

## **Itineraries in the Museo De América**

In this pilot project, the Museo de América focused on stimulating opinion-sharing, commentary and dialogue between visitors to promote intercultural, intergenerational and inter-professional dialogue. By creating an itinerary of a few pieces connected with an accessible theme, on which most people would have a personal opinion, the aim of the Museum was to build public loyalty and confidence in visiting the permanent display.

### **Objectives**

- To generate opinion and therefore dialogue and debate through a themed itinerary emphasising the life experiences of visitors;
- To help audiences become more inclined to observe and reflect critically on the objects on display.

### **Process**

The project team devised a monographic visit around the theme of the human body as represented in American cultures. Few, selected objects were chosen for the visitors to explore at their own pace, without following the traditional guided visit. A leaflet provided the cultural context for the artefacts, and emphasised the iconographic aspects that distinguish them. By encouraging visitors to observe the objects in detail and then to express opinions on what they had observed, the purpose of this leaflet was to draw out both universal and particular elements in the representation of the human body in different American cultures, and highlight similarities and differences. It was hoped that the observation exercise would lead visitors to think more closely about the objects and to create alternative interpretations.

The project was addressed to two main target groups:

- families and groups of friends (to facilitate the exchange of opinions between visitors who already knew each other);
- blind and partially-sighted visitors.

For the latter group, a Braille version of the leaflet including raised drawings of the selected objects was produced in close cooperation with the educators of ONCE (the Spanish National Organisation for the Blind), which also helped arrange a joint museum visit for people with visual disability and sighted people.

In the process, the Museum had to address the following challenges:

- Creating a visit in which pieces can be visually described and discussed, but not touched;
- Taking into account the physical needs of blind and partially-sighted people, for example by avoiding difficult routes around the museum;
- Combining the information needs of blind, sighted and partially-sighted people, and devising brief, rigorous, accessible texts within the space allowed.

### **Outcomes**

- The project promoted the active involvement of participants in the interpretation of collections;
- Communication was facilitated between visitors by creating interest around a generative theme (the representation of the human body) allowing them to familiarise with American cultures;

- The museum visit was seen as an opportunity to draw out the experiences and viewpoints of different audience groups;
- The Museum approached a new audience – blind and partially-sighted individuals – and had an opportunity to reflect on their learning strategies as well as on their skills in perceiving and interpreting form;
- The themed visit has become an integral part of the Museum's offer, and the possibility of creating new itineraries with a similar approach is currently being considered.

### **Institutions**

Museo de América

<http://museodeamerica.mcu.es/>

ONCE (Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles)

[www.once.es](http://www.once.es)

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### **Target Groups**

Families and groups of friends; blind and partially-sighted visitors