

# What kind of Art Mediator are you?

Today most biennials, museums, galleries, art centres and even art fairs offer a program or department associated with art mediation. However, their goals and motives can be as different as the means they employ to achieve their aims. What do we actually mean when we speak about art mediation? What do you actually mean when you speak of art mediation? Do the following test to find out.

Check one or more box per question. For the best results, we suggest you don't hesitate too long but follow your first instinct.

## 1. MY FAVORITE ACTIVITY IS

- ☐ leading a guided tour *a*
- ☐ staging public art interventions *d*
- ☐ facilitating community debates *e*
- ☒ giving guest lessons at schools *b*
- ☐ organising a museum night event *c*

## 2. I WOULD SAY MY MOST IMPORTANT TASK IS

- ☒ to ensure art is accessible to everyone *c*
- ☐ to find a way to relate the concepts of the artworks on display to people's everyday lives *b*
- ☐ to ensure the independent position of art education within the institution *d*
- ☐ to stimulate people to act and think more freely, through art *e*
- ☐ to properly inform visitors about the artworks presented in my institution *a*

## 3. MY RELATIONSHIP WITH COLLEAGUES OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS IN MY INSTITUTION IS

- ☐ good, we have a meeting once a month *b*
- ☐ nonexistent, 'which other departments?' *e*
- ☒ mediocre, sometimes I would really appreciate more interaction and assistance *c*
- ☐ good, although I would like that my colleagues would come to my evening lecture series more often *a*
- ☐ in a constant state of crisis *d*

## 4. FOR ME PERSONALLY, ART IS

- ☐ a platform for debate *d*
- ☐ pour l'art *a*
- ☒ a knowledge base *b*
- ☐ a tool to change society *e*
- ☐ cultural distinction *c*

## 5. MY IDEAL - MOST SATISFYING - AUDIENCE

- ☐ has studied art-history *a*
- ☐ is well-informed and critical *d*
- ☒ is the next generation of museum visitors *b*
- ☐ would never have set a foot in an art exhibition (if it weren't for me) *c*
- ☐ are experts in their own fields of knowledge *e*

**6. I MAINLY USE THE EXHIBITION CATALOGUE AS**

- ☐ as a work of reference in conjunction with other relevant scientific literature *e*
- ☐ truthfully? It's pretty useless; the texts in these things are incomprehensible for most people *c*
- ☒ as my premier source of information when preparing education programs *b*
- ☐ as paperweight, I already have far too much reading to do about art education *d*
- ☐ what do you mean 'mainly use'? I co-edited it *a*

**7. MY PREFERRED FIELD OF STUDY IS**

- ☐ pedagogy *b*
- ☐ aesthetics *a*
- ☐ sociology *c*
- ☒ cultural anthropology *e*
- ☐ ethics *d*

**8. I FEEL THAT THE ART MEDIATOR'S VOICE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS**

- ☒ inspirational *e*
- ☐ authoritative *a*
- ☐ objective *b*
- ☐ motivational *c*
- ☐ independent *d*

**9. WHAT I HOPE MY AUDIENCE REMEMBERS MOST FROM THEIR VISIT TO THE EXHIBITION IS**

- ☐ that an art exhibition isn't a scary or boring place after all *c*
- ☐ the wealth of information provided to them *a*
- ☐ the fact that they themselves did most of the talking (not me) *d*
- ☐ how the works of art addressed certain subjects with innovation *e*
- ☒ the new ways in which to apply their own creativity *b*

**10. IN MY OPINION QUESTIONS ARE PREFERABLY**

- ☒ discussed *b*
- ☐ answered *a*
- ☐ investigated *c*
- ☐ rephrased *d*
- ☐ contextualised *e*

**11. THE MOST INTERESTING ROOM OF AN ART INSTITUTION IS**

- ☐ the coffee shop *e*
- ☐ the auditorium *d*
- ☐ the main hall *c*
- ☒ the education workshop *b*
- ☐ the exhibition rooms *a*

**12. IN MY OPINION EDUCATION ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE**

- ☒ affordable for everyone *b*
- ☐ competitively priced *e*
- ☐ priced according to their value *a*
- ☐ free of charge *c*
- ☐ able to be financially self sustainable *d*

**13. IF SOMETHING CONTROVERSIAL HAPPENS AT MY INSTITUTION**

- ☐ I quickly spin it to the benefit of the institution: "communication is everything" *c*
- ☐ my lips are sealed, "what controversy"? *a*
- ☒ for now I don't do anything, "but let's see what we can learn from this" *b*
- ☐ "great, controversy!" Let's organise an independent public debate *d*
- ☐ I don't worry about it at all, "there are certainly bigger problems in the world" *e*

**14. AT THE END OF THE DAY, I AM MOST CONTENT IF**

- ☐ we furthered knowledge about art *a*
- ☒ we were able to learn and contribute to personal development *b*
- ☐ lots (and lots) of people visited my institution *c*
- ☐ we got into a deep discussion with the curator *d*
- ☐ we furthered knowledge in general *e*

**TO SCORE: COUNT ALL A, B, C, D AND E ANSWERS. WRITE YOUR TOTALS IN THE BLANKS BELOW.**

0 \_\_\_\_\_ A

10 \_\_\_\_\_ B

2 \_\_\_\_\_ C

0 \_\_\_\_\_ D

2 \_\_\_\_\_ E

The letters with the highest number of responses give clues about your style of art mediation.

If most of your answers were 'A' your Art Mediation style tends to be: *Intrinsic*  
Art mediation is about transferring knowledge about art and culture. Visual art has an intrinsic value which is not dependent on didactic or moral purposes outside of its own domain. Art mediation can contribute to the aesthetic experience of the visitor by supplying background knowledge, analytical tools and relevant concepts to enable the viewer to interact with the artworks on display.

If most of your answers were 'B' your

Art Mediation style tends to be: *Formative*

Art mediation is about learning from art. Interaction with art stimulates personal growth on many different levels. It can impact the way we see the world around us, and the way we see ourselves. It can contribute to social development or – for instance – prepare people to better deal with complexity and change.

If most of your answers were 'C' your

Art Mediation style tends to be: *Participatory*

Art mediation is about creating access to art and culture for everyone. Art, and especially the art we know as 'high' art, which is presented in most institutions, has always functioned as a tool of social distinction. Art mediation can contribute to bridging the gaps in social distinction. It can create positive social capital, decrease social isolation and improve the understanding of different cultures.

If most of your answers were 'D' your

Art Mediation style tends to be: *Critical*

Art mediation relates as closely to the visiting audience as to the manner in which the institution presents itself. The role of art education is both to question the interaction between the artworks and the visitors, and to question and critique the role of the institution within the art world's ruling conditions.

If most of your answers were 'E' your

Art Mediation style tends to be: *Transformative*

Art and the mediation of art are tools to encourage social change. Artists and art mediators have a responsibility to establish ties to all other fields of knowledge. Art as a specific mode or expression of human thought has unique contributions to offer to activities such as economics, science, religion and politics.

As you have probably gathered, the above is a broad list of possible mediation styles. There are many possible alternatives, nuances and different aims one could strive for. Try to formulate a specific idea of what art mediation is for you, but try to keep your answer limited to four or five sentences.

## ART MEDIATION IS ABOUT

"B" komt goed overeen met hoe ik mezelf zie als art-mediator. Kunst is voor mij een middel om te leren, zowel voor jezelf als voor anderen. Het verbindt mensen met zichzelf en met elkaar, vooral door het proces van creëren. Interactie met kunst stimuleert persoonlijke groei op verschillende niveaus en kan tegelijkertijd een prettige manier zijn om met elkaar in gesprek te gaan. Soms is de ene persoon verbaal sterker dan de ander, en kunst kan dan dienen als een toegankelijk middel om over bepaalde onderwerpen te praten, door ze visueel te maken.

Kunst kan niet alleen bijdragen aan de sociale ontwikkeling, maar helpt mensen ook om anders om te gaan met complexiteit en verandering. Het biedt de mogelijkheid om op diverse manieren te denken en te reflecteren. Ik ben ervan overtuigd dat kunst toegankelijk moet zijn voor iedereen.