



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

DIPARTIMENTO DI
SCIENZE GERONTOLOGICHE,
GERIATRICHE E FISIATRICHE

PRESS RELEASE

The memory of beauty

Museum paths for people with Alzheimer's disease

Symposium

Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna
Viale delle Belle Arti, 131 - Roma
Venerdì 14 ottobre 2011
ore 9.30 – 13.00

On 14th October 2011, the Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna (GNAM) presents the symposium: The memory of beauty. Museum paths for people with Alzheimer's disease.

It takes its name from an experimental project that took place in the Galleria between March and May 2011, in collaboration with the Università Cattolica Sacro Cuore Department of Gerontological, Geriatric and Psychiatric Sciences, Medical Center of Aging at the Policlinico A. Gemelli, directed by prof. Roberto Bernabei.

The memory of beauty consisted of two cycles of visits, each made of three meetings, during which groups of patients, with their caregivers, were urged to establish a direct relationship with the artworks, recalling their memories through the observation of the subjects represented and exchanging opinions with each other. The checking of the results was performed at the Policlinico A. Gemelli, where the patients underwent neuropsychological testing and evaluation of psycho-behavioral type.

MoMA, Museum of Modern Art in New York was the first, in 2006, to realize that the museum could be a "therapeutic place" both for people with Alzheimer's disease and for caregivers, especially if family members. The results, monitored by the Psychosocial Research and Support Program of the New York University's Centre of Excellence for Brain Ageing and Dementia, were surprising: even though they have had no effect on memory retrieval, the visits to the museum have improved the quality of life both of patients and their caregivers, significantly lowering levels of anxiety and stress-related illness.

In October 2010 the Education Department of MoMA has submitted to the GNAM its experience and this contact resulted in the desire to replicate the project at the Roman museum.

The conference aims today, after one year, at illustrating the steps taken since the beginning of this path. The whole experience and achievements will be presented under a double perspective: the clinical and the museum one. Besides, it will describe its future goals and how the museum can become a tool and setting of non-pharmacological treatments for people with Alzheimer's disease. Finally, a short video will be shown, illustrating the project through the words of its protagonists.

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