 1/3 of the exhibits will come from other museums, a fact that is expected to diminish the cost of the exhibition.

The project aims to make the best use of the scientific and administrative personnel of the Gallery. In particular, on the occasion of the exhibition, there will be a curator involved, assuming the role of coordinating all the factors pertaining to the exhibition, a secretariat to cater for the emerging secretarial needs (correspondence, text development e.t.c), a financial service that would monitor the revenues and expenses, two of the security guards of the Gallery and the conservator, who would be responsible for the condition of the exhibits. The last one is expected to produce the condition reports, either when receiving or delivering the exhibits. The Technical Service Centre of the Municipality of Thessaloniki would also be used, as for example the electricians and engineers, whose duty would be to support technically the exhibition (quality control of lighting, fire control System, temperature and general safety of spaces); while utilizing the Gallery's Department of Public Relations will be an important component of success.

Target Audiences

As stated above, the Gallery's audience is not permanent and concrete. Some museums, newer than the Municipal Art Gallery, are competing for the interest of the art-loving audience of Thessaloniki. These are: the "*Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art*", that exhibits European Art works of the Post-war period (Alexandros Iolas Collection) and works of contemporary Greek artists, the "*Tellogleion Art Foundation*", which is an Art Gallery belonging to the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki that collects and exhibits works of contemporary artists, and the State Museum of Contemporary Art, including works of the Russian avant-garde (Kostakis Collection). There are two other museums that also operate in the city, which are well-known and constitute important tourist attractions: The "*Archaeological Museum*", including works of the classical Greek and Roman period and the "*Museum of Byzantine Culture*", containing works of early Christian, Byzantine and post-Byzantine art. They are all situated in the centre of Thessaloniki, except for the "*State Museum of Contemporary Art*", which is located on the western side of the city. The first three museums compete with the Municipal Art Gallery, as their target audience is almost the same: students and young people, experts and those, who are interested in modern and contemporary art. To be more specific, the ultimate goal is to attract foreign tourists and through our new exhibition, to create a permanent audience for the Municipal Art Gallery, which will still visit the Gallery after the exhibition and will actively participate in its events.

Strategy

In order to achieve our objectives, though, there must be efficient management of the project, such as the reasonable use of the resources (loan, sponsorships and revenue), the utilization of the permanent and temporary personnel, and the proper use of the infrastructure (technical service). The promotion of the exhibition and of the museum would be widely covered in order to attract a wide audience that will form a permanent and stable audience which would consider the Gallery as a space for pleasure and utilization of their leisure time. Events, both small and large, would keep the exhibition alive and up to date. Musical events, art happenings, lectures for the wider public, educational programmes and scientific forums, would be arranged to complement a programme that would run throughout the duration of the exhibition.

Special attention would be given for the association of the Gallery with the neighbourhood, by motivating the citizens to visit the Gallery, through specially conducted tours, discussions with the curators, personal challenges and daily contact with the members of their family. A prerequisite for the success of the exhibition is the recruitment of external partners, who would cooperate with the Gallery's permanent personnel. First of all, a project manager should be employed, who would be responsible for the entire supervision of the exhibition throughout the proposed period (preparation and implementation of the project). The project manager would be responsible for implementing all the terms of the agreement (contract), would monitor the proper execution of the project idea and propose solutions to any emergent problems as well. Moreover, he would undertake the organization of the gift shop, which is expected to contribute to the collection of revenues. The responsibility for the function of the gift shop would be taken on by the Financial Department of the Gallery. A project designer/Architect should also be recruited to undertake the architectural design of the exhibition[^] spaces.

The promotion of the exhibition would be assigned to another external associate, who would work in collaboration with the Gallery's Public Relations office. It would also be necessary to employ two additional security guards (apart from the existing guards of the Gallery), due to the importance and the uniqueness of El Greco and Malevich's works. A graphic designer would play an important role and would be responsible for the design of any kind of brochure, such as the catalogue, the invitations, the posters and the banners of the exhibition. He/she would also be charged with implementing the publicity campaign (on an aesthetic and communicative level) throughout the media and the Internet. A photographer would be needed for the digital photography of the exhibits, as well as for the selection of the appropriate team that will create special radio and television commercial advertisements.

The advertising and the promotion of the exhibition as well as the Gallery, would aim at seeking out sponsorships, a prerequisite for the success of the entire project. A part of the sponsorship would also be the promotion of the exhibition by newspapers and magazines. The biggest sponsor could well be the well-known mobile telephony (Cosmote) which could take over some of the exhibition's expenses, with the acknowledgement of the Company's role and generosity to be included in any kind of brochure. Another part of the expenses could be met by a Bank (Alpha Bank) in the form of a loan, while the balance would be covered by revenues, coming from the tickets and the earnings of the gift shop. The main concern is to balance the budget at the final analysis.

The Public Relations Office of the Gallery will take on the promotion of the exhibition. This kind of promotion entails: posting banners in central parts of the city (Airport, Aristotelous Square and Railway Station) and organizing a press conference a day before the opening of the exhibition. It would also channel press releases in the media and the Internet and will promote the special designed commercial advertisements on television, in magazines and newspapers. Seven students would be asked to work in the exhibition as volunteers, contributing to the promotion of the exhibition (by handing out leaflets) and to the overall information of the public.

The Gallery is an Organization with permanent personnel, is housed in a historic building and is adequately funded on an annual basis. This increases the trustworthiness of the institution in terms of major companies as future sponsors. The exhibition is expected to further enhance the status of the Gallery, to make it competitive, attractive and more widely known.

Evaluation

As mentioned above, the evaluation of the project is expected to last half a month. The main risk that we face in the implementation of our project is a possible failure to achieve all the agreements, as for example the contract with the sponsor within the fixed time frame, with the possibility of a resulting budget deficit. In the evaluation-part, we would take into consideration the following data: 1) the visitor numbers, 2) the cooperation with the municipal services, 3) the positive reaction by, and correspondence in the press and 4) the creation of our new audience. Should the whole planning of the project be strictly implemented; we guarantee the absolute success of it.

Timescales and milestones

The exhibition would follow a specific time frame incorporating, and necessitating, the strict application of the activity plan. More specifically, the exhibition will last eight and a half months, of which six would be devoted to the processes of preparation, the following two would be the actual duration of the exhibition, while half a month would be dedicated to the evaluation of the whole project. The timescale is as follows:

- Acceptance of the project-Week 1
- Project manager's contract- Week 2
- Agreement with the cooperative museums - Week 3
- Bank loan - Week 3
- Contract with insurance and transportation company - Week 4
- Editorial contract - Week 4
- Agreement with the main sponsor - Week 5
- Construction of the gift shop and other facilities - Week 13
- Start of publishing-Week 14
- Design and technical support of exhibition spaces - Week 17
- Start of the exhibition^ promotion - Week 21
- Volunteers' assistance - Week 22
- Delivery of the artworks- Week 24
- Press Conference - Week 25
- Public Opening — Week 25
- Lecture to the public-Week 26
- Music group performance -Week 27
- Artistic happening- Week 29
- Scientific conference - Week 31
- Open conversation with the neighbourhood - Week 32
- Return of the artworks-Week 33
- Evaluation - Week 34

(Appendix 3)

Budget and cash flow

The proposed budget of our project would be about 125.000 € One fifth of this amount would come from sponsorship and a bank loan, whereas the rest of it, from ticket sales and the earnings of the gift shop. A part of the above amount would be spent on salaries, mostly allocated according to working hours. The staff that already works in the Gallery would be partly paid from this budget, while no salary would be given to the volunteers. Another portion of the budget would be spent on advertising, for materials needed for the exhibition, and for the construction of the gift shop. Also, 10% of the proposed budget would be retained for a possible contingency. The cash flow would be calculated on a monthly basis and according to the income and expenditure. It is expected that the project's budget would be balanced in the first two weeks of the 9th month, when the evaluation-part of the project would be undertaken and the project drawn to a conclusion.

(Appendix 1 and 2)

* This paper constitutes the exhibition “Byzantine and Modern Art Exhibition: From El Greco to Malevich” management proposal, which is fictional.

References

- Hadjinikolaou, N. (ed.). (1995). El Greco of Crete. Proceedings of the International Symposium held on the Occasion of the 450th anniversary of the artist's birth. Iraklion, Crete, 1-5 September 1990, Municipality of Iraklion.
- Riese, H. P. (1999). Kazimir Malewitsch. Hamburg.
- Hill, L., O'Sullivan, C. and O'Sullivan, T. (2010). Creative Arts Marketing. BH, London Municipal Gallery of Thessaloniki. (2003). Thessaloniki, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. (1998), From post-Byzantine to the Contemporary art(18th-20th century). Thessaloniki. [in Greek]
- Papanikolaou, M. (ed). (2002). Behind the Black Square. Texts and Speeches, State Museum of Contemporary Art. Thessaloniki.
- Annual Report of the Municipal Gallery of Thessaloniki. (2003).
- Thessaloniki Annual Report of the Municipal Gallery of Thessaloniki. (2009). Municipal Gallery of Thessaloniki.
- Thessaloniki Regulation of the Municipal Gallery of Thessaloniki, (2005). Municipal Gallery of Thessaloniki

Proposed budget 125.000 €		
	Project Budget	
	In €	Notes
INCOME		
Tickets	78.000	15.600 (300tickets x 52 days) for 5€each (6 days a week)
Catalogues	15.600	780 (15 catalogues x 52 days) for 20€each
Sponsorship	10.000	"Cosmote"(mobile telephony company)
Loan	15.000	"Alpha Bank"
Gift shop	6.250	more or less, 120€/day x 52 days
Total Income	124.850	
EXPENDITURE		
Insurance	14.000	
Transportation	7.000	
Staff		
Project manager	13.000	6 1/2months for 2.000€/month
Curator	3.000	partly in kind contribution
Architect/designer	4.000	2 months for 2.000€/month
Technicians	2.000	partly in kind contribution (2 months/2persons for 500€each)
Graphic designer	5.250	3 1/2 months for 1.500€/month
Photographer	3.000	2 months for 1.500€/month
Advertiser/promotion	5.100	3 months for 1.700€/month
Conservator	1.000	partly in kind contribution
Volunteers		in kind contribution
Security officers	6.000	2 persons for 2 months for 1.500€/month
Financial assistant	1.500	partly in kind contribution
Public Relations office	1.500	partly in kind contribution
Marketing		
Catalogue's publishing	22.000	1.200 copies
Banners/posters/leaflets	3.000	6 banners/1.500 posters/10.000 leaflets
Techn. Resources		
Special Lighting	3.500	
Gift Shop Supplies	2.500	
Loan	15.000	
Contingency (10%)	12.500	
Total Expenditure	124.850	

(Appendix1)

INCOME										
Tickets							39000	39000		78.000
"Cosmote" (sponsorship)		5000		5000						10.000
Gift shop + Catalogues							10925	10925		21.850
"Alpha Bank" loan	5000		5000		5000					15.000
TOTAL INCOME	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000	0	49925	49925	0	124.850
EXPENDITURE										
Project Manager			2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	1000	13.000
Curator			500	500	500	500	500	500		3.000
Architect/Designer					2000	2000				4.000
Technicians (2 per.)							1000	1000		2.000
Graphic Designer				1500	1500	1500	750			5.250
Photographer							1500	1500		3.000
Advertiser						1700	1700	1700		5.100
Conservator							500	500		1.000
Volunteers							0	0		0
Security Officers (2 per.)							3000	3000		6.000
Financial Assistant							750	750		1.500
Public Relations Office						500	500	500		1.500
Catalogue's Publishing							20000	2000		22.000
Insurance							7000	7000		14.000
Transportation						1000	2000	4000		7.000
Materials						3000	3000	3000		9.000
Loan paid back							5000	5000	5000	15.000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	0	0	2500	4000	6000	12200	49200	32450	6000	112.350
Contingency 10%										12.500
CLOSING BALANCE	5000	10000	12500	13500	12500	300	1025	18.500	12.500	12.500

(Appendix 2)

ACTIVITY PLAN									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8 1/2
Preparation	█	█	█	█	█	█			
Duration of the exhibition							█	█	
Acceptance of the project	█								
Project manager's contract	█								
Agreement with cooperative museums	█								
Bank loan	█								
Insurance and transportation agreement	█								
Editorial contract	█								
Sponsorship		█	█	█	█	█			
Project manager			█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Curator			█	█	█	█	█	█	
Construction of the gift shop				█	█	█			
Start printing				█	█	█			
Exhibition design					█	█			
Promotion						█	█	█	
Delivery of the artworks						█			
Conservation							█	█	
Photographing							█	█	
Volunteers' assistance							█	█	
Security officers (4)							█	█	
Operation of the gift shop							█	█	
Opening to the public							█		
Loan paid back							█	█	█
Happenings							█	█	
End of the exhibition								█	
Return of the artworks								█	
Evaluation									█

(Appendix 3)