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Motivation and creativity art practices for adults through museum and photography

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Abstract

This article investigates the promotion of creativity, studying the process and results of a course given to students of the Nau Gran, an educational program that is offered to a public over 55 years old. It is a workshop designed to activate creativity through the practice of photography and visits to museums. Learning processes are approached from a multidisciplinary perspective, integrating aspects ranging from Visual Culture and Art History to digital technologies and Art Education. The research methodology is based on the Case Study, combining Arts-Based Research, so that the images acquire an important value as a result. Assuming the problem of learning for senior students, due to the gerontophobia, and valuing the benefits of lifelong learning, we use motivation as an argument, while reinforcing participatory practices evaluating the students' experience. The positive results of the project are reinforced with the opinions of the people involved in the research.

Keywords: heritage education, lifelong learning, photography, museums, creativity

Introduction

Some universities, mostly public institutions, have implemented programs designed for adults in their academic offerings. This is due to several interconnected factors, of which we will highlight three: 1) It is considered necessary to meet the demand of a type of student who is no longer studying for employment or initial training, since they are retired, having worked for decades; 2) With this type of offering, public universities amortise their potential faculty and facilities, while also meeting a social need; 3) A segment of the population has pursued tasks and obligations throughout their lives out of necessity, having always postponed their desire to study humanities subjects, such as art, history, or philosophy, something they always wanted to learn.

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University programs for adult education are designed to connect with existing subjects and courses, allowing this senior audience to share learning experiences with much younger students. In addition to the required courses for their chosen specialization, complementary pathways are also offered, typically consisting of workshops or more practical subjects. Within this complementary offering, the University of Valencia launched the course 'Photographing the City's Museums'. This innovative educational experience is the basis for the present article, which observes and analyses each step of the process, examining key moments and the creative potential that emerged during the sessions.

While seemingly simple, the framework of this activity explores the creative potential of senior students, employing innovative pedagogical approaches with a critical social dimension (Sofaer & Vicze, 2020). It involves learning photography while simultaneously visiting and exploring various museums in the city (Maksimovic, 2024), thus transforming the practice into a genuine performance and an artistic urban exploration (Lee, 2024). The real challenge lies in leveraging this academic environment to create a space for generating creativity (Meléndez et al., 2018). This is made possible by the attitude of everyone involved, as the accumulated experience of these senior students is highly valued. It is from this experience, combined with a relaxed academic atmosphere, that a high degree of creative maturity can be achieved. This is a highly engaging photography workshop that enhances creative and visual skills and abilities, emphasising visual culture, as advocated by Duncum (2015). Furthermore, the project offers the opportunity to explore the city, enjoying museums and other urban heritage sites. Huerta (2021) also emphasises this when he assures that 'economic barriers cannot become cultural barriers; therefore, we have an obligation to maximize the attractions of museums and heritage, such as attractive and identity environments', insisting that 'cultural heritage is for all citizens' (p. 3). To achieve this, we start with a structured approach centred around urban wanderings (*dérive*), organising activities that involve walking and strolling through the city, emulating the figure of the *flâneur*. This concept of *flâneur* connects with the art tradition and leads us to revisit the literature of Baudelaire (2006).

This research highlights the value of museums as spaces of intense cultural and educational activity (González-García, 2019), which is linked to the importance of heritage education. According to the latest definition approved by International Council of Museums in 2022, a museum is a non-profit, permanent institution serving society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets, and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible, and inclusive, museums foster diversity, sustainability, and creativity (Huerta & Alfonso-Benlliure, 2025). With community participation, museums operate and communicate ethically and professionally, offering diverse experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection, and knowledge exchange (Panciroli et al., 2020). It is clear, therefore, that museums must promote civic education, and it is from this intention that we foster creative thinking and creativity, with a healthy critical perspective (Hamlin & Fusaro, 2018). Students need more information about the cultural and educational possibilities of the museum. In a group of people over 55, what we especially value is their maturity and acquired knowledge, encouraging their concerns and desires. We encourage them to experiment, while strengthening their skills and expertise with the camera, encouraging them to create images to reflect on the power of photography (Sontag, 2001) and post-photography. This empirical part of the project will be fundamental, since from a certain point onward, the theoretical classes will take their own photographs as their starting point, which will be analysed in the classroom and discussed by all participating students.

The senior student group consists of 17 people, 6 men and 11 women, some with diverse professions (dentist, administrative assistant, salesperson, designer, chemist), most of whom are teachers, although some participants have opted for early retirement or have already retired. We are grateful for the commitment and great interest shown by all the participants. Their photographs demonstrate a strong sense of composition, showcasing their skill, aptitude, and ability to create images, sometimes with virtuosity and mastery. The aim is to leverage their knowledge and experience to foster creativity (Foley, 2014), boosting their self-esteem and abilities, and thus promoting healthy habits through innovative pedagogical practices (Dewey, 2005).

The *dérive* [drift]

The approach we propose to students for their various museum visits is that of the dérive, as conceived by Guy Debord, as a technique linked to the act of walking through diverse environments with a playful-constructive approach, something emphasised by Careri (2017) in his theory of walkscapes or aesthetic strolls. This type of *dérive* is undertaken with an awareness of the psycho-geographical effects it generates – effects experienced by the person undertaking the activity – and therefore with notions different from those of a simple trip or walk. Numerous artistic collectives have practiced the *dérive* since the beginning of the 20th century, such as the Dadaists, later in the wanderings of the Surrealists, as well as in the urban explorations of Walter Benjamin, or in the psycho-geographies of Lettrist and Situationist artists, as well as in the Land Art, or the experimental practices of groups like the Italian Stalkers in the 1990s.

The city as a public space is the ideal place for the practice of *dérive*. Urban environments are full of spaces that stimulate the development of learning experiences, thus becoming places where each artist acts as an archaeologist of the city itself, investigating through artistic practices with elements extracted from urban life (Figueras Ferrer, 2022). In this way, we break down certain prejudices we have regarding places where we can express ourselves without coercion (Foucault, 1995). Museums are urban spaces suitable for generating *dérive*, especially when the group of students leaves the classroom and walks to the designated location, although each participant can establish their own particular itinerary with complete freedom and autonomy (Freire, 2015). Using artistic experiences as a foundation is essential in defining new methods that can serve to develop innovative research approaches, from broad and diverse conceptual frameworks.

Methodology

The methodology we applied in this research is mixed, combining the Case Study (Stake, 1995) with Arts-Based Research (Navarro Espinach, 2022). Our aim throughout the process is to work from a critical and creative thinking perspective, assuming the role of participant observer. When exploring teaching with senior students (individuals over 55 years of age), we chose to create spaces for participation, both through reflection (dialogue, debate) and artistic creation, taking photographs that are used in the classroom as elements of analysis, thus fostering learning through their own creations. The creation and analysis of images is one of the defining characteristics of Arts-Based Research methodology (Barone & Eisner, 2011). The methodology of Arts-Based Research extends far beyond the method itself and is primarily grounded in epistemology – in how we come to know and represent the world. Photography, as a means of capturing the world through images, fosters an artistic intention in the recording of planned activities. We thus

promote a space for the co-construction of knowledge, prioritising issues through the study of factors offered by the images themselves. The methodological approach of the research is, therefore, qualitative, applying participatory action to the research design, so that the entire participating group becomes both researcher and researched, using techniques such as brainstorming, museum visits, urban drifting, image creation, or shared critical reflection (Starrett, 2020).

The course we are analysing, which was conducted for senior students, combines a theoretical component with a series of practical sessions, including museum visits and a photography workshop. This combination effectively trains students in image creation and art education, as well as in understanding museum spaces and art galleries. We explore contemporary art and other artistic expressions, including museums of various types. This combination of theoretical and practical elements, incorporating the *dérive*, a technique used to enhance creativity (Huerta, 2022), prepares participants to create photos with communicative intention, establishing and legitimising spaces that combine debate and training. We offer the opportunity to learn about museum processes from a broad cultural perspective, aiming to foster flexible participation and thus familiarise them with the mechanics of art and images from a contemporary viewpoint. We also promote a workshop model among adult audiences to empower them creating photos and face the challenges of the future of museums as cultural promotion entities and spaces for dialogue (Corbisiero-Drakos et al., 2021).

The context of the research

Given our interest in fostering creativity, a schedule of sessions was established with an original and provocative title for each one: session 1: *Identity* (presentation of participants and explanation of the course, dynamics and intentions of each planned activity); session 2: *Territories* (visit the websites of the city's museums); session 3: *Voluptuousness* (first visits with a practical photography workshop); session 4: *Intimacy* (visits with a photography workshop); session 5: *Memory* (theoretical class on the creative possibilities of photography, based on the work the students are doing); session 6: *Collecting* (visits and discussions through focus groups); session 7: *Dérive* (drifts, students are organised into teams and assigned museums to visit); session 8: *Practice* (new *dérive* and preparation of the final project, a group video); session 9: *Vanity* (theoretical class with issues related to the current state of digital museums); session 10: *Memories* (final session to review and discuss the students' work).

The main objective of the educational activity is to foster an understanding of art and images through the enjoyment of exhibition spaces in museums and other heritage sites. Among the secondary objectives, we highlight the following: (a) Introduction to the main concepts of photography, applying this theoretical foundation to the possibilities of image creation in exhibition spaces; (b) Understanding the importance of museums in the idea of cultural transmission and heritage education; (c) Designing and creating images coherently through lived experience; (d) Encouraging personal artistic practice in the workshops offered during classes and visits; (e) Approaching the city's museums as a key element of visual culture; (f) Walking through the city as an aesthetic practice; (g) Creating images by photographing details, elements, objects, interiors, landscapes, and exteriors; (h) Revisiting the city as a typographic museum, identifying the aesthetics of urban lettering. (i) To examine the lights and shadows of the city, also appreciating the magic of the liminal areas.

The aim is to emphasise the use of Arts-Based Research through image creation. This artistic methodology can empower adult learners. As Saam and Egetenmeyer (2026)

state: 'In the discourse of adult education empowerment can be seen as a process promoting equitable opportunities' (p. 65). A paradigm shift is proposed, moving the focus from image interpretation to a transformation of reality that promotes the use of images through a performative approach, exploring their heritage potential (Gutiérrez González, 2022). Issues of gender and diversity are incorporated into classroom explanations and discussions, utilising a virtual museum that students can access on their mobile devices or through projections. The goal is to emancipate adult learners so they feel capable of generating artistic processes (Hachem et al., 2025).

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining a descriptive-exploratory qualitative methodology with an artistic methodology, using a socio-educational approach that considers factors such as student age and teacher involvement. An ethnographic perspective is adopted, oriented towards educational innovation and fostering educational change. Because the research takes place within the teaching activity itself, it raises awareness of the interactions occurring within the entire group involved in the educational process. Data collection occurs during the teaching exercise, and participant observation is inductively developed, focusing on the unfolding educational activity, tutoring the students, and identifying critical learning moments, including both the difficulties and the benefits they bring. The responses, expressions, and narratives of the participants, based on their actions in the teaching and learning processes, are also collected.

Analysis of data and findings

A key data collection tool is the analysis of images created by students, critically reviewing them during various teaching sessions. This observation is then incorporated into the research findings (Healey et al., 2016). The information is categorised by focusing on two main aspects: the artistic outcomes of what has been learned and the didactic activities as an observed environment. The study sample draws on the teacher's own experience and the historical collection of materials produced by the students. Acquiring resources to promote lifelong learning and participation in artistic activities fosters interaction with participating senior students.

Results obtained from artistic approaches

Participants/place/activities

Drifting and photography are the two artistic discourses that methodologically frame the educational experience we are investigating, thus proposing a teaching approach that aims to foster creativity (Suh, 2019). The results include both written documents and records of student opinions, as well as their image creations. During the course, the group visited various museums in the city of Valencia (Museum of Fine Arts, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern [IVAM], Museu Valencià de la Il·lustració i de la Modernitat, Benlliure House Museum, Ceramics Museum, Fallas Museum, Silk Museum, Museum of Prehistory, L'Etno, Rice Museum, Science Museum, L'Íber, and Museu d'Història de València [MHV]), as well as some heritage sites (l'Almoina, City of Arts and Sciences, la Nau, San Nicolás, El Patriarca, Centre del Carme, las Naves, Centre d'Artesania, Palau de les Arts, and Grau Cemetery). The participants took thousands of photographs, which favours the use of mobile phones as portable devices (Mascarell Palau, 2020), although some

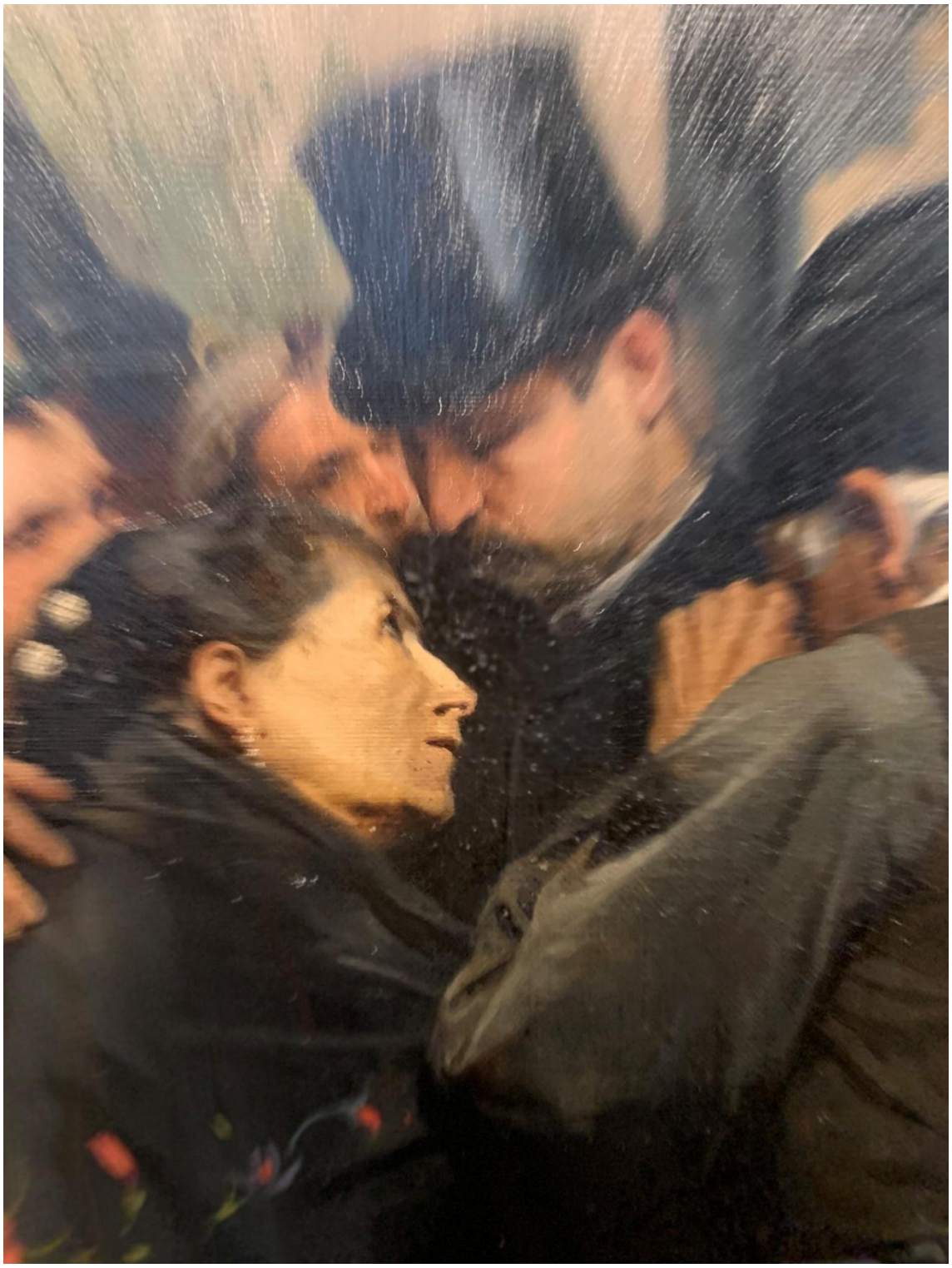
students used their digital SLR cameras. The instruction was as follows: each student had to choose and submit a single image from each museum.

Figure 1. Photo of the Zanele Muholi exhibition at the IVAM. Source: Photograph by Arcadi Cotolí Melià, used with permission

The effort of having to choose a single photograph from all those taken is the most intense and rewarding part of the process, as it forces students to question many aspects of their own creations (Barthes, 2025). The number of photographs uploaded (17 per museum) also allows for the development of an explanation in the classroom, with enough time to analyse each image, encouraging the teacher to generate discussion among the students (Souza et al., 2022). It is through these images that we address formal, content-related, semiotic, and symbolic issues. For example, in the case of Arcadi Cotolí's image (Figure 1), we discussed the importance of geometry in this mathematics teacher's creations. Furthermore, we used some element of each photograph to talk about artists who use photography as a means of expression.

Art teacher María José Tamarit uses an expressive technique in her photograph of a detail from the painting *The Glory of the People* (Figure 2), thus accentuating the intensity of the gazes of the figures involved (mother and son in the scene). This decision allows us to reflect in class on the use of filters and effects in photography. This analysis is based on demonstrating the pedagogical value that this type of research practice has for students in the construction of their personal identity (Huerta, 2024), as well as in the understanding of the identities within their cultural reality, thereby fostering a comprehensive understanding of the social environment through active and participatory methodologies (Bourriaud, 2009).

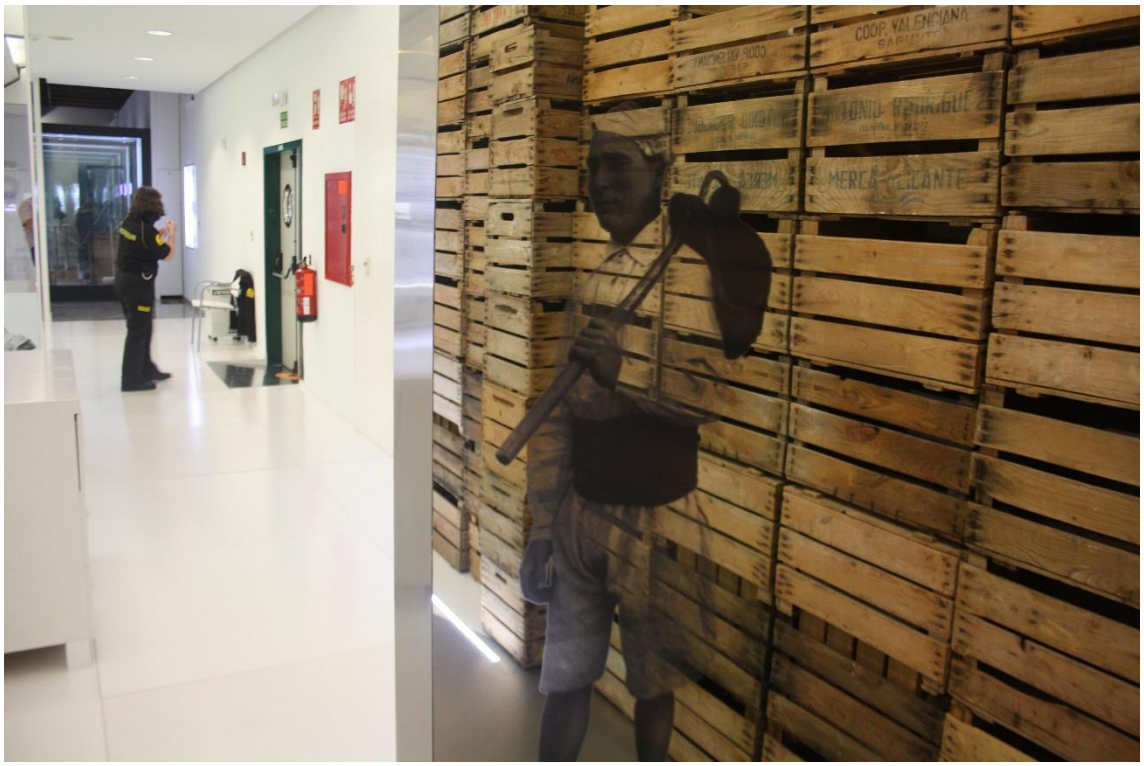
Figure 2. Detail of the painting *The Glory of the People* (1895) by Antonio Fillol Granell, in the Museum of Fine Arts of Valencia. Source: Photograph and digital modification by María José Tamarit Moradillo, used with permission



Research method using reflection based on images

The classroom work develops an analysis of the value of photographs taken during the *dérive*, as a means of investigating the social environment from lived experience (Sutton, 2020). The research is conducted from an auto-ethnographic, narrative, and artistic perspective, involving all participants in the active construction of a narrative that is complemented and built in different phases: searching, analysing, and selecting images; discussion; and joint analysis and reflection with the group. The analysis of the images is developed through a series of educational research activities with participating senior students, where the artistic perspective plays a key role in their practice (Macaya et al., 2025). The process consists of: searching for images through inquiry; selecting and compiling these images; developing a personal proposal based on the images; collectively exhibiting and commenting the results through discussion groups; and finally, systematising and jointly debating the results of the discussion groups on the images (Specker et al., 2017). Among the images collected, those offered by the installations created in museum exhibition halls stand out, as captured by Miguel Marín Jiménez in his image of the l'Etno art installation (Figure 3).

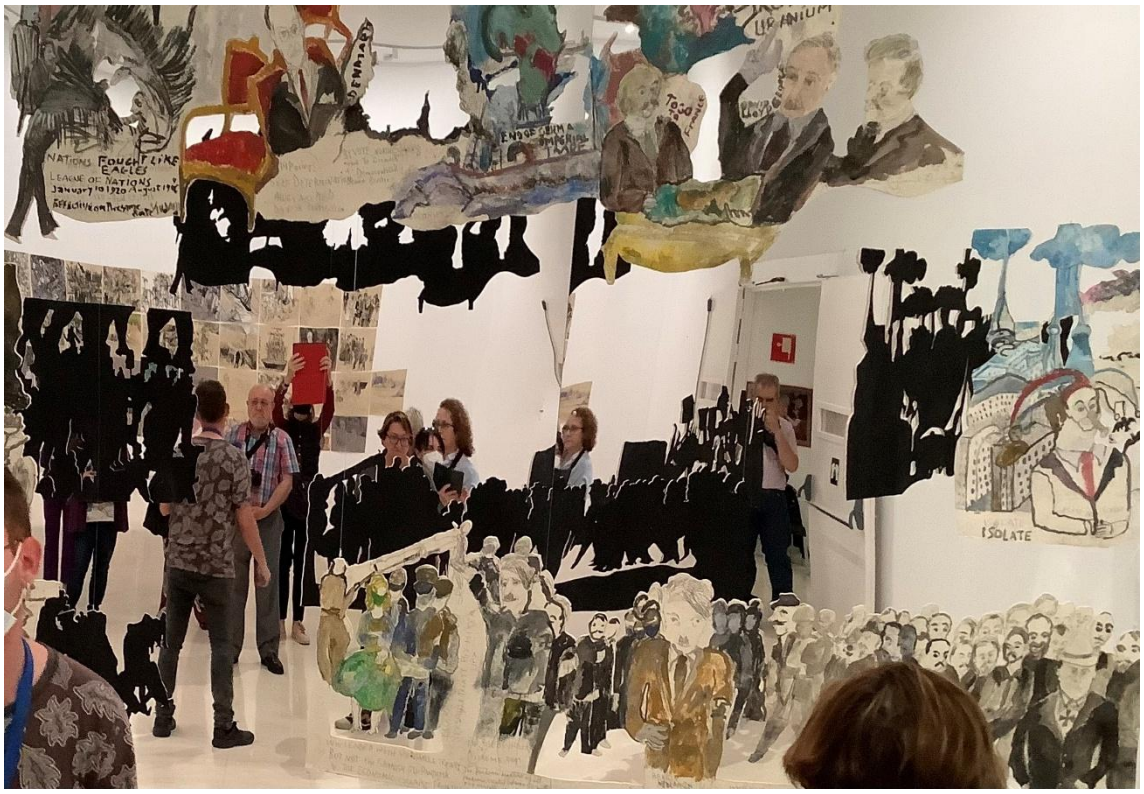
Figure 3. Room setup in the permanent exhibition at the Valencia Ethnology Museum 'l'Etno'. Source: Photograph by Miguel Marín Jiménez, used with permission



Collecting snapshots taken of museum exhibition installations allows us to develop detailed reports on the discussion processes, based on an analysis of the photographs submitted by the students. It is important to emphasise this process as a key aspect of the research, since it fosters a pedagogical practice that results in a conscious learning process based on an auto-ethnographic visual narrative. The use of digital technology to create the images and share them with the group promotes a mutual exchange of knowledge. To foster the development of critical and creative thinking, it is important to provide students

with spaces for debates that promote analysis, synthesis, interpretation, inference, and judgment. This encourages a bolder and more unconventional education, from which to formulate ethical and aesthetic questions (Atkinson, 2019). Creative skills are also required to help students see things from a fresh perspective, considering current challenges, especially when dealing with senior students who come to the classroom with a wealth of accumulated life experience. Critical and creative thinking should be present in the activities students undertake both inside and outside the classroom, empowering them to propose innovative solutions to specific problems.

Figure 4. An IVAM mediator explains the Anna Boghiguian exhibition. Source: Photograph by Dolors Enrique i Ferrada, who titled her photo *Don't think you're out*, used with permission



Critical thinking is the ability to analyse and reflect on facts objectively in order to form a judgment or opinion, solve problems systematically, and understand the logical connections between ideas, values, and beliefs that are rooted in society (Soto-González et al., 2025). It involves gathering the necessary data to analyse and understand situations, leading to logical conclusions. A person capable of critical thinking is not easily manipulated. Psychologist Joy Paul Guilford identifies the following aptitudes as essential for success in developing creative thinking: sensitivity to problems, fluency, flexibility, novelty and originality, elaboration, analytical and synthesis skills, reorganisation or redefinition, complexity, and evaluation (Guilford, 1950). Both in the classroom and during museum visits, students have been able to experience these aptitudes, incorporating this knowledge into their creations, developing an artistic discourse through images, and reflecting on these narratives. When discussing in class the photographs taken during the visit to the Anna Boghiguian exhibition at the IVAM, most students highlighted the motivation they felt at being able to 'enter' the works of

this octogenarian artist (Figure 4). The aspect of motivation is fundamental to adult education (Bílá & Kalenda, 2025).

Figure 5. Architectures by Santiago Calatrava at the City of Arts and Sciences in Valencia. Source: Photograph by Manuel Zapata Rayo, used with permission

In addition to details of artworks, exhibition halls, exhibited pieces, and other elements typical of museums, another facet reflected in the students' photographs is the urban landscape as the environment in which the visited museums are located. The City of Arts and Sciences is the most striking example (Figure 5). In this way, we observe how the images that form part of this research connect us with humanity, which has implications for the conceptual and pedagogical approach to these images. They bring us closer to ways of life, behaviours, and roles, to people's relationships with others and with the world, allowing us to delve into the research process from a personal and lived perspective. The personal is part of the social; it places us before the symbolic visualisation of what we know, and from this emerge narratives and discoveries that tell us about social relationships, how we perceive the city, and how we live. In educational research, it is important to establish and connect with educational practices, since these same practices, based on ethnographic and artistic visual research, are in turn articulated along the dual axis of research, teaching, and the improvement of teaching practices within their context. Working with creativity through Arts-Based Research offers senior students the enormous potential of a research methodology as a pedagogical process of construction, allowing them to learn about themselves and the society they are part of. Furthermore, it enables them to explore the creativity generated by their own history and to reflect collectively on pressing issues that include the city, museums, collective

heritage, and the understanding of art through artistic practice. Using the *dérive* as a catalyst transforms them into *flâneurs* (the dérive involves critical observation and active intervention in space, whereas the *flâneur* is essentially a passive observer who records urban experience without intervening in it), observant strollers conscious of the aesthetic capacity generated by the urban environment (Careri, 2017). The results are ultimately aesthetic in nature, since reflection allows them to obtain surprising and captivating images, going beyond the document that certifies their museum visit, as seen in the photograph presented by Miquel Valls after his visit to the Museum of Fine Arts (Figure 6). It is not a work of art or an interior space of the museum, but rather the interplay between the architecture, the clouds, and the sky.

Figure 6. Ambassador Vich Courtyard in the Museum of Fine Arts of Valencia. Source: Photograph by Miquel Valls Marco, used with permission

By having to develop a visual narrative from their own images, participating students can offer us themes and questions that will be addressed later in the classroom, incorporating those issues that truly interest them or that emerge from the images themselves. This constitutes a participatory approach (Healey et al., 2020). In this way, knowledge arises directly from the photographs they have created images linked to the visited environment, which speak to us about the museum as an institution, and which respond to specific sociocultural and personal conditions. We detected an artistic intention in these images, an aesthetic element that, in this case, acts as an ally to the research process, as we have emphasised in the methodology description, facilitating and enabling a deeper exploration of some of the aspects that each participant wishes to highlight. Analysing the results of the focus group work allows us to identify several issues related to the comments from the viewing and analysis sessions of the photographs, which in turn allows us to

strengthen the wording of the research process's conclusions. The impact caused by the images themselves affects the analysis developed by the participants in the focus group, allowing them to delve deeper and learn about issues related to positions and the history of photography, the people who generated it, and their own involvement in the process.

Figure 7. Handloom in the Valencia Silk Museum. Source: Photograph by Maite Rabena Pérez, used with permission

The great diversity of the museums visited also allows us to understand the potential of these institutions, since beyond their collections, their architecture, or the distinction that may emanate from the image they project, what matters in this case is that the senior students enjoy themselves, learn, and above all, create, practising an exercise in artistic production that empowers them as inspired designers (Figure 7). Luigini (2020) states that the ability to use graphic skills, and in general the ability to integrate the use of the visual, the mind, and the hand (perception, thought, representation) to solve problems and create effective products, facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge. The Italian author also reminds us, referring to the advice of Morin (2016), of his definition of art as the human capacity to create works, forms, colours, and sounds that give, or should give, aesthetic emotions. The French sociologist compiles his notes on beauty, art, and aesthetic feeling in this essay. He is interested in aesthetics understood as emotion, as the feeling that arises in us when confronted with the spectacle of beauty, whether artistic (the beauty of a work of art) or natural (the beauty of a landscape). How can we define this feeling, this pleasure, that we experience in the presence of beauty? For Morin, aesthetic emotion is the mirror of creative emotion. To create, the artist appeals to unconscious forces (inspiration) and conscious ones (corrections). Similarly, the aesthetic emotion that seizes us when faced with a work is both rational and irrational, since it appeals to both feeling and intelligence. And is this aesthetic emotion useful? Echoing Aristotelian concept of catharsis, the author demonstrates how, in these times of crisis we are experiencing, beauty is a formidable antidote to fear, horror, anguish, and death.

Figure 8. Figures of 'ninots indultats' in the Museu Faller de Valencia. Source: Photograph by Vicente Zaragoza Dolz, used with permission

Visiting a museum unique in the world for its subject matter, such as the Fallas Museum of Valencia, highlights aspects of identity that lead us to reflect on the capacity of certain elements (the Fallas festival, popular culture, deeply rooted celebrations with a tourist appeal) to become symbols of what each territory, each culture, each particular way of living and representing experiences represents. This is reflected in the photo by Vicente Zaragoza, in which we see people dressed in traditional Valencian attire (Figure 8). The historical tone of the image is reinforced by the use of black and white when showing it to the rest of the class.

Based on classroom discussions and student responses to questionnaires, a synthesis of the results of the analysis of these work sessions was compiled, systematising the issues raised by theme. In this sense, certain themes prevailed in their observations, and therefore in their learning, which helps us understand how their interest in creating one type of image or another emerged. This highlighted several realities. First, how the images themselves constructed a series of meanings, with narratives implicitly present in the photographs in recurring ways. This noteworthy aspect allows us to make generalisations and reach consensus based on the experience dérived from the images themselves, and not solely through the institutional discourse we often fall prey to. This reinforced our perspective and our conviction regarding certain social, cultural, political, and economic situations in our environment, shaped by the very image of the museums we visited.

Figure 9. Photograph of the painter's studio in the Benlliure House Museum, an image that its author, María Alonso, offers us as a true still life with objects. Source: Photograph by María Alonso, used with permission

One case we consider particularly interesting is the visit to the Benlliure House Museum, the place where the brothers Mariano and José, a sculptor and a painter respectively, lived and worked. These artists are important figures in Valencian art, but the most appealing aspect of visiting this house-museum is that it preserves the studio where José Benlliure painted. Walking through the artist's studio allows one to see both the large north-facing window through which light entered the workshop, and numerous materials the artist used for painting, including clothing and props with which he dressed and adorned his models. Student María Alonso has created a still life (Figure 9) using some of these elements, taking advantage of the light entering through the window, which gives the image an interesting contrast of light, encouraging a more artistic interpretation of the composition.

The students expressed their preferences regarding photographic artists, resulting in the following names: Ramon Masats, Robert Capa, Dorothea Lange, Ron Galella, Cindy Sherman, Del LaGrace Volcano, Francesc Jarque, Sebastião Salgado, Chema Madoz, Spencer Tunick, David Hamilton, Brassaï, Man Ray, Ouka Lele, Sally Mann, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Luis Calvente. We therefore see a wide variety of styles and backgrounds, thus creating an eclectic value for the whole, which allows for greater freedom in the teaching experience, while also enriching the range of opinions during reflections and debates.

Among the feedback we received from students through the surveys, we observed both their interests and their concerns when facing a creative and participatory activity. To the first question of the final questionnaire, 'Why did you choose this course?', the majority responded that it was because of the appealing proposal, which combined photography and museum visits. However, three students, the most experienced in photography, initially thought it would be more of a conventional photography course. To question 2, 'What did the course give you?', six responses highlighted the discovery of museums they were unfamiliar with, two considered it very interesting to have learned

how to take photographs, and the rest indicated that they had discovered their creative and artistic side. In response to question 3, 'What would you highlight positively about your experience during the course?', all answers agreed that the overall experience was worthwhile for both learning and enjoyment. To question 4, 'What aspects could be improved or changed?', six people indicated that the afternoon schedules don't allow for the desired depth of exploration during museum visits, as there isn't enough time; four indicated that the theoretical section on photography and the history of photography should be expanded, while the rest highlighted the need to increase the course hours. Question 5 refers to museums they were unfamiliar with and discovered thanks to the course. Most were unaware of the Benlliure House Museum, the Centre d'Artesania, the Grau Cemetery, and the Rice Museum, but all agreed that they rediscovered some they had already visited, such as the Fallas Museum, the Silk Museum, the Museum of Prehistory, L'Etno, and the MHV. In the case of the L'Íber Museum, a miniature museum (lead soldiers), they were surprised by the originality of its concept. When asked about the aspects of photography they found interesting (question 6), they particularly valued the aspects of composition and the technical possibilities offered by cameras, including their mobile phones. When asked to evaluate the group visits (question 7), they made it clear that sharing these experiences was one of the most positive elements of the experience. Since the group consisted of senior adults, it was very common for a pleasant chat to spontaneously arise after the visits on a terrace or in a café. The responses to question 8, 'What role have museums and photography played in your life?', being an open-ended question, provided a true life story for each participant, something I, as an educator, greatly value. Finally, regarding question 9, about whether there was any aspect they would like to highlight, they again agreed in positively valuing the experience as an example of participatory teaching that yields artistic results and enhances the creativity of those who participated.

Among the students' final comments, we have gathered some phrases that we consider particularly significant, given the high level of satisfaction and the fact that the experience allowed them to foster their creativity through motivation. Student RBE expressed her satisfaction: 'Este curso me ha permitido conocer mejor mis posibilidades haciendo fotos, algo que nunca había imaginado' [This course has allowed me to better understand my photographic potential, something I had never imagined]. For MJT, the most important aspect was being able to share the experience: 'Hacer las actividades en los museos en compañía del resto del alumnado me ha proporcionado una gran satisfacción, y los resultados han sido increíbles' [Doing the museum activities with the other students was incredibly satisfying, and the results were amazing]. In ACM's opinion, the combination of theory and practice yielded excellent results: 'Cada sesión de clase tenía un componente teórico poderoso, pero además teníamos la oportunidad de convertir en imágenes la información recibida gracias a las fotos que hicimos en los museos' [Each class session had a strong theoretical component, but we also had the opportunity to translate the information we received into images thanks to the photos we took in the museums]. In MCC's case, the motivation stemmed from the structured pace of instruction: 'Hemos tenido tiempo suficiente tanto para aprender de autores y obras, como para disfrutar haciendo fotos' [We had enough time both to learn about artists and their works and to enjoy taking photos]. A noteworthy aspect of the results obtained is that the participating senior students have developed their observational skills, something we consider especially important given the value we currently place on time and how we use (or fail to use) it, being so immersed in the presence of digital devices. For Byung-Chul Han, among the practices that require time is attentive and careful observation, since the perception associated with information excludes long and slow observation. The

philosopher argues that the careful contemplation of things, unintentional attention, which would be a formula for happiness, recedes in the face of the pursuit of information (Han, 2023). He is concerned about the lack of appreciation for knowledge, given that we communicate continuously without participating in a community. We store vast amounts of data without memories to preserve. Faced with these concerns, and revisiting the concepts of studium and punctum developed by Roland Barthes when reflecting on photography, Han insists that greater attention to things is paired with forgetfulness and the loss of self. When the ego weakens, it becomes receptive to the silent language of things. What worries Han, however, is that along with things, we lose our sense of belonging. Research like the kind we present here gains strength as a lived experience, both in the creative process and in the exploration and generation of artistic and aesthetic explorations among adult students.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis conducted, we highlight some key issues as a conclusion and final assessment of the research. We value the displays of artistic creativity in the images created by the study participants, which are exhibited in the results section, along with some examples of their photographic work. The senior students demonstrated their creative ability to generate narratives through images, creating photographs based on lived experiences. These photographs reflect their interests and their understanding of life, which aligns with their extensive life experience and their desire to materialise this acquired knowledge. They had no prior experience with photography (except for one student who is a graphic designer and has worked in that field for decades), but this did not prevent them from achieving excellent results. Furthermore, thanks to the experience, they were able to revisit their city through its museums, as the images were taken during a series of excursions to different urban spaces, especially museums.

The mix of male and female students also offers an interesting result that we can approach from a gender perspective, since we detect particular ways of deciphering social rituals, depending on the perspective taken. This is especially evident in aspects of identity, both personal and collective. It is also clear that this type of research, based on teaching experiences, allows for innovation in education, demonstrating its theoretical and practical foundation, and incorporating a certain degree of risk, always necessary given that it is an artistic subject. The emotional impact multiplies the educational effect of the activity, and this is made possible by the program of museum visits, some well-known, along with others with which the students were less familiar. The age of the participants fosters a type of intense and enriching reflection, taking into account their life experience and their desire to share ideas in the discussions. The images they have created and shared constitute a valuable element for better understanding the interests of these students. They demonstrate their creative ability, boosted by lived experience.

A research design was developed to foster critical and creative thinking among senior students, students who had no prior experience with or knowledge of creativity through arts practice. Artistic and creative skills were developed from a critical perspective, incorporating an educational model that promotes both teamwork and individual creativity. To achieve this, visits to various museums were organised, where students took photographs. It was recognised that there was a lack of prior knowledge about the meaning and characteristics of critical thinking and creativity, which served as a starting point for exploring different situations and themes. The participatory action research was based on a program of activities that considered time, participation, resources, dedication, and student responsibility, allowing them to make the most of each planned and lived

experience. The aim of the participatory action research was to become a valuable tool, with the potential to transform a specific reality, by engaging creative thinking through the active participation of the students in the research, and by fostering new perspectives on change in learning. The research has made it possible to solve the problem of the incipient knowledge about creativity as a perspective of the experience carried out, in this case with senior students.

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